

Evaluation of the 15/16 July 2016 Military Coup Attempt

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1. Introduction

a. On July 15–16, 2016, Turkey experienced certain military movements, the true nature of which remains disputed even today. Narratives vary depending on one's perspective. According to official discourse, it was a military coup attempt carried out by members of FETÖ (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization). According to the main opposition party and a broad political spectrum, it was a “Controlled Coup Attempt” that the state knew in advance, deliberately did not prevent, may have even guided, and later benefited from. On the other hand, members of the Gülen community, some journalists, and researchers argue that it was a fully orchestrated scenario—a staged event in which military personnel were trapped.

b. In their defense, military personnel punished for participating in the coup generally state that they were following orders related to a terrorist threat or a scheduled exercise. In this respect, they have been called to duty, performing security and training tasks inside and outside the barracks. They declare in their defense that these orders were strictly service-related and that they had no knowledge of any coup attempt. Nonetheless, the courts disregarded these defenses and convicted the defendants under Article 309 of the Turkish Penal Code for “Violation of the Constitution.”

c. As extensively discussed in this report, calling personnel to duty for security or training purposes constitutes a service-related order. Therefore, it can be clearly stated that personnel who engaged in certain activities inside or outside the barracks under such orders were merely executing service-related commands. The issue lies in how consistently these actions complied with standard operational practices. This is also where court justifications and defendant defenses typically clash. Ultimately, the answer depends heavily on how “normal” the prevailing circumstances were, which this report aims to explore.

d. At the time, there was a clear sense of anxiety among soldiers due to bombings and terrorist incidents. MIT (National Intelligence Organization) reports concerning potential terrorist attacks had elevated security alertness to its peak. Terrorist organizations had begun targeting urban centers more heavily. In parallel, anti-terror operations by the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), including the use of tanks and other heavy weapons, were extended into populated areas. ¹ Legal regulations concerning military involvement in public order under the KOKTOD framework were in effect. Moreover, recent amendments had eliminated all legal ambiguity regarding the deployment of military forces for security purposes.

e. Strong traditions dominate within the Turkish Armed Forces. In counter-terrorism contexts, quick and bold actions are seen as signs of patriotism and bravery, while hesitation and inaction are perceived as cowardice or weakness. Consequently, questioning or delaying orders that appear to be related to training or security is generally deemed unacceptable. From a legal perspective, it seems that all such activities occurred in an extremely rigid hierarchical structure governed by a principle of absolute obedience.

f. The fairness of post-coup investigations and trials is highly questionable. Compared to previous coup-related trials, the number of prosecuted and convicted personnel is disproportionately high. One of the most problematic aspects is that soldiers who believed they were merely executing standard service orders were judged and punished in the same category as high-level officers who issued those orders or were allegedly leading the coup.

g. Although the courts delivered verdicts and thousands have been punished, the mystery of what actually occurred that night persists. Until now, no concrete coup plan or leader has been identified. It was admitted in the indictments that there is no document or testimony identifying the alleged members of the Peace at Home Council, who were said to have orchestrated the coup. 2 After the long court periods, this ambiguity was reflected in the courts' reasoned decisions and later confirmed by the Court of Cassation. 3

h. Most recently, the UN Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled on the case of former Air Force Commander Gen. Akın Öztürk, accused of leading the coup and the Peace at Home Council. The group determined that Öztürk was arbitrarily detained without reasonable suspicion and had not been fairly tried, recommending his release and compensation. 4

i. From planning to execution, the coup attempt appeared irrational and destined to fail based on the orders issued, tactics used, weapons deployed, and objectives pursued. On the other hand, it is striking that the passive and reluctant reaction of the security bureaucracy has raised concerns. Beyond that, they refrained from reporting this incident to the Minister and the Prime Minister. These were later exacerbated by exaggerated narratives and disproportionate post-coup actions, reinforcing the "Controlled Coup Attempt" and "Trap" allegations.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Report

a. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the legality of the actions carried out by military personnel alleged to have been involved in the coup attempt by analyzing the individuals involved, the activities conducted, and the prevailing conditions. It also aims to assess the true nature of the events within the context of how the security bureaucracy sought to manage the crisis and clarify the situation.

b. The report endeavors to explain that those who planned and issued orders for the coup cannot be considered equivalent in authority, responsibility, or military tradition to those who merely executed those orders. By examining the command structure of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), it is aimed to uncover the real character of the activities carried out that night. Within

this framework, it is argued that many actions which externally appeared to be part of a coup attempt may, from the perspective of subordinates, have simply been acts of compliance with service-related orders requiring personal sacrifice.

c. With that purpose, the report analyzes the planning and execution of the coup attempt to determine to what extent it aligns with military necessity. In addition to evaluating the activities carried out, the personnel who carried them out are also examined, with the goal of determining their levels of responsibility based on the information and discretion they possessed.

3. Methodology

a. The preparation of this report begins with an overview of the national security environment prevailing during the relevant period. Particular emphasis is placed on the reflexes developed by military personnel as a result of years of counter-terrorism operations. Additionally, the report addresses the atmosphere of concern stemming from terrorist attacks in city centers over the past year and the anticipation of further incidents.

b. Indictments and reasoned judgments from trials related to the July 15 coup attempt were examined. In this context, the compatibility of the judgments rendered with key military legislation—namely the Constitution, the Military Internal Service Law and Regulations, the Turkish Penal Code (TPC), and the Military Penal Code—was scrutinized.

c. In this context, following the receipt of intelligence concerning a possible assassination or abduction attempt targeting the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), information reported in the media and court records was reviewed to understand the events in a broader framework. The military activities observed on the night of July 15 were examined in comparison with the principles and procedures of military operational planning and execution, as well as with past coup attempts. All evaluations were carried out with due consideration for legal requirements and established military conventions.

d. On the other hand, the official narrative has been interpreted based on the actions taken by the personnel responsible and authorized to detect and prevent the coup attempt, particularly following the intelligence received concerning a planned attack against the Head of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT). In this context, special attention was paid to the unusually swift mobilization and organization of civilians, police radio announcements, and similar data. The deliberate and persistent effort to involve civilians in the events—despite the risk of armed clashes and civilian casualties—was critically examined.

e. In light of all these investigations, the appropriateness and fairness of the trials and the sentences handed down have been questioned. Furthermore, allegations directed at the top levels of the state regarding a “controlled coup” or a “trap” aimed at purging a specific group from state institutions were scrutinized, and available evidence and indications supporting such claims were evaluated.

4. General Situation Prior to July 15

a. The prevailing atmosphere of chaos and the marked increase in terrorist attacks

(1) In Turkey, which has been combating terrorism for over 40 years, there was a notable rise in terrorist attacks, particularly in urban centers, during the year leading up to the July 15 coup attempt. Attacks claimed by groups such as the PKK, TAK, ISIS, and others resulted in numerous deaths and injuries, with some being recorded as the largest attacks in the history of the Republic. Several of these attacks specifically targeted military units or occurred in close proximity to military installations and in border regions within the responsibility of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK). A detailed list of significant attacks in 2015 and 2016, including their dates and casualties, is provided in Annex A.

(2) Two of these attacks, which occurred within close proximity to the General Staff Headquarters, regarded as the heart of the TAF, took place shortly before the July 15 coup attempt and deeply affected all military personnel and their families. As a result, there was a heightened state of alertness among military personnel regarding potential terrorist actions. In this context:

The first attack occurred on February 17, 2016, in an area housing the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), the General Staff Headquarters, the main Command Headquarters, and military residences. A car bomb was detonated as TSK shuttle vehicles were exiting the area. The attack, claimed by the TAK (Kurdistan Freedom Falcons), resulted in the deaths of 29 people, including civilians, and injured 61 others.

The second attack took place less than a month later, on March 13, 2016, in front of the Güvenpark bus stops, where a bomb-laden vehicle was detonated. The attack, also claimed by TSK, caused the deaths of 36 individuals and injured more than 300. The site of this attack was approximately 1 kilometer from the TBMM, the General Staff Headquarters, and the major Command Headquarters mentioned above.

(3) The TSK has been the primary force combating these terrorist organizations. Consequently, the perceived threat from these groups has significantly influenced the planning of training and exercises, personnel policies, and the operational priorities of the armed forces. For example, a large area in Turkey's southeast is designated as the Counter-Terrorism/Internal Security Operation Zone. Due to the dangers involved, assignments in this region come with substantial financial and personal benefits. The principal motivation behind Turkey's ongoing cross-border military operations in Iraq and Syria is also to prevent terrorist infiltration into the country from these areas.

(4) One of the peak periods of the TSK's counterterrorism efforts was the 2015–2016 period, during which the military remained fully engaged in operations against the PKK. In 2015, the PKK declared so-called self-rule and attempted to gain control over several provinces in the southeast. To restore public order against acts such as trench-digging and barricade-building in urban areas, comprehensive operations were launched. During these operations, more than 300 security personnel were martyred, and over 110 civilians lost their lives. 5

Alongside police and gendarmerie forces, TSK units equipped with heavy weapons such as tanks and artillery played a major role in the operations. 678 (Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, sources on the internet are frequently removed.)

b. Intelligence Warnings Sent from Intelligence Agencies to Military Institutions Regarding Terrorist Acts and the Increase in Threat Expectations

(1) In the lead-up to July 15, there was a surge in large-scale terrorist acts and bombings. Warnings and intelligence reports about potential terrorist attacks became one of the primary factors shaping the activities of military units. While most of these alerts were classified as “confidential,” making access difficult, two examples that provide some insight are presented below.

(2) The first notification, the original version of which is included in Annex B, is dated July 11, 2016, just four days before the coup attempt. It is particularly notable as it concerns the General Staff Headquarters—the very location where tanks were later deployed that night.

The document refers to the possibility of high-impact terrorist acts and requests the closure of part of the road in front of the General Staff entrance to civilian traffic, along with the establishment of police checkpoints. It is evident that the implementation of such measures would heighten the perceived threat of terrorism among the personnel commuting daily to the headquarters.

(3) The second piece of intelligence is a message order issued by the 1st Army Command in Istanbul, referencing a MİT (National Intelligence Organization) intelligence report. This message was distributed to all military units in Istanbul just one day before the coup attempt. It refers to potential bombings and armed attacks targeting naval bases, ships, military barracks, schools, service vehicles, military housing, places of worship, and transportation facilities. It also mentions the risk of assassination or kidnapping attempts against prominent individuals. The message order, which called for increased security measures, is provided in Annex C.

(4) Reflecting the heightened threat of terrorist attacks during that period, the central focus of the Turkish Armed Forces' meetings, training, and exercises was on counter-terrorism measures and precautions. Indeed, as cited in the justified ruling of the main court, when the intelligence tip-off received by MİT was conveyed to the General Staff Headquarters, the Deputy Chief of General Staff was in a routine Counter-Terrorism Operations meeting. This demonstrates that, at every level of the chain of command, from top to bottom, the dominant concern at the time was the threat of terrorism and the measures required to mitigate it.

5) This reality was also frequently emphasized in the testimonies taken after the coup attempt from both military and police personnel. For example, on July 23, 2016, Lieutenant General Metin Gürak, who was then the Ankara Garrison Commander, gave a statement numbered 2016/106247 to the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office regarding the night of the coup. According to his statement, around 22:00, he received a phone call from the Governor of Ankara warning him, “There are explosions at the General Staff, and gunfire can be heard.” Based on this, he headed to the area. Considering the past terrorist attacks in the same vicinity

on February 17 and March 13, his immediate assumption was that the General Staff Headquarters was under a terrorist attack.

(6) Similarly, in a witness statement documented by the Bitlis 1st High Criminal Court on November 29, 2017, under Instruction No. 2017/96, Yaman Ağırlar—then Deputy Chief of Police in Ankara—shared the same interpretation. While sitting in his office, he heard a police radio call stating, “Heavy gunfire is coming from the protocol section of the General Staff.” Due to the past bomb attacks in nearby areas, there was already an expectation of such incidents. Ağırlar also initially believed that the General Staff Headquarters was once again under a terrorist attack.

(7) In his statement to the public prosecutor dated July 18, 2016, which was included in the indictment, then-Land Forces Commander General Salih Zeki Çolak also referenced this issue. On July 15, while returning to the General Staff Headquarters after inspecting an aviation unit mentioned in a tip-off regarding a possible abduction attempt against the MİT Chief, he encountered soldiers resembling fully equipped special forces personnel. He initially assumed that this could be a training exercise aimed at defending the barracks. Furthermore, hearing intense gunfire in the dark, he interpreted it as the General Staff Headquarters being attacked from outside and the soldiers defending it against external threats.

(8) In such an environment, it would be unacceptable—under established military customs, the sense of duty, and legal regulations—for a military officer to ignore, question, or delay the implementation of an order related to a terrorist threat.

c. KOKTOD Implementation and Additional Regulations in the Fight Against Terrorism

(1) Under Article 11/d of Law No. 5442, the KOKTOD (Support of Law Enforcement by the Armed Forces in Public Incidents) regulation has been in force for many years. It permits provincial governors to request the deployment of Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) units in public order situations that cannot be controlled by available law enforcement forces. The procedure is based on the principle that, upon such a request from the governorates, the nearest designated land, sea, or air force command, including border units under the Land Forces Command, will respond as swiftly as possible with the available means.

(2) From 1997 to 2010, this regulation was implemented under the EMASYA Protocol, which was signed between the General Staff and the Ministry of the Interior in accordance with this article. Although the protocol was annulled in 2010, the legal basis in the law remained unchanged. A Cabinet Decree issued in 2013 re-established the procedures for requesting military support under this law, allowing the practice to continue in a similar form.

(3) As noted above, in the period leading up to July 15, there was a marked increase in terrorist acts and intelligence reports warning of potential attacks. Consequently, training and exercises were intensified, aiming to minimize the reaction times of units assigned KOKTOD duties. In 2015, the Land Forces Command updated its directive titled KKT 117-5: Training on Supporting Law Enforcement in Public Incidents, and ordered its implementation across all branches of the armed forces.

(4) Just before the events of July 15, a significant development took place that expanded and reinforced the scope of the TSK's duties under the KOKTOD framework. Specifically, a new paragraph (j) was added to Article 11 of the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442. This addition aimed to facilitate such deployments, grant the General Staff greater operational discretion, and provide legal protection for military personnel assigned to such duties. The newly added provisions stipulate that:

(a) In cases where the capabilities of general law enforcement forces are insufficient, and where necessary for counterterrorism operations or where terrorist activities seriously disrupt public order, the TSK may be deployed by Presidential decree upon the recommendation of the Ministry of the Interior.

(b) The size, organization, deployment locations, command and control structure, force mobility, and other operational aspects of the deployed military units shall be determined by the General Staff.

(c) It is stated that the activities carried out by TSK personnel under this paragraph shall be considered part of their military duties and service. Any offenses allegedly committed in the course of these duties shall be treated as military offenses, and no measures such as arrest, detention, or imprisonment may be taken until formal permission for investigation is granted.

(5) Compared to paragraph (d) of the same law, which traditionally formed the legal basis for KOKTOD implementation, the newly added paragraph (j) contains far more detailed provisions regarding intelligence, command and control, and responsibilities. Although the law already provided a legal framework for KOKTOD activities, this new regulation was enacted just three weeks before the coup attempt, and entered into force after being published in the Official Gazette on July 14, just one day prior. ⁹ This regulation may have served as a motivating factor for those contemplating a coup, or as a trap for those unaware of its implications. It is a matter that warrants thorough investigation. For reference, the full texts of both Article 11/d (pre-existing) and the newly added 11/j (issued just before the coup attempt) are provided in Annex D.

(6) Due to the persistent threat of bombings, rising terrorist activity, and a general climate of chaos, military personnel had already developed strong reflexes in counterterrorism operations. This new regulation further heightened those reflexes, fostering a mindset of immediate and unquestioning intervention upon assignment.

5. Assessment of the July 15 Coup Attempt

a. Evaluation in terms of planning and execution activities

(1) When the coup of September 12, 1980, which was also widely reported in the media, is examined, it is evident that its planning phase was conducted with the full discipline and methodology of a military headquarters operation. The coup plan, named the "Flag Operation

Plan”, detailed in a clear and structured operational format the actions to be taken starting from Day G-2. 10

(2) In the annexes accompanying the main text, specific political parties, associations, trade unions, and professional organizations to be shut down were listed along with their addresses. The annexes also clearly outlined which individuals were to be detained, by which units, and through what procedures—essentially forming an automatic response mechanism upon implementation.

(3) By contrast, when examining the actions attempted on July 15, there appears to be no indication of any centralized planning or comprehensive operational document. The only documents that could be considered part of a "plan" were a martial law directive and a list of general officer assignments. However, these documents lacked any operational guidance or specific instructions for subordinate units and were far from providing actionable objectives. In terms of content, the martial law directive cannot be considered a coup plan—it could, at best, be one of the many annexes that would normally accompany a comprehensive coup plan. Moreover, the appointment list may have been the most unnecessary element at that critical hour. Dissatisfaction with appointments could easily cause things to spiral in an unanticipated direction—and indeed, this dissatisfaction triggered a counter-movement, as it eventually did. Notably, this list later became a significant source of input for emergency decree laws (KHKs) and judicial proceedings, which is particularly striking.

(5) Official narratives claim that 8,651 individuals participated in the coup attempt. 11 However, this figure, which is repeatedly cited and based on initial allegations, does not align with the actual findings of the courts. Of all the concluded trials, 4,891 defendants were convicted with varying prison sentences. 12 Including the 162 military personnel officially declared as fugitives, 13 the total number of participants would amount to 5,053. From this figure, those acquitted at the Court of Cassation stage should also be deducted.

When this number is compared to the Turkish Armed Forces' total strength of approximately 570,000 personnel, and taken together with the government-controlled 250,000-strong police force and potential civilian support, it becomes clear that the number of participants represents a nearly negligible proportion. The only factor that could have enabled such a limited force to succeed through asymmetric impact would have been the element of surprise. However, it seems that the coup plotters did everything in their power to eliminate that possibility.

(6) When previous coups are analyzed, it is clear that the primary focus was on taking control of the executive branch—namely, the President, Prime Minister, ministers, and key bureaucrats—who held actual power and public support. Similarly, in this coup attempt, one would have expected the entire plan to revolve around these figures, with them designated as the first and foremost targets. However, apart from a few symbolic and questionable moves, the already limited forces were directed toward secondary targets that had little or no impact on the outcome. As a result, insufficient effort was dedicated to securing the principal objectives.

(7) During the coup attempt, which began around 20:30–21:00, low-altitude flyovers by fighter jets were conducted at 21:00 in an apparent effort to intimidate the civilian population. 14 These flyovers, along with helicopter attacks on public institutions, served more as signals warning the key targets—those at risk of being detained—to take precautions, rather than facilitating a successful operation.

(8) In Istanbul, tanks and other heavy weaponry were sent to the Bosphorus Bridge to close traffic in one direction. In Ankara, tanks were deployed into the city during peak traffic hours. It was obvious that such actions—or similar ones—would serve no purpose other than to publicly expose the coup attempt at a stage when it could still be most easily suppressed, thereby provoking a public response. Even if it is being said that the coup had to be launched prematurely and they had no other choice, initiating such a critical operation at a time when failure was almost certain cannot be regarded as a rational course of action.

(9) The intended targets of the tanks deployed in Ankara also seem highly questionable. Given the number of individuals arrested and sentenced, it appears that the General Staff Headquarters could have been secured using existing personnel alone. In addition to special forces units that were reportedly part of the plan, the coup plotters went further, attempting to deploy their already limited number of tanks to the General Staff—even after the Chief of General Staff had been rescued, which seems illogical.

(10) Sending the tanks to Parliament instead of the General Staff Headquarters might not have produced a successful result either, but at least it would have had a logical basis. It is clear that control over the area and Parliament could only be achieved through ground forces and effective tactical implementation. Instead, the decision was made to bomb Parliament with fighter jets, a course of action that could serve no practical purpose other than inciting public outrage. To clarify, this point is meant to emphasize the illogicality of the bombing claims, which have become one of the core arguments in official narratives about the coup attempt. There are, in fact, numerous publicly available articles and videos asserting that the widely circulated bombing footage is not genuine. Many of these sources appear quite convincing. To refrain from making polemical statements, I provide only one link regarding these articles. 15

(11) As noted in the main indictment, nearly all officers who were promoted to general rank after 2011 were later dismissed from the military on allegations of affiliation with FETÖ and active participation in the coup. The situation was similar for staff officers, with the President stating that 81% of them were expelled. 16 It should be understood that, at the time, this group represented the core decision-makers responsible for virtually all planning and execution at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels within the Turkish Armed Forces. However, as extensively analyzed in Annex E, nearly all of the Principles of Military Operations, which are considered essential for the success of any military campaign, were ignored during this coup attempt. Given the absence of a coherent written plan and the irrational actions observed, it is highly unlikely that this operation was the product of such a competent and experienced cadre.

b. The "Peace at Home Council"

(1) On the night of July 15, a declaration was broadcast on TRT (Turkish State Television) at midnight, announcing that the government had been taken over by an entity calling itself the "Peace at Home Council". Subsequent judicial proceedings were based on the premise that the coup attempt had been planned and orchestrated by this council. However, despite the passage of eight years, no concrete evidence has ever been presented to substantiate this claim. In reality, the assertions regarding the council appear to rely more on forced interpretations than on solid, factual evidence.

(2) In a coup attempt carried out by a marginal force—reportedly just 1% of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK)—against the full power of the state and its public support, the most critical operational requirements should have been secrecy, surprise, and flexibility. Achieving this through a 38-member council, many of whom were stationed in different locations, subject to demanding daily schedules, and lacking an effective communication system, is extremely difficult. For example, as alleged in the indictment of the main (Çatı) trial, the council is said to have received news of the operation being exposed between 20:09 and 20:30, and then, in less than half an hour, evaluated the situation, made decisions, and moved to execution. This scenario is virtually impossible.

(3) On the other hand, official narratives claim that the coup attempt was a FETÖ (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization) operation and that the group had infiltrated every level of the state. If that were the case, a council allegedly formed to govern the country should logically have included members representing all core functions of the executive branch, possibly even including civilian figures. Even if politicians were excluded, at minimum, there should have been members from the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), the Police Force, and the Judiciary. However, even from a strictly military perspective, the alleged structure of the council fails to reflect any functional, regional, or operational division of responsibility among the armed forces. It does not exhibit any coherent structure that would suggest it was formed to run a state or even manage military operations.

(4) In the main indictment (Çatı case), it is explicitly stated: "No documents or testimonies were encountered during the investigation that identify the members of the Peace at Home Council." This admission underscores the weakness of the council narrative. Nevertheless, the identification of 38 council members based on two suspects' possession of transcripts from the May 27, 1960 coup trials and a book referencing that era is a highly strained interpretation. This demonstrates how speculative the claim is. Apparently recognizing this, the 17th High Criminal Court of Ankara, in case file 2017/109, removed the label "member of the Peace at Home Council" from the prosecutor's final opinion in its reasoned judgment. Instead, only 20 individuals were classified as leaders of an armed terrorist organization and held responsible for all related acts. Finally, during its review of the appeal, the Court of Cassation (Yargıtay) confirmed that no official document identifying the alleged members of the council had been found.

(5) On the other hand, the United Nations Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has issued its Opinion No. 33/2024 concerning Akın Öztürk (Turkey),

concluding its review of the human rights violations alleged in his case. Öztürk, who was portrayed as the number one figure behind the July 15 coup attempt and the Peace at Home Council, is the subject of a decision that appears to seriously undermine the already controversial claims surrounding the Council.

(6) In summary, the decision states that Öztürk, who was sentenced to 141 aggravated life sentences and thousands of years in prison, was arbitrarily detained without reasonable suspicion and was not given a fair trial. The Working Group calls for his immediate release, recommends that he be compensated, and requests an investigation into those responsible for the violations. The decision also notes that the allegation that Öztürk's conviction was based on evidence obtained under duress was not refuted in the government's response. Furthermore, the report emphasizes that such practices not only violate legal and ethical standards but also undermine the credibility and integrity of the entire judicial process. Allowing such evidence in a criminal case, it states, would amount to a gross miscarriage of justice.

(7) Beyond the specific findings related to Öztürk, the decision includes observations that concern the entire judicial process. In this context, the claims raised by Öztürk's defense attorneys are particularly noteworthy:

(a) That Öztürk and approximately 200 other defendants who received life sentences were convicted using identical wording, without any individualized justification, and that the reasoned judgment was essentially a copy of the indictment, containing identical grammar and punctuation errors;

(b) That only 101 hours of the 319 hours of unedited camera footage were shared with the defendants, and that approximately 70% of the footage was deleted or not included in the case file;

(c) That the President of the 17th High Criminal Court, who presided over the case, was the same judge who had issued the initial arrest warrants for several of the defendants, and that no ruling was issued in response to the objections raised by the defense;

(d) That the same court president participated in October 2017 in a workshop organized by the Police Academy—an executive branch institution—contrary to judicial ethics guidelines, and endorsed without objection a statement asserting that, “When fighting the Gülen group, concrete evidence is not necessary; if there is even the slightest doubt, the State should take advantage of it”;

(e) That shortly after issuing his ruling, this court president was promoted and appointed as a judge to the Court of Cassation, Turkey's highest court.

(8) In light of this decision, the claims portraying Akın Öztürk as the top figure in the coup attempt have lost all validity. Beyond that, it increasingly appears that all operational activities—including the dissemination of martial law orders, appointment lists, and similar directives—took place without any higher-level command structure. In fact, no vertical communication lines or horizontal coordination channels between

the branches of the armed forces have been identified. This suggests the absence of centralized control. Alternatively, one could argue that some form of centralized direction may have existed, but rather than being internal to the military, it may have originated from a deeper structure within the state, possibly as part of the “trap” hypothesis discussed in the following sections.

(c) Allegations of a “Controlled Coup Attempt” and a “Setup”

(1) The claim of a “Controlled Coup Attempt”—that is, the assertion that the coup was known in advance but deliberately not prevented—was prominently voiced by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, then-leader of the main opposition party, the Republican People’s Party (CHP), and found considerable resonance within the public. The CHP also prepared a 300-page report as an addendum to the official report of the Parliamentary Investigation Commission on the coup attempt. In this report, titled “A Predicted, Unprevented, and Exploited Controlled Coup,” the same allegations were reiterated. 17

Indeed, it appears highly plausible that the government, acting on a self-preservation instinct, may have viewed this as an opportunity to entrap and purge members of the organization it referred to as the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ). Supporting this possibility is the information included in the CHP’s report indicating that no fewer than 105,000 public officials were dismissed from their posts. The seriousness of the claim becomes even clearer when one considers that these mass dismissals began just 4.5 hours after the onset of the coup attempt, starting with the expulsion of 2,740 members of the judiciary. 18

A separate claim, voiced either by members of the movement labeled as FETÖ living abroad or whispered among dissident circles within the country, posits that what occurred was not merely a “controlled coup” but in fact a government-orchestrated scenario in which a segment of the movement’s members were lured into a trap and used as instruments. At first glance, this may seem like an attempt to delegitimize the coup trials. However, anyone who closely examines the events of that day will notice a significant gap between the official narrative—and the judicial process aligned with it—and the realities on the ground.

(2) The movements and actions of several high-ranking state officials, including then-Chief of the General Staff Hulusi Akar, National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Chief Hakan Fidan, and Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal, are of particular importance when evaluating the “setup” allegations. The most important one among these is Hulusi Akar, who was at the very center of the coup attempt from beginning to end.

(a) One of the most problematic aspects of the July 15 coup planning is that it appears to have been carried out without a clear leader. Indeed, leadership of the coup was only proposed to the Chief of the General Staff once the attempt was underway. From a military standpoint, this is an unacceptable risk. In the event of failure—which did occur—the participants and even their families would be likely to suffer severe consequences.

(b) The order to mobilize the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) against the constitutional order—a crime of the gravest magnitude—was signed by a brigadier general. In the TSK hierarchy, however, the word of a brigadier general carries almost no weight in the eyes of a

full general. Even if the Chief of the General Staff had refused to participate, his name could easily have been added to the signature block. Without the endorsement of at least one full general, any such mobilization would be unlikely to succeed or would be met with hesitation. It is well known that no insurrection in the TSK stands a chance of success unless backed by at least one full general. In this light, it appears that the individual initiating the coup took precautions to ensure its failure...

(c) Consequently, either there was a strong belief that Hulusi Akar would accept the leadership of the coup, or—as several defendants have persistently claimed—he was already part of the process. If the former is true, then upon his refusal, one would have expected him to be swiftly neutralized, at the very least imprisoned and rendered incapable of interfering with the process. Yet no such action was taken.

(d) The footage of Hulusi Akar being apprehended and taken to Akıncı Air Base that night is far from satisfactory. Despite the presence of numerous security cameras in the area where the Chief of General Staff's office is located, only a limited clip showing him being led down a staircase has been made public. In that footage, he is seen asking the non-commissioned officer—allegedly among those who detained him—for the cap he left in his office. The officer complies and retrieves it for him. ¹⁹ In other words, he is able to issue a direct order to someone purportedly detaining him, and that order is immediately fulfilled.

(e) At Akıncı Air Base, he reportedly continued to act with the authority of a commander in the base commander's office. According to his testimony, he even shouted at the coup plotters and insulted them in an attempt to dissuade them from continuing with their actions. He spoke with his wife over the phone and disclosed his location to her—again, by his own account. Defendant testimonies, however, go significantly further than this.

(f) Between 08:30 and 09:00 the next morning, he requested to speak with either the President or the Prime Minister and was connected to the Prime Minister. He was subsequently provided with a helicopter and transported to the Prime Ministry under VIP conditions. The question arises: Why was Hulusi Akar released at all, and more importantly, why was he transported to a location of his choosing under such privileged circumstances? On the same day, other generals—including Akın Öztürk, who was accused of being the ringleader—were detained and subjected to such severe torture that the images were circulated by state-controlled media. Given that the conditions of those imprisoned have not changed even eight years later, it is clear that no negotiation or deal has been made. As he stated, it appears he was released unconditionally by the coup plotters. Unless he maintained a chain-of-command relationship with them—that is, unless he was the actual decision-maker—this release defies logic.

(g) During the coup attempt, Zekai Aksakallı, then-commander of the Special Forces, openly accused Hulusi Akar in his court testimony. ²⁰ Aksakallı stated: “In crisis situations, the first order issued in the Turkish Armed Forces is that no personnel are to leave the barracks. Had this fundamental and simple rule been followed, the coup attempt would have been exposed from the beginning.” In saying so, Aksakallı directly accused Akar of dereliction of duty. Considering Akar did issue orders to ground all aircraft and helicopters and prevent tanks from leaving their bases, his failure to give this most basic order appears highly suspicious.

(h) Moreover, this was not a matter of discretionary judgment. Article 647 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Regulations—a principal legal framework governing all TSK activities—explicitly states: “In the event that a rebellion or coup is likely to occur, all military personnel are to remain in the barracks.” In the most charitable interpretation, he should be held accountable for neglect of duty. Yet far from being charged, he has not even been summoned as a witness before the courts.

(i) Despite issuing operational orders out of concern that a coup might take place—including closing the entire country’s airspace as of 19:05—he did not inform the President or the Prime Minister. Not only did he fail to notify his superiors, but he also did not attempt to warn the commanders of the Navy, Air Force, or Special Forces, all of whom were attending weddings in different locations that evening. Meanwhile, he continued calmly signing documents in his office, as if everything were normal. It was almost as if he were waiting in his office for the coup plotters to arrive and detain him.

(j) These actions are not those of someone in a position of responsibility facing the threat of a coup that could cost lives—including his own. His remarkably calm demeanor, coupled with his passive and unmotivated response to informing superiors or attempting to prevent the coup, reinforces allegations that he was in fact, orchestrating events from behind the scenes.

(3) Another figure whose actions on the night of July 15 were among the most perplexing was National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Undersecretary Hakan Fidan.

(a) At approximately 14:30, an officer from the Army Aviation Command arrived at the MİT headquarters and reported that a group of soldiers planned to assassinate or abduct the MİT Undersecretary using three helicopters.

(b) In response, the MİT Undersecretary first dispatched his deputy to the General Staff Headquarters. Following inter-agency discussions and upon the Chief of General Staff’s request, the MİT Undersecretary personally went to the General Staff Headquarters at 18:00. There, he stated, “This incident might be part of a larger operation,” openly expressing his suspicion of a potential coup. 21 Despite harboring such suspicions, it is difficult to understand why he would willingly enter a military headquarters that could easily serve as the command center of a coup, and where he could be easily detained or assassinated. As the head of an intelligence agency, one would expect him to act with heightened caution and skepticism. His reckless visit to a location that could naturally serve as the nerve center of a coup not only endangered himself but also placed the Chief of General Staff, Hulusi Akar, in a similarly questionable light.

The Supreme Criminal Court’s reasoned decision notes that “Hakan Fidan left the General Staff Headquarters at 20:22, while at the same time, 33 Special Forces personnel gathered at the 4th Main Jet Base and departed by bus en route to the General Staff Headquarters.” The fact that the coup plotters, whose key targets included the MİT Undersecretary, allowed him to freely leave the headquarters is another contradiction. Even

more so if, shortly afterward, they were preparing to send teams to the MİT compound via helicopter to kidnap or assassinate the same individual.

(c) While still at the General Staff Headquarters, the MİT Undersecretary called the President's chief of security to inquire about the unit's capability to respond to an armed assault. Yet, despite fearing for the President's safety, he did not inform the President, citing that he was "resting"—and never attempted to contact him again. 22 He also failed to inform his immediate superior, the Prime Minister, as well as the Minister of National Defense, the Minister of the Interior, or any other relevant cabinet members.

And normally, in the face of a possible coup attempt, the individuals who would be responsible for taking and implementing necessary state-level security measures are undoubtedly the President and the Prime Minister. In a post-coup interview, President Erdoğan himself stated, "Unfortunately, it is evident that there was an intelligence failure here," expressing his disappointment with how the events unfolded. 23

(d) Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, in an interview given one year later, stated that his first contact with the MİT Undersecretary occurred "between 22:30 and 23:00—maybe around 22:40." Notably, it was the Prime Minister who made the call. In the same interview, he remarked: "At that moment, he didn't say anything about a coup. I asked him, 'There's a coup underway, what are you doing?' He replied, 'No, nothing is happening, we're just working as usual.'" From a perspective of state operations, this is wholly unacceptable.

(e) There was an intelligence report regarding a possible assassination or abduction attempt targeting the MİT Undersecretary. He interpreted this as potentially being part of a broader operation—namely, a coup attempt. And yet, for reasons unclear, he did not feel the need to cancel his previously scheduled dinner that evening with the President of Religious Affairs and a Syrian opposition leader. As a result, at around 22:00, the President of Religious Affairs found himself caught at the MİT compound during the unfolding of the coup attempt. 25 This unusual situation also paved the way for the rare occurrence that night of mosques broadcasting the sela (call to prayer) across the country until dawn.

(4) A third figure who failed to act decisively, despite being in a position to intervene early and potentially prevent the coup attempt on the night of July 15, and who persistently chose to remain passive, was Air Force Commander General Abidin Ünal. Although it may not seem so reasonable, elements of the Air Force played a central role in the coup attempt, or at the very least, that is the widely held accusation.

(a) On the night of the coup, Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal and his senior command staff were attending a wedding ceremony in Istanbul. While en route to the event, at 19:06, the Air Force Operations Center contacted him to inform him that all flights had been grounded and that orders had been issued to land all airborne aircraft. In response, he instructed that the order be executed. 26

(b) It must be emphasized that such a situation is among the most critical an Air Force Commander could ever face. The closure of national airspace directly indicates a potential crisis or threat specific to the air force. In such a scenario, the commander is expected to

immediately seek clarity on the situation and determine the nature of the crisis. Together with the Chief of the General Staff, he holds both decision-making and operational authority in any air force-related emergency. Therefore, the expected course of action would have been to contact either the Chief of the General Staff or the Armed Forces Command Operations Center, which had relayed the order. Based on the information obtained, he might have needed to issue further directives or recall the Air Force command staff, who had gathered for the wedding, back to their posts.

(c) However, he did not even feel the need to contact any higher authority until 20:30, treating the order as if it were an ordinary routine instruction. Not only did he fail to contact his superiors, but he also did not inform his subordinates of this critical order. For example, Lieutenant General Mehmet Şanver, the second-in-command of the Air Force and present at the same wedding, later stated that he only learned of the order between 19:30 and 20:00 through a phone call from his deputy, Lieutenant General Ziya Kadioğlu. In his post-coup book, Şanver recounts that upon receiving the information, he immediately dispatched his deputy to the Combined Air Operations Center (BHBM) in Eskişehir, which manages air operations.

But, subsequently, when he informed Air Force Commander Abidin Ünal of the situation, Ünal allegedly told him that “at this stage, there is no need for him to go; ask him to return.” 27 This indicates that Ünal not only remained inactive and withheld critical information but also deliberately obstructed others from taking preventive measures upon learning of the situation independently. Furthermore, Şanver noted that during this exchange, “I realized from his tone that the Air Force Commander was fully aware of everything.” 28 Up to that moment, Abidin Ünal had still not informed the Combat Air Force Commander, who was with him at that time and in effect, commanded all the F-16s flying that night—of the situation.

(d) Although in his witness statement included in the Supreme Criminal Court’s reasoned verdict, Abidin Ünal claimed that he had personally dispatched Lieutenant General Kadioğlu, 29 this is refuted in Mehmet Şanver’s book. It appears likely that Ünal made this claim in an attempt to justify—or at least obscure—the otherwise inexplicable and passive stance he had adopted. He seems aware of the irrationality of his actions.

(e) At 22:10, upon learning of jets flying over Ankara, he recognized that a coup attempt was underway, and by 23:50, he realized that coup plotters had arrived to apprehend him. For nearly two hours, the Air Force Commander remained in a public wedding hall, well-known and completely vulnerable, as if waiting to be detained. 30 That he was one of the primary targets is beyond doubt. Şanver stated that he asked Ünal about the whereabouts of his plane, and upon learning it was at Atatürk Airport, advised that it be transferred to the more accessible Sabiha Gökçen Airport. 31 In other words, even after being implicitly advised to leave the area, Ünal stubbornly refused to leave the wedding venue.

(f) Later, it was believed that Abidin Ünal was being held in a room at Akıncı Air Base. However, security footage broadcast by the media revealed otherwise. Footage captured in the corridor showed him acting with notable ease, including walking arm-in-arm with Akın Öztürk—allegedly the mastermind behind the coup. These images caused significant

discomfort. Ünal remarked, “What’s strange is that the only corridor with a camera was the one I was in. For some reason, there were no cameras in the area where the Akıncı Base Commander’s office, the room holding the Chief of General Staff, or the main coup plotters were located,” implicitly suggesting that similarly compromising footage of Hulusi Akar might also exist. 32

(6) The courses of action taken that night by the Chief of the General Staff, the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), and the Air Force Commander—figures who could have played a decisive role in preventing the coup attempt—cannot be brushed aside as mere “errors in judgment.” Their behavior suggests not negligence, but a deliberate effort to allow the coup attempt to proceed unhindered until its planned initiation time, despite it being a preventable event.

The MİT Undersecretary, in an act that seems to deny the very purpose of his existence, failed to inform either the President or the Prime Minister, both primary targets of the coup, about the unfolding situation. The Chief of the General Staff could have prevented the coup with a simple order such as “do not leave your posts,” yet he remained unresponsive, even in the face of a clear legal obligation under the Armed Forces Internal Service Regulation. The Air Force Commander, despite receiving what was arguably the most critical order of his career—the closure of national airspace—did not attempt to assess the situation or take countermeasures against potential threats. On the contrary, he inexplicably chose to remain at the wedding venue until he was finally detained.

(7) Therefore, all three individuals should have been subject to a thorough investigation. Yet not only were they never investigated—they were not even summoned as witnesses. Initially, in an apparent attempt to pacify public backlash, the President invoked the principle of “not changing horses midstream” and allowed them to remain in their posts. 33 Later, both the Chief of the General Staff and the MİT Undersecretary were rewarded with ministerial appointments. Even assuming they acted in complete good faith, their failure to prevent the coup is evident. The fact that they were explicitly protected despite this failure implicates their superiors as well, drawing them into the orbit of allegations regarding a “controlled coup” or a “setup.”

(8) At the time, Metin Gürak was serving as Commander of the 4th Corps and the Ankara Garrison. Upon receiving an alert, he was ordered by Hulusi Akar to inspect the tanks at the Armored School and Training Division Command. Accordingly, Gürak visited the unit, met with the unit commander, and issued warnings against moving the tanks. However, he did not feel the need to issue similar warnings to the 28th Mechanized Brigade under his direct command. It was from this brigade that the tanks, which later rolled through the streets of Ankara, were deployed.

It was previously stated that Metin Gürak interpreted the gunfire heard from the General Staff Headquarters, communicated by the Ankara Governor, as a terrorist attack. However, certain details cast doubt on the sincerity of this claim. First, it is highly uncharacteristic for an experienced officer to drive toward what he believes to be a terrorist attack site in an official vehicle marked with military insignia and a visible command pennant. Upon arrival at the security gate, he ignored instructions to stop, exited the vehicle, and—despite being warned

“Get in the car or we’ll shoot”—continued walking in plain view under a searchlight. He forcibly opened the pedestrian entrance despite repeated threats. His behavior suggests he was not heading toward what he believed to be a real danger zone, but rather somewhere he knew he would not be harmed. In fact, he appeared to be deliberately placing himself in a situation where he could be forcibly detained—perhaps to avoid future prosecution for the tanks deployed from his own unit. 34

Interestingly, Metin Gürak was also listed in the coup plotters’ assignment document as the incoming Commander of Military Medical Services. Had he not “ensured” his own detention that night, he could easily have been implicated for both the tanks deployed from his brigade and his named role in the coup’s internal appointments. Instead, no such consequence was imposed—he was later promoted, eventually ascending to the position of Chief of the General Staff.

(9) Another commander whose actions appeared as though he was deliberately attempting to get himself detained was Land Forces Commander General Salih Zeki Çolak. Çolak was returning from an inspection assignment at the Army Aviation Command, where signs of a possible coup attempt had been observed. His aide-de-camp warned him at the southern gate of the General Staff Headquarters that there were individuals lying on the ground and that the area was unsafe, suggesting instead that they go to the Army War College. However, Çolak insisted on returning and entered the General Staff compound. 35 He behaved as if he had not just returned from investigating a potential uprising. Despite witnessing abnormalities inside the headquarters and not having established direct contact with the Chief of the General Staff, he appeared to force his way inside. According to his own statement, he entered the premises assuming the heavy gunfire was the result of a terrorist attack.

Moreover, he was one of the most important commanders in the Turkish Armed Forces and would be expected to assume overall command in the absence of the Chief of the General Staff. In a true terrorist scenario, it is obvious that he himself would be a primary target. His behavior, which lacks any rational explanation, naturally invites interpretations suggesting that he was deliberately seeking to be detained. 36

(10) The government’s continued efforts, eight years after the event, to keep “coup plotters” as a constant topic in public discourse no longer appears sincere. In reality, it does not seem particularly disturbed by the coup plotters themselves. For example, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which is now a coalition partner in government and was one of the most vocal in condemning the July 15 coup attempt from the beginning, has deep historical ties to military interventions. The MHP’s founder and undisputed leader, even posthumously, Alparslan Türkeş, was himself one of the 1960 coup plotters. As a staff colonel, Türkeş was the very person who read the 1960 military coup declaration over the radio. 37

(11) For those who argue that elements were lured into a trap, a key question remains: how did ordinary civilians manage to mobilize so quickly and pour into the streets to resist the coup? While even top state officials struggled to reach one another, the public seemingly took spontaneous initiative and positioned themselves in front of armed tanks. This took place in a society that, up until that day, had experienced military coups roughly every ten years and had

grown accustomed to living under constitutions written by coup regimes, without necessarily viewing coup plotters as problematic.

(12) It is not normal for a society so deeply accustomed to a coup culture to suddenly mobilize in mass the moment they hear of a coup attempt. It is as anomalous as the MIT Undersecretary having dinner that night with the President of Religious Affairs and a Syrian opposition leader. Below are a few excerpts from media coverage regarding the activities of civil society organizations and the mobilization of the public, which may help illustrate how the public was directed during that critical night.

(a) Ümit Özdağ, Chairman of the Victory Party, has publicly shared details of a conversation he had on a flight with Adnan Tanrıverdi, founder of SADAT (International Defense Consultancy). According to Özdağ, when he asked Tanrıverdi whether it was SADAT who organized the buses and trucks that were placed in front of military units on the night of July 15, Tanrıverdi smiled and nodded in confirmation. Continuing the conversation, Tanrıverdi reportedly said, “In fact, we had already been working with civilians on a plan to seize control of military units. When they got wind of this, some counter-training was conducted to prevent civilians from taking over the bases.” 38 This statement clearly suggests that SADAT played a role in orchestrating civilian actions on the streets and in relation to military units that night. Considering that just one month after the coup attempt, Tanrıverdi was appointed as a chief advisor to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, these claims further reinforce the need for a thorough investigation into the “setup” hypothesis. 39

(b) Professor Dr. Nevzat Tarhan, known for his proximity to the ruling government, also provides notable insights about that night on his personal website: “When we talk about NGOs, there is an invisible group of heroes. ASDER (Association of Justice Defenders), composed of approximately 1,000 retired soldiers who were themselves victims of past coups, took action. These individuals organized civilian resistance by cutting fuel lines, disabling tank periscopes, jamming tank treads, and persuading the soldiers.” 40

It is also worth noting that Adnan Tanrıverdi, founder of SADAT, served as the president of ASDER between 2004 and 2009 and was later named honorary president by the new leadership. 41

(c) Retired Colonel Kemal Mete, Deputy Chair of ASDER’s Kayseri branch, elaborated on their role in street operations:

“My fellow ASDER members—retired soldiers—taught civilians how to disable a tank, where to cut the fuel line, and how to reason with the soldiers. Very quickly, abandoned tanks filled the streets, especially in Istanbul but also across Anatolia.” This provides a direct indication of ASDER’s role in the civilian coordination seen that night. 42

(d) Retired Colonel Mustafa Hacımustafaoğulları, ASDER’s Vice President, later stated in a televised interview: “We implemented ASDER’s coup prevention plan that night. And we proudly declare it.” 43 Such a statement serves as clear evidence that civilian mobilization during the coup attempt was orchestrated by organized groups.

(e) On the BBC Turkish website, various reports citing different sources indicate that thousands of Syrian refugees in Turkey also took to the streets on the night of the coup attempt in support of President Erdoğan. One of these reports quoted an individual as saying: “Someone called me and said, ‘Our men are in position.’ When I asked what they were mobilizing for this time, the answer was, ‘To protect Erdoğan from the coup plotters’ tanks.” 44 This supports claims that Syrian opposition groups were also acting in a coordinated manner, likely under direction.

(13) Numerous reports prepared by United Nations experts contain allegations that Syrian opposition fighters were used by Turkey in regions such as Nagorno-Karabakh 45 and Libya 46. These reports indicate that the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) has acquired substantial experience in deploying Syrian militants globally.

Ultimately, this is the same MIT Undersecretary who, in a meeting attended by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff and the Foreign Minister, proposed launching missiles onto Turkish territory as a pretext for war with Syria. In a leaked audio recording of the meeting, the Undersecretary is heard saying: “If necessary, I would send four men to Syria. I’ll have them fire eight missiles into Turkey to create a casus belli. We would even orchestrate an attack on the Süleyman Shah Tomb.” 47 Given this precedent, it seems entirely plausible—even likely—that during the coup attempt, MIT could have used Syrian opposition fighters and affiliated NGOs to manipulate public sentiment and mobilize civilians into the streets.

(14) In fact, even a simple review of the Ankara Police Department’s radio communications from that night would be enough for any observer to realize that events were not unfolding in a normal manner. The police radio was filled with directives to involve civilians in the events, encouraging them to act as human shields against military units, including tanks, and even to engage in confrontation with soldiers. The following are just a few examples of the many such transmissions:

“All units, direct our citizens to the General Staff Headquarters, the Land Forces Command, and the Air Base in Etimesgut. Also, direct them to the Army Aviation School. Citizens are to neutralize any soldiers, regardless of rank, and inform us.”

“HQ: Civilian friends within police buildings should blend into the crowds without identifying themselves as police. Support the citizens, copy that.”

“HQ: Understood, sir. Apparently, soldiers opened fire on the citizens, and they fled. If they regroup, we will direct them again, copy that.”

“If you can mobilize citizens, we’ll move in through them. Advise our teams not to become isolated targets.”

“HQ: In front of Province Building 11, ammunition arriving as reinforcement is being distributed without ID checks. Citizens are also taking ammunition. Let’s issue a warning—we’ve already made the necessary announcements, but distribution continues. Citizens are taking ammo from the supplies there.” And these examples represent just a small sample; dozens of similar transmissions can be cited, all indicating a deliberate attempt to direct and weaponize civilian involvement that night. 48

(15) It would not be inaccurate to state that the police were directed—and even pushed beyond the bounds of legality—on that night through such announcements. Indeed, Article 1 of the Law on Police Duties and Authorities clearly states that: "The police shall protect public order, public and private safety, the inviolability of property, and the sanctity of the home. It shall safeguard the honor, life, and property of the public and ensure public peace." In contrast, the police announcements instructing civilians to enter military zones and avoid being "the sole target" plainly show that civilians were used as human shields. Furthermore, deploying civilians into military zones and assigning them the task of capturing all military personnel, regardless of rank, endangers both the civilians and uninvolved military staff.

Article 2/1 of the European Convention on Human Rights, under the title "Right to life," stipulates: "Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally, save in the execution of a sentence of a court following his conviction of a crime for which this penalty is provided by law." Subsection 2/2 lists exceptions to this rule, and clause 2/2-c specifically notes that: "Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary... in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection." However, using civilians as human shields or orchestrating direct confrontations between armed soldiers and unarmed civilians cannot be justified by any law. Moreover, at the time, military barracks remained designated as restricted military zones, still housing thousands of innocent soldiers who were unaware of the events. Encouraging civilians to enter these premises forcibly constitutes a direct threat to both civilian and military lives. Given the evident unlawfulness of these practices, they clearly constitute a violation of Article 2/2-c.

(16) It is also unlikely that these announcements—clearly in breach of legal norms—were the independent actions of well-trained officers or local police command. Rather, it appears that the police were following directives issued by higher authorities. A year later, in a televised interview, the Prime Minister stated that he had received no information from the head of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), and went on to say:

(a) He had formed his initial opinion on the coup attempt by consulting with the President and synthesizing the limited information he had received from law enforcement, noting that his interpretation might have been right or wrong at the time.

(b) They concluded that it was an attempt by a FETÖ-linked faction within the military but did not immediately disclose this publicly to avoid speculation that "they already knew about it."

(c) He had asked the leader of the opposition to call his supporters into the streets and, when the latter expressed security concerns, responded: "The people will ensure their own security." 49

Through these remarks, the Prime Minister essentially admits that he had already determined who the "enemy" was in his mind and was attempting to use the coup attempt as a pretext to target them. Stripping away the rhetoric from his statements reveals that there was no significant opposing force or counter-power from the very beginning. In fact, to suppress

the coup attempt, he used the very fighter jets that he insinuated were aligned with the putschists. He portrayed the delay in arming the aircraft and concerns about striking residential areas as forms of resistance against him. Though the police already controlled the streets, he still called the entire population to take to the streets as well. It seems as though an immense national mobilization was staged against an adversary that was, in reality, quite feeble.

The events appeared so artificial that U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, after his meeting with Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, told the press: "While events were unfolding, we couldn't tell whether it was real or just an internet game—whether it was serious or not."⁵⁰ Furthermore, Yıldırım's statement in response to journalists asking whether there was a project he regretted getting involved in—"The project I didn't like was July 15"—sparked widespread public debate.⁵¹

(17) Immediately after the first gunshots were heard, the police began taking precautionary measures at all locations, including in front of the General Staff Headquarters. In that case, why was there a need to manipulate and draw civilians into the events at the cost of so many civilian lives? When looking at the indecisive, visibly confused, and significantly outnumbered military units moving hesitantly through the streets, the answer becomes clear. It is likely that the intention was to portray the military mobilization that night as a large-scale, brutal coup attempt and civilian massacre, in an effort to gain both national and international legitimacy.

At a moment when everyone was fighting for their lives, a police radio broadcast issued the following announcement: "Friends, share pictures on social media of civilians standing on top of the captured tanks."⁵² If this was indeed a "trap," it appears that those who wrote the script had not neglected to gather the necessary propaganda material for the public relations phase that was to follow. Immediately after that night, the media began narrating how a massive and treacherous coup attempt had been thwarted thanks to the resistance of ordinary citizens. Exaggerated and often fabricated narratives soon became part of daily conversation. For example, a former AKP Member of Parliament, now a university professor, stated on a widely watched national television program: "On the night of July 15, people became martyrs by headbutting low-flying F-16s from the 11th floor."⁵³

(18) Following the coup attempt, which reportedly involved around 5,000 individuals, a large-scale purge process was launched, resulting in the dismissal of approximately 125,000 public servants. It has been claimed that, including the private sector, this number exceeded 400,000. ⁵⁴ The mass dismissal of such a large number of people via emergency decrees (KHKs) without encountering significant resistance would only have been possible in the aftermath of a coup attempt. Viewed from this perspective, President Erdoğan's remark that the coup attempt was "a gift from God" ⁵⁵ appears to refer precisely to this context. The climate of fear created by mass dismissals and imprisonments enabled the President to restructure the legislative, executive, and judicial branches without meaningful opposition.

(19) Significant contradictions can be observed in the official timelines of the events of that night. One such example is the conflicting statements made by President Erdoğan regarding the exact time he learned about the coup, which he claims to have first heard about

from his brother-in-law. His citing of drastically different times across various platforms has become one of the key factors fueling skepticism toward the nature of the coup attempt and the President's actions during those critical hours.⁵⁶

(20) The judicial proceedings following the events were also marked by highly controversial practices. Thousands of military personnel were convicted on the basis of insufficient investigations and fabricated or coerced evidence. A particularly contentious tool used during these purges was an application called "FETÖMETRE," developed by an admiral in the Turkish Armed Forces. Based on the results generated by this tool, thousands of TSK members were accused of being covert members of the FETÖ organization. This application—utterly lacking in legal grounding and described by some as primitive—contained 70 main and 249 sub-criteria, many of which could be considered crimes against humanity under international law. ⁵⁷ It facilitated mass purges based on absurd criteria such as depositing money into a legal bank, scores obtained in university or foreign language exams, career progression, or even engagement and wedding photos. Scoring systems derived from these criteria were used as the foundation for eliminating targeted individuals, clearly as part of a political and institutional purge. The existence and use of such tools lend weight to claims that the coup attempt was, at least in part, orchestrated or exploited as a trap to justify premeditated purges and systemic restructuring ⁵⁸

(21) Following the initial wave of mass dismissals, a significant portion of the remaining personnel were gradually discharged in a planned manner. Notably, many of the staff officers—80 percent of whom were ultimately expelled—continued to serve for an extended period despite allegations of affiliation or connection with FETÖ. Furthermore, some of these individuals were directly involved in the planning and coordination of cross-border military operations, which are typically beyond the access of an average officer. Even more strikingly, nine pilots who were prosecuted shortly after the coup attempt on charges of FETÖ membership were deployed in critical domestic and international counterterrorism operations, including ongoing campaigns in Syria, while their trials were still underway. ⁵⁹ Had these pilots truly been "traitors," as alleged, it would have been entirely possible for them to target friendly forces. The fact that such high-risk personnel were entrusted with the most sensitive missions, despite the potential dangers, supports the argument that the narrative of "FETÖ members being traitors" is fabricated and was, in fact, part of a psychological warfare campaign against the Gülen group.

Indeed, within military protocol, even mere intelligence-based suspicions of treachery—let alone ongoing legal proceedings—are generally sufficient grounds for removing personnel from critical duties. Yet, many of those falling under this category continued to serve in some of the state's most sensitive operational roles. Simultaneously, a propaganda campaign portraying all dismissed personnel as traitors was propagated to the public. This dual approach lends further credibility to claims that a trap was being orchestrated.

(22) In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the Parliamentary Coup Investigation Commission, which initially appeared to serve the role of distributing hope, failed to complete its report within the three-month period and did not request an extension. Ultimately, the report

was entered into the parliamentary records without legal standing. 60 Both the Speaker of the Parliament and the Chairman of the Commission—members of the ruling party—blamed each other for the outcome. However, the real reason likely lies in the concern that such an extensive report might include dissenting evidence, interpretations, and statements, thereby opening official narratives to public scrutiny and debate.

d. Trials Related to the Coup Attempt/Attempted Coup

(1) Coup Attempts Led by Talat Aydemir

(a) Dissatisfied with the outcomes of the 1960 military coup, then-Commander of the Turkish Military Academy, Colonel Talat Aydemir, and his associates attempted two separate coups in 1962 and 1963. In both instances, centered around the involvement of Military Academy cadets as key actors, the attempts failed. Following the first failed coup attempt, Colonel Talat Aydemir and his associates were retired from active duty. On the same day, the cadets of the Military Academy were granted a 20-day leave, and officers from the units involved in the attempted coup under Aydemir's command were placed on temporary compulsory leave. A year later, Aydemir and his group made a second attempt at a coup, which led to legal proceedings carried out by two martial law courts.

(b) In this context, the 1st Martial Law Court tried 126 individuals. Seven were sentenced to death, 29 received life imprisonment, and 71 were sentenced to various prison terms. Nineteen individuals were acquitted. Upon appeal, the Military Court of Appeals upheld the death sentences for Talat Aydemir and three of his associates, life sentences for 15 individuals, and prison sentences ranging from 4 to 15 years for 29 others. The remaining convictions were overturned.

(c) The indictment prepared within the scope of the proceedings of the 2nd Martial Law Court stated that Military Academy cadets had been involved in the attempted coup after being persuaded by Talat Aydemir and his followers. Of the 1,459 cadets on trial, 75 were sentenced to 4 years and 2 months in prison, and 91 were sentenced to 3 months. The court acquitted 1,293 military cadets. Those who were acquitted were considered on leave for a period and subsequently resumed their education at the Military Academy. Following appeals, the verdicts for 10 of the 75 cadets sentenced to 4 years and 2 months were overturned. 61

(2) The Military Coup of September 12, 1980

(a) Following the military coup of September 12, 1980—whose consequences are still felt today—the constitution drafted by the coup leaders was approved in a referendum held on November 7, 1982, with 91.37% of the vote in favor.

(b) The provisional Article 15 of the Constitution, which stipulated that members of the National Security Council could not be prosecuted, was abolished 30 years later through a referendum held on September 12, 2010. Following criminal complaints filed against those responsible for the coup and those who implemented their orders, legal proceedings were initiated against the Chief of General Staff at the time of the coup and later 7th President of the Republic, Kenan Evren, as well as the then Commander of the Air Force, General Tahsin Şahinkaya.

(c) Evren and Şahinkaya were convicted on two counts: first, for attempting to abolish or prevent the functioning of the Constitution and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey through the memorandum they delivered to the Prime Minister on December 21, 1979; and second, for forcibly altering, abolishing, or suspending the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and dissolving or obstructing the functioning of the Grand National Assembly on September 12, 1980. They were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment. With discretionary mitigation, these sentences were reduced to life imprisonment.

(d) While the appeal process was ongoing at the 16th Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation, Evren died at the age of 98 on May 10, 2015, at the Gülhane Military Medical Academy, and Şahinkaya died at the age of 90 on July 9, 2015. The Court of Cassation subsequently ruled to dismiss the case due to the deaths of the defendants during the appeal review. 62

(3) The February 28 “Postmodern” Coup

(a) A military intervention, later referred to in Turkish political history as the "postmodern coup," occurred following the decisions and actions taken during the National Security Council (MGK) meeting on February 28, 1997. This intervention ultimately led to the resignation of the legitimate government. Prior to this, on February 4, 1997, a convoy of 20 tanks and 15 armored vehicles conducted a maneuver through the town of Sincan, widely perceived as a show of force by the coup plotters.

(b) As part of the ensuing legal proceedings, 103 individuals were indicted on charges of "participating in the forcible overthrow or attempted overthrow of the Government of the Republic of Turkey," with prosecutors seeking aggravated life imprisonment.

(c) The reasoned judgment of the court noted that the deployment of tanks in Sincan was deemed an action "suitable for forcibly toppling the 54th Government of the Republic of Turkey," referencing the movement of tanks and armored vehicles through the busy streets of the town.

(d) On April 13, 2018, the Ankara 5th High Criminal Court delivered its verdict: 21 defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment. Due to the death of 4 defendants and the expiration of the statute of limitations in the cases of 10 others, those

proceedings were dismissed. A total of 68 defendants were acquitted. 63 In July 2021, the Court of Cassation upheld the life sentences of 14 of the convicted individuals. Most recently, in May 2024, President Erdoğan issued a decision to remit the remaining prison sentences of the incarcerated individuals, based on reports from the Forensic Medicine Institute citing “permanent illness” and “advanced age” as grounds for clemency. 64

(4) The April 27, 2007 E-Memorandum

(a) During the 2007 presidential elections held in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), the then Chief of the General Staff issued a statement on the official website of the General Staff opposing the ruling party’s presidential candidate. He later confirmed that he had personally authored the statement. The final paragraph of the statement read as follows:

“In summary, anyone who opposes the understanding of our Republic’s founder, the great leader Atatürk—‘How happy is the one who says I am a Turk!’—is an enemy of the Republic of Turkey and shall remain so. The Turkish Armed Forces maintains its unwavering determination to fully fulfill its duties, clearly assigned by law, to protect these principles. Its commitment and belief in this determination are absolute.” 65

(b) The government described the statement as a memorandum issued against it, and a counter-statement was released in response; however, the Chief of the General Staff remained in his position. Five days after the publication of the statement, Prime Minister Erdoğan and General Yaşar Büyükanıt held a private meeting lasting 135 minutes, the content of which has remained undisclosed to this day.

An investigation into Büyükanıt regarding the e-memorandum was only initiated five years later. The investigation, launched in 2012 in response to complaints, was closed following the death of Yaşar Büyükanıt—the sole suspect in the case—on November 21, 2019. 66

(5) The July 15 Coup Attempt and Its Comparison with Previous Cases

(a) As of July 2024, in the context of the July 15 coup attempt trials, first-instance courts across Turkey have rendered verdicts in 289 actual coup cases involving a total of 8,725 individuals. Within this scope, 1,634 defendants were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment, 1,336 to life imprisonment, 1,891 to fixed-term prison sentences, while 2,870 were acquitted, and in the cases of 964 defendants, the courts ruled there was no ground for punishment. 67

(b) A comparison between the July 15 trials and previous coup trials reveals significant inconsistencies. In earlier trials, those who acted under orders or were persuaded by their superiors were judged separately, often receiving very light

sentences or being acquitted altogether. Even when their participation in the coup was established, the military principle of absolute obedience, central to military service, was taken into consideration, and the actions of subordinates were distinguished from those who led the coup.

In contrast, in the July 15 trials, the most severe punishments were imposed on subordinates for actions that, on the surface, appeared entirely service-related and carried no inherent suspicion, such as continuing duty after working hours, reporting for duty upon being called, wearing training uniforms, or transferring under orders. These cases were judged with strained interpretations, ignoring military procedures and conventions. Individuals were designated as members of the so-called "Peace at Home Council" based solely on evaluative assumptions, despite the lack of any concrete evidence or documentation. Furthermore, convictions were handed down based on arguments detached from operational realities, such as suggesting that soldiers should have ceased all activity upon learning of the coup attempt through social media.

(c) Notably, while 8,725 people were tried after July 15 and 4,891 of them convicted, in all previous coup trials combined, only 1,690 individuals were prosecuted, with just 223 convicted. These figures alone indicate that judges presiding over the July 15 trials acted with a clear punitive motive.

(d) The purge of judges and prosecutors initiated in parallel with the coup attempt is also noteworthy. In an interview with a newspaper, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) Mehmet Yılmaz stated: "At 01:00 a.m. on the night of July 15 leading into July 16, we dismissed 2,740 members of the judiciary." 68 These dismissals took place merely hours after the coup attempt began. Rather than being driven by a pursuit of justice, these actions appear to have been aimed primarily at facilitating executive operations.

(e) However, despite the judiciary's apparent eagerness to punish as many individuals as possible, no investigation or prosecution was ever initiated against Hulusi Akar, who served as a First Lieutenant, or Binali Yıldırım, who served as a Second Lieutenant, during the September 12 military coup. Yet, it is undeniable that both followed orders issued by the coup leadership without objection, within the chain of command of that coup. According to the logic applied in the July 15 trials, both should have been prosecuted and convicted. In fact, that same logic would require identifying, trying, and sentencing every officer, noncommissioned officer, or enlisted soldier who was on active duty during the September 12 coup.

(f) Hulusi Akar also served during the February 28 "Postmodern" Coup as the private secretary to then-Chief of the General Staff General İsmail Hakkı Karadayı, who later became the primary defendant in the trial. Typically, a private secretary is responsible for organizing the daily schedule of their superior, drafting speeches, preparing public statements, and handling official communications. Interestingly, despite his role, Akar was not even called to testify as a witness during those proceedings. 69

(g) In Decision No. 33/2024 of the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concerning Akın Öztürk (Turkey), it is noted that the presiding judge of the 17th High Criminal Court—where the main trial related to July 15 was held—participated in a workshop organized by the Police Academy in October 2017. The decision states that the judge endorsed, without reservation, a conclusion from the workshop asserting that “it is not necessary to present concrete evidence when combating the Gülen Group, and if there is even the slightest suspicion, the State should take advantage of it.”

(h) Meanwhile, the prosecution report concerning the night of July 15—available in open sources—also warrants examination.⁷⁰ This report, which served as a basis for subsequent investigations, reveals how careless and even factually inaccurate the official narrative of that night was. The report, shown as a photo image in Annex-F, appears to have been signed at 01:00 on July 16. However, it describes many events that occurred after that time as if they had already taken place. For example, according to the Akıncı indictment, the first bombing of the Parliament occurred at 02:35—an hour and a half after the report was allegedly signed. Moreover, contrary to what is stated in the report, no one was killed in this bombing. Similarly, the deployment of soldiers to private television stations occurred about two hours after the report’s timestamp.

This report, which should have been seen as a scandal and made headlines, failed to receive media attention due to the climate of fear in Turkey. Only a few journalists acknowledged the report, and even then, they attempted to portray it as reasonable. One such journalist, Nedim Şener—known for his pro-government stance—recounted in his newspaper column a conversation he had with the prosecutor. The prosecutor claimed that he began drafting the report at 01:00 on July 16, completed and signed it at 07:00, and that the start time was mistakenly left as the only timestamp.⁷¹

The prosecutor’s explanation lacks credibility. If the issue were merely an oversight in not updating the completion time, it might have been understandable. However, considering that the report was drafted over a six-hour period and fails to include the timestamps of some of the night’s most critical events, it is difficult to attribute this to mere forgetfulness or carelessness. More troubling still, the report includes references to events that did not happen at all. For example, contrary to the report’s claims, the appointment list issued that night did not include any assignments to the Command of the Armed Forces or the Chief of General Staff. Furthermore, the Intelligence Department of the National Police was not bombed that night, despite the report’s assertion to the contrary.

Filled with incorrect information, lacking proper timing, and referring to events that never occurred, the report gives the impression that it was documenting anticipated fictional events rather than actual occurrences. It appears to have been hastily and chaotically compiled. Thus, the claims of a controlled coup and entrapment once again

prove to be highly serious and worthy of scrutiny. The most generous interpretation that can be offered regarding the report—laden with numerous inaccuracies—is that every investigation and review of that night was conducted with extreme negligence and raises deep suspicions. This is precisely why a legal regulation was introduced to grant legal, administrative, financial, and criminal immunity to all individuals, including civilians, who acted in the suppression of the events of July 15 or subsequent related actions. 72

6. Evaluation of the Chain of Command in Military Personnel

a. Assessment of Command and Subordination Relations

(1) As is well known, military service—unlike other forms of public service—requires more complete, more absolute, and more immediate obedience from individuals. In fact, it compels such obedience from soldiers. This is clearly stated in Article 14 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law, which provides: “A subordinate is obliged to show full respect to their commander and superior in accordance with general decorum and military procedures, to obey their superiors absolutely, and, in the cases specified in laws and regulations, to obey their higher-ranking officers unconditionally. A subordinate performs the assigned duties and carries out the orders given without delay or modification, and must not exceed their authority. The responsibility arising from the execution of the order lies with the person who issued it. Any manifestation, words, writings, or actions that threaten the sense of obedience shall be prohibited by penal sanctions.” This provision unequivocally emphasizes that the subordinate is obligated to obey their superior “absolutely,” must carry out the order promptly and without alteration, and is even prohibited from overstepping their authority.

(2) In addition, Article 10 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Regulation forbids even the act of “commenting on” an order, “murmuring” against it, or displaying behavior that might suggest disagreement with its correctness. The same regulation also includes the imperative provision: “An order received shall be executed without any reservation or condition and without engaging in any personal contemplation.” This underscores the obligatory nature of carrying out orders.

(3) Under military legislation, the responsibility imposed on the subordinate is limited to a formal assessment of whether the order was issued by a competent authority. If the person issuing the order holds the status of a “commander,” the principle of absolute obedience applies. If the person is merely a “superior,” then absolute obedience is limited to the circumstances defined in laws and regulations. Therefore, the subordinate must determine whether the person giving the order is a commander or a superior. If a commander, the subordinate must obey without question. If a superior, the subordinate must evaluate whether the superior is legally authorized to issue such an order; if so, absolute obedience again becomes mandatory.

(4) As can be understood from all these provisions, it is evident that military legislation precludes the subordinate from assessing the legal validity of an order. Any attempt to do so may result in the subordinate facing criminal or administrative sanctions. Given this particularity of military service, the exceptional provisions outlined above have been introduced accordingly.

b. Assessment of the Exception Clause

(1) The main provisions on this subject are found in the Constitution, the Turkish Penal Code (TPC), and the Military Penal Code. Within this framework:

(a) Article 137 of the Constitution states that a person who carries out an order that constitutes a criminal offense shall also be held liable. However, it goes on to specify that exceptions may be introduced by law in cases involving “the execution of military services.” Accordingly, the liability imposed on a subordinate who executes an unlawful order under Article 137 of the Constitution is subject to exceptions set forth in Article 24 of the TPC and Article 41 of the Military Penal Code.

(b) Article 24 of the TPC provides that a person who executes an unlawful order which is mandatory to fulfill due to duty-related obligations, or in cases where the law prevents the assessment of its legality, shall not be held criminally liable.

(c) Article 41/3-B of the Military Penal Code explicitly states that if an order concerning military service constitutes a criminal offense, the person giving the order shall be held liable for the commission of that offense. For the subordinate to be held responsible, it must be established that they were aware that the order related to an act intended to constitute a judicial or military crime.

(2) Under these provisions, if the order pertains to service-related matters, the person executing the order is, in principle, not criminally liable. All responsibility lies with the person who gave the order. Any order that does not possess a clearly special nature and whose criminal intent is not immediately apparent must be presumed to relate to service duties.

(3) If a subordinate is aware that an order was given with the intent to commit a crime and nevertheless carries it out, they will share liability for the resulting offense with the superior who issued the order. However, if the subordinate is unaware of the criminal intent behind the order, then they shall not bear responsibility. In such a case, only the superior who issued the order will be held accountable for the offense. Whether the crime is a military or judicial offense does not change the outcome. In either case, the subordinate can only be held liable if it is established that they knew the order was aimed at committing a crime.

(4) Furthermore, it must be clearly and unambiguously evident that the subject of the order constitutes a crime. For instance, an order given to a fighter jet pilot to bomb a mountain known to be a route heavily used by terrorists might constitute a criminal act. However, it would be impossible for the pilot, while actively flying the

aircraft, to investigate, evaluate, or discern this in the moment. Therefore, if the subject of the order is in fact a crime, the subordinate executing the order cannot be held criminally liable. Similarly, if a superior gives an order in the context of preventing or responding to a terrorist incident, and a crime occurs as a result of carrying out that order, the subordinate who carried it out cannot be held criminally responsible.

(5) Accordingly, for a subordinate who executes an order that constitutes a criminal offense to be convicted of that offense, judicial authorities must determine—based on concrete evidence—whether the subordinate was aware that the order's subject was criminal in nature. In other words, it must be conclusively established whether the subordinate had criminal intent. Otherwise, if the subordinate lacked such intent, they cannot be held criminally liable for the resulting offense.

Here, to know refers to actual, direct knowledge. Under the current legal framework, the possibility, foreseeability, or predictability of the order's criminal intent does not equate to knowledge. In other words, for the subordinate to be held accountable, it must be proven that they executed the criminal order knowingly and intentionally.

c. Evaluation of the Legal Concept of “Mistake”

(1) A subordinate who is aware that an order given by their superior in relation to military service concerns an act intended to constitute a crime may believe that there is a lawful justification rendering the wrongful act legitimate. In such cases, it becomes necessary to assess whether the subordinate bears criminal responsibility under the “mistake” provision stipulated in Article 30 of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC).

(2) It must be emphasized that the determination of whether the mistake was unavoidable should be examined from a subjective standpoint, specifically, in the context of the relationship between the superior and the subordinate. In this respect, the following factors may explain the subordinate's compliance with the order: the subordinate's personality, psychological state, hierarchical obligation to obey, a presumed belief (based on legislation and past experience) that orders from the superior would be lawful, their level of knowledge, training, age, rank, duty, and the social and cultural environment in which they operate. In such circumstances, the existence of a mistake may be recognized.

For this determination, the judge must investigate the individual circumstances and assess the matter in light of the specific facts. Considering the extent of the obligation to obey in military service and the unique nature of military duties, it is evident that cases involving “mistake” may be relatively common. Therefore, if a subordinate exercised all due diligence and care but still could not avoid falling into error, the mistake must be considered unavoidable.

(3) Indeed, the legislation states that any order given by a competent authority in relation to service must be carried out, and that the subordinate is obliged to obey even if the content of the order appears unlawful. However, if the order pertains to an act with a clearly criminal intent, and this is known by the subordinate, they must not carry out the order. In all other cases, the subordinate is required to comply. Accordingly, if the subordinate has doubts or misconceptions regarding the content of the order, they are expected to execute the order, and due to such a mistake, they will not bear criminal liability for doing so.

(4) However, during trials, courts have rendered judgments without adequately considering factors such as the subordinate's lack of experience, established military customs, the inherent trust in superiors based on legal and traditional grounds, the prevailing security environment, and heightened states of alert. In some cases, courts have imposed severe sentences based solely on speculative reasoning, such as "they should have realized from social media that these actions were part of a coup attempt." In reality, due to counterintelligence (CI) and operational security (OPSEC) requirements, all personnel—except for those specifically assigned to intelligence roles—are required to remain isolated from social media during military operations.

d. The Concept of Absolute Obedience in the Turkish Armed Forces

(1) Beyond the legal frameworks outlined above, the principle of absolute obedience is a deeply rooted and rigid tradition carried through Turkish military history. It is such a powerful sentiment that even a Turkish soldier unfamiliar with legal provisions inherently feels it with full intensity. If you approach anyone at any level within the Turkish military with a request that implies hesitation or doubt, it is highly likely that the response will not be "Is this legal?" but rather "Does the commander know about this?"

(2) Every soldier who joins the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) takes an oath. The form of this oath is stipulated in Article 37 of the Internal Service Law as follows: "In peace and in war, on land, at sea, and in the air, at all times and places, I swear on my honor to serve my nation and my republic with loyalty and affection, to obey the laws, regulations, and my commanders, and to consider the honor of military service and the glory of the Turkish flag dearer than my life, and to willingly sacrifice my life when necessary for the homeland, the Republic, and my duty." Obedience to superiors is clearly emphasized in this oath.

(3) The founding father of the Republic of Turkey and himself a soldier, Commander-in-Chief Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, highlighted the critical importance of obedience in military service in his work "Conversations with Officers and Commanders" with the following words: "In military service, every order must be executed. What at times may appear despotic and is referred to as absolute obedience, is in fact the foundation and guarantee of discipline and success in the military. The

reason is clear: military service is not merely about carrying out tasks—it is the art of commanding and leading people. It is only through such discipline that many individuals can be moved by the command of a single person. If even the slightest room were given for dissenting voices, it would be impossible for a major to assemble a thousand troops and lead them toward a target, especially when the mission involves risking their lives...”

(4) In conclusion, for the Turkish soldier, the principle of absolute obedience is not merely a legal obligation—it is a way of life. Every soldier takes their first step into military life by receiving basic training based on the KKT 164-15 Close Order Drill Manual. One of the very first subjects in this training is how to present oneself in response to a superior’s address. As part of this self-introduction, the soldier responds with “At your command, Commander!” (“Emret Komutanım”), a phrase that, over time, becomes internalized and transforms into a reflexive response to any order received throughout their service. While it may sound like motivational wording, Turkish soldiers have historically focused not on why an order cannot be fulfilled, but on how it can be carried out. Any contrary attitude has never been accepted.

e. Examples Related to the Concept of Absolute Obedience

(1) Atatürk’s Order During the Gallipoli Campaign

One of the most poignant and powerful examples of how the concepts of “obedience” and “willingly sacrificing one’s life when necessary”—as stated in the military oath—are put into practice is found in the Gallipoli Campaign during World War I. At a most critical moment in the battle, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk gave the 57th Regiment the following order: “I am not ordering you to attack; I am ordering you to die. In the time that passes until we die, other forces and commanders can take our place.” This order is memorized by nearly all Turkish officers and non-commissioned officers and is considered a fundamental benchmark in the training of subordinates. Indeed, nearly the entire 57th Regiment advanced toward death without hesitation upon receiving this command. It remains one of the clearest expressions of the absolute obedience and self-sacrifice expected in the Turkish Armed Forces.

(2) The Çiğiltepe Incident During the War of Independence

Another striking example of the critical importance of military orders in the Turkish Army, particularly during decisive moments, and the extent to which they must be fulfilled at any cost, is the Çiğiltepe Incident. On August 26, 1922, the Turkish Army launched the Great Offensive under the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to expel the Greek Army from Anatolia. Securing Çiğiltepe, a strategically vital position, was essential to the success of the operation. The unit responsible for this objective was under the command of Colonel Reşat Bey.

Despite multiple assaults, the position had not yet been captured. On the morning of August 27, Reşat Bey initiated another attack. At around 10:30, Mustafa Kemal called and said, “Colonel Reşat, I hope you are well. When will you reach your objective?” Reşat Bey responded, “Commander, we are very close to the objective. We will reach it within half an hour.” At 11:45, Mustafa Kemal called again, stressing the importance of capturing the hilltop. What followed was profoundly tragic.

Reşat Bey, having failed to fulfill his promise within the stated timeframe, left a note reading: “Since I was unable to fulfill my promise to capture that position within half an hour, as I pledged, I cannot continue to live.” He then took his own life. Shortly thereafter, the soldiers under his command successfully cleared Çiğiltepe of all enemy forces. Of course, not every commander who fails to fulfill an order commits suicide. However, this incident is viewed as a significant illustration of the perspective subordinate commanders hold regarding orders in the Turkish military. It reveals the weight of responsibility they bear and the depth of their commitment to obedience.⁷³

(3) The TCG Kocatepe Incident During the Cyprus Peace Operation

Although it ended in tragedy, one of the most notable examples illustrating the concept of absolute obedience occurred during the Cyprus Peace Operation, which began on July 20, 1974.

Intelligence was received indicating that a convoy of Greek naval vessels was heading toward Cyprus. Based on this information, the Naval Command confirmed that there were no Turkish ships in the area, and a decision was made to launch an attack on the supposed enemy vessels. However, the ships under attack soon realized that the aircraft attacking them were Turkish. The crews tried to establish contact with the pilots and convince them of their identity, even speaking in Turkish and identifying themselves as Turkish naval vessels, but to no avail. This was because the wartime command headquarters in Ankara suspected that the Greek forces might be engaging in deceptive tactics, such as flying the Turkish flag or using Greek operatives fluent in Turkish to mislead Turkish forces.⁷⁴ One of the pilots who bombed the TCG Kocatepe, Major Zeki Kılıç, recounted the event as follows:

“The order we were given was to sink all floating objects spotted in that area. So we bombed them. But during the attack, we heard a broadcast from one station claiming that our own ships were being bombed. It was instructing us to return. We asked for the password—he didn’t know it. We assumed it was a Greek ruse. I even cursed the man heavily over the radio. We sank the ship, but we had our doubts. On our second sortie, we learned the truth—but by then it was too late. We were devastated.”⁷⁵

While numerous factors may be cited as having contributed to this tragic event—the sinking of the TCG Kocatepe destroyer—the most critical takeaway is this: errors based on faulty intelligence and mistaken assumptions can occur at any time, at

any level, and under any condition. Moreover, during military operations, the most authoritative and trusted source of information for personnel on the ground is the command from their superiors. Any other information, particularly from outside sources, is approached with deep suspicion, especially in light of the possibility of deception or misinformation by enemy forces.

7. Evaluation Regarding Personnel and Activities Within the Scope of Drills and Terror Threat Notifications on July 15

a. Personnel who remained on duty or came to their units, and those who wore training uniforms to perform activities such as maintaining security, controlling entry and exit points, and standing guard;

(1) On July 15, 2016, particularly in units where increased activity was observed, it is evident that superiors issued orders to military personnel present in the units not to leave the premises “until further notice.” It should not be expected that subordinates receiving such an order would suspect any unusual circumstances. Personnel are accustomed to this type of order and will obey and carry it out without questioning it. In the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), which has long been engaged in counter-terrorism operations, such orders are quite common.

Orders to remain on duty can be issued for a broad range of reasons. For example, a last-minute night exercise, a scheduled command visit in the following days, or a compressed preparation timeline for an upcoming activity may all necessitate extended duty hours. Additionally, an after-action review to discuss corrective actions or a sudden briefing on safety precautions, or even a transportation issue with service vehicles, could lead to prolonged duty. It is not uncommon for a commander to order continued presence in the unit simply out of dissatisfaction with something.

From the perspective of intent, such an order is a service-related command. Moreover, an order to “remain in the barracks until further notice” or “stay in the unit as of that day” does not constitute an unlawful command by nature, nor does it present any indication that would require a subordinate to question its legitimacy.

(2) The situation of personnel who initially left the unit on July 15 but later returned for various reasons is essentially no different from that of those who remained. It is evident that the return of personnel to their units for reasons such as security concerns or in response to orders framed as drills was part of the execution of service-related directives. For TAF personnel, being called back to duty is entirely routine and could not reasonably be interpreted as a sign of an attempted coup.

(3) In fact, the activities and actions carried out under the framework of barracks security on that night can be considered among the most natural and unproblematic from both a security environment and legal standpoint. In the TAF, the issue of security is an integral part of all operations, as well as of base and headquarters functions. For this purpose, all units establish guard and security duties. Rapid Response Teams and Standby Units are organized to counter potential raids or attacks on units and barracks.

Alternative plans—including the deployment of such units in response to possible threat scenarios—are prepared. These plans are kept up to date through regular drills, and reaction times are minimized through both scheduled and surprise alerts.

(4) Article 33 of the Internal Service Law states that a standby unit (Hazır Kıtı) shall be maintained in every military barracks, while Article 85 indicates that, in extraordinary situations, the entire force may be designated as a standby unit. Article 650 of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) Internal Service Regulations stipulates that the ammunition of the standby unit shall be kept in a place and condition that allows for rapid and easy distribution, and in extraordinary circumstances, each non-commissioned officer and enlisted soldier shall carry an appropriate amount of ammunition. Furthermore, Article 647 states that, in the event of a likely coup or rebellion, an order may be issued requiring all soldiers to be present in the barracks.

(5) Additionally, under the section concerning the maintenance of public order in the same regulation, the "stand-to arms" (silah başına) procedure is addressed. Article 651 states that, in extraordinary situations, units may be ordered to stand to arms by the competent commander. Article 654 notes that implementation of this measure places the unit in a combat-ready state. Article 657 further indicates that units may be ordered to stand to arms several times a year for training purposes with various objectives.

(6) Moreover, during frequent drills and inspections, personnel may be alerted and called to the barracks through daytime or nighttime "ALARM" orders. Units are expected to prepare their vehicles, weapons, and ammunition in accordance with pre-defined loading plans within a specified time frame, and their performance is evaluated accordingly.

(7) Therefore, in an environment where expectations of terrorist acts against military installations have increased and security awareness is at its highest, calling some or all personnel to the barracks for security purposes must be regarded as a fully lawful practice. Accordingly, personnel returning to their barracks in compliance with such orders, wearing training uniforms, and performing guard duty or other tasks related to barracks security clearly do not act contrary to legal regulations or military customs and traditions.

(8) Furthermore, even if we were to assume, for the sake of a moment, that the intent of the individual issuing the order was to contribute to a planned coup attempt, it would not be possible for the personnel reporting for duty to be aware of such intent. Additionally, due to the prevailing security climate and the heightened threat of terrorism, military personnel are accustomed to being assigned to security-related tasks, and in accordance with the counterintelligence principle of "need-to-know," they operate with limited information. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to expect personnel to question or view their call to duty with suspicion.

b. Personnel who left their barracks under the scope of KOKTOD operations to intervene in or reinforce other military units or civilian institutions/organizations;

(1) The KOKTOD (Public Order Support Operation Plan) procedure is based on Article 11(d) of Law No. 5442, which allows governors to request assistance from the nearest land, naval, or air force command—including border units under the Land Forces Command—when public order incidents arise that cannot be contained using the available law enforcement resources. This practice has been in effect for many years.

(2) During such operations, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) units and personnel carry out their assigned duties by exercising the authorities granted under the Internal Service Law of the Turkish Armed Forces, in conjunction with the powers typically held by law enforcement to maintain public security.

(3) Following the coup attempt, a report dated October 31, 2016—submitted by the General Staff in response to a request from the Office of the Prosecutor and presented in full as Appendix G—includes the following summarized findings:

(a) The units assigned to KOKTOD duties prepared operation-specific plans and had them approved by higher commands,

(b) KOKTOD activities were carried out entirely within the framework of applicable legislation,

(c) Residential areas were assigned to units as designated responsibility zones,

(d) Although the use of foot patrols was the primary method, the deployment of armored units was also anticipated,

(e) Armored vehicles were to be employed based on a tank-infantry cooperation model,

(f) Units were to operate with their own organizational structure, personnel, and equipment,

(g) Special precautions were to be taken regarding the acquisition, transportation, and distribution of ammunition,

(h) The required readiness times varied from 30 minutes to several days,

(i) Psychological preparation was to be undertaken to withstand potential verbal or physical provocation at the scene,

(j) The use of firearms was permitted when specific conditions were met.

(4) Perhaps the most critical legal requirement for the legitimacy of KOKTOD operations is that the Governor must make a formal request for military support. Normally, such a request is directed to the Garrison Command or to command units designated by the General Staff. For example, as understood from the General Staff's

correspondence included in Appendix G, the designated authority for Ankara is the 4th Corps Command. In such a case, the request would be submitted to the 4th Corps Command and then transmitted through the chain of command to the relevant unit. Considering that the preparation time may be as short as 30 minutes, to minimize the disadvantages of any delay, it is likely that the operation would begin with a verbal order by phone, to be followed by a written order.

According to well-established military customs within the Turkish Armed Forces, when an operation that has already been planned and approved by a higher command receives a verbal execution order, questioning that order would be perceived as unwillingness or insubordination. In fact, such considerations would only apply to the unit commander; any questioning from lower-ranking personnel would be regarded as a breakdown of military discipline. Furthermore, the legal provision that states, “A Governor’s request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, such a request may initially be made verbally, provided that it is later formalized in writing,” eliminates any doubt about the legality or appropriateness of such actions.

(5) Under the framework of KOKTOD operations, which are based on Article 11(d) of Law No. 5442, the training and exercises conducted have heightened the state of alert among military personnel and developed a reflexive readiness to respond to possible civil disturbances. Approximately three weeks prior to the coup attempt, an amendment was made to the same law, adding Article 11(j), which provided for more extensive military intervention. This article authorized the Turkish Armed Forces to be deployed in counter-terrorism operations by a Presidential decree in cases where the general law enforcement forces were deemed insufficient. This amendment was published in the Official Gazette and entered into force just one day before the coup attempt.⁷⁶ As a result, the perception that terrorist incidents and the need for immediate response were imminent was reinforced, and the necessity of acting without hesitation in such cases was firmly instilled in the minds of personnel.

(6) In this context, it is evident that on July 15, units that were called to duty due to a terrorist threat and that were deployed under the KOKTOD framework—whether to other military installations or to civilian institutions/organizations in city centers for the purpose of implementing security measures—acted within the bounds of legality. During these duties, taking action to protect themselves or to control crowds, including the use of firearms when necessary, is likewise legally justified.

(7) Attempting to associate standard tactical procedures required by operational necessity with the coup attempt constitutes a strained and speculative interpretation. For example, the positioning of tanks arriving at the General Staff Headquarters has been construed as “targeting civilians,” even though such formations are consistent with all standard tactical field manuals. A review of even the basic KKT 17-15 Tank Platoon Manual shows that when a threat is expected from all directions, the tactical requirement is for tanks to be deployed in a 360-degree outward-facing formation. Units dispatched as a precaution against a potential terrorist threat followed this standard deployment, which is entirely natural and appropriate under the circumstances.

(8) The KKT 117-5 Manual (Training for Supporting Law Enforcement in Public Order Incidents) includes a table titled “Rules of Engagement Matrices and Legal Framework,” which clearly sets out the legal basis and conditions under which units deployed in this context may use force, including firearms.⁷⁷

c. Personnel who, under orders related to a terrorist threat or a drill, proceeded to assembly points, acted with a security motive to reinforce protection outside their assigned barracks, and wore training uniforms:

(1) There is no doubt that military personnel acting under this category—or those who claim to have acted similarly—were executing a service-related order. The issue lies in the extent to which this course of action aligns with standard procedures. The answer to this question is closely tied to how ordinary or extraordinary the prevailing circumstances were at the time.

(2) It is common practice for personnel to be assigned to the command of other units for a variety of reasons, particularly for supporting units involved in overseas operations or counter-terrorism missions. In some cases, orders may require participation on extremely short notice—something the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) is not unfamiliar with. Therefore, there was no apparent reason for personnel assigned to such duties to hesitate or suspect a coup attempt.

(3) Moreover, within the rigid legal framework governing military obedience and the principle of absolute compliance with orders, following commands to move to different barracks or assembly points should be regarded as a natural reflex. This is especially true if the movement is justified on sacred grounds such as protecting against terrorist acts—an objective for which one would be prepared to sacrifice one’s life. In such a context, any display of reluctance would be inconceivable.

(4) Furthermore, up to that day, there had been no prior warning, shared experience, or expectation among personnel that they could be unwittingly involved in a coup attempt in this manner. As such, associating an order given under the guise of a security or drill exercise with a coup attempt would not have been a natural or reasonable assumption. In fact, had no coup attempt taken place that night, questioning such an order would undoubtedly have been perceived as dereliction of duty.

(5) In conclusion, the orders issued were, in their formal aspects, entirely within the bounds of legality. Given the prevailing security environment, legal obligations, established military customs, and a general lack of prior experience with such scenarios, it is assessed that the personnel carried out these orders without questioning them. Moreover, as noted in the relevant section of the report, even if a service-related order were later found to involve unlawful conduct, unless the person executing the order was clearly aware of its criminal nature, legal liability would rest with the issuer, not the executor.

d. Evaluation of the Response to Unauthorized and Armed Individuals Entering Military Units

(1) It has been alleged that some military personnel, either under orders from their commanders or on their own initiative, opened fire on civilians, whether attempting to enter or already within the premises of military installations such as barracks, headquarters, institutions, or encampments, on the night of the incident.

(2) Article 5/1-a of Law No. 2565 stipulates that areas of vital importance for national defense may be designated as first-degree military prohibited zones by connecting points located at least 100 meters and up to 400 meters from the external boundaries of military facilities and regions. Article 7/1-b of the same law states that only personnel assigned to these areas, their family members, and other Turkish citizens expressly authorized by the competent military command may enter such zones.

(3) Similarly, Article 20/1-b provides that for military facilities not declared as first-degree land or sea military prohibited zones—including barracks, units, headquarters, institutions, encampments, as well as underwater and surface installations of the Armed Forces—military security zones may be established by connecting points located up to 400 meters from their outer boundaries. Article 21/c states that entry into these military security zones is restricted to personnel assigned to the area and individuals authorized by the competent command.

(4) Furthermore, Article 24 of Law No. 2565 prescribes penalties for those who damage, destroy, remove, or alter signs, fences, walls, ditches, or similar structures located within or on the boundaries of first-degree military prohibited zones. Article 25 provides that Turkish citizens who enter such zones without permission shall be subject to punishment, while Article 26 stipulates penalties for unauthorized entry into military security zones. In addition, Article 332 of the Turkish Penal Code criminalizes unauthorized, clandestine, or deceptive entry into locations restricted for reasons of military interest to the State.

(5) When the aforementioned legal provisions are considered collectively, it is clear that unauthorized entry by civilians, other than those working at or affiliated with military facilities such as barracks, headquarters, institutions, or encampments belonging to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), is both prohibited and criminal. Likewise, any act of damaging such facilities is also explicitly illegal and punishable by law.

(6) Articles 87 and 89 of the Internal Service Law stipulate, in summary, that military personnel assigned to security duties may use firearms when faced with resistance or when protecting individuals or objects placed under their guard from potential attacks. Similarly, these provisions state that force may be used to repel interference or resistance encountered while performing an official duty.

Article 88 further clarifies this responsibility by stating: “Any soldier authorized to use a weapon, or any commander authorized to issue such an order, who fails to exercise this authority appropriately and in a timely manner shall be punished in accordance with the nature of the act.” This establishes that the use of firearms, when necessary, is not optional but a

mandatory responsibility. Article 90 affirms, without any room for dispute, that every soldier has the right to use force in cases of legitimate self-defense.

(7) Based on these legal regulations and the statutes referenced earlier, a subordinate who receives an order to use force against individuals attempting to unlawfully enter a military installation is obligated to carry out that order—provided they are unaware that the order is part of a coup attempt or issued with the intent of committing a criminal act. Since the civilians attempting to breach these facilities are, in legal terms, committing an offense, an order to prevent them, including by means of armed force, appears on the surface to be a service-related order. Therefore, the subordinate has no legal right to question or disobey it and is legally bound to comply. Moreover, the subordinate cannot be held criminally liable for any outcome resulting from the execution of such an order.

(8) Furthermore, military personnel who are unaware that civilians are attempting to stop a coup may, even without a direct order, use force to prevent unauthorized entry, under both the TAF Internal Service Law and the legal principles of self-defense. Since the act of using a firearm in such a context appears to be service-related and lacks criminal intent, legal punishment would not be applicable.

(9) It must also be remembered that only approximately one percent of the total TAF personnel are alleged to have participated in the events of the coup night. In other words, roughly 99 percent of the Armed Forces did not take part in the coup attempt, and a significant portion of them were present at their respective barracks, headquarters, or military institutions. For example, nearly 1,000 enlisted personnel from the Service Unit, Transportation Unit, Guard Unit, and Ceremonial Unit—who live and serve at the General Staff Headquarters, where the events were most intense—were present but uninvolved in the incidents. Commissioned personnel who were present in the headquarters but later acquitted due to non-involvement must also be included in this figure. It would therefore be entirely unreasonable and unjust to consider all members of the TAF as legitimate targets based on the actions of a small minority. Accordingly, it is clear, under the legal provisions mentioned above, that protecting military personnel present in barracks that night, who had no connection to the coup attempt, against any form of aggression, including through the use of force if necessary, was both a lawful duty and a legal obligation.

e. General Assessment Regarding Those Who Issued and Received Orders on July 15 and the Chain of Command Regulations

(1) In evaluating this matter, it is essential first to consider the prevailing security environment at the time of the events, as well as the psychological background of the personnel involved. For many years, the primary operational focus of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has been counterterrorism, which has become a chronic national security issue.

(2) In this context, numerous domestic and cross-border operations have been conducted. Most recently, “trench operations” carried out with the full capabilities of military units, including heavy weapons, were brought into urban areas within the country. These operations resulted in a significant number of casualties and injuries. During such operations,

personnel and units developed a deeply ingrained habit of acting immediately upon receiving orders from their superiors. As a result, situations such as the following have become routine for TAF personnel: transferring from one unit to another under orders, deploying from one city to another, remaining on duty until further notice, returning to their unit and resuming duties even while on leave, and changes or cancellations in scheduled personnel transportation services. These repeated occurrences have reinforced among TAF members a strong reflex of obedience to orders—one that is already codified in military law.

(3) On the other hand, in the year leading up to the events, a series of bombings, rising terrorist attacks, and the continuous circulation of intelligence reports warning of new threats had heightened the military's security reflexes to their peak. Additionally, just prior to the incidents, new and controversial legal amendments were enacted that expanded the military's role in counterterrorism operations. Taken together, these developments created a psychological environment in which personnel were conditioned to carry out security-related orders without question.

(4) Unless there is clear, undeniable evidence that individuals acted with a separate, malicious intent, it must be assumed that, in such a context:

Personnel who remained on duty or returned to their units after hours in response to orders issued for security, protection, or exercise purposes;

Those who were dispatched to reinforce other units, institutions, or organizations under KOKTOD provisions;

and those who received and executed deployment orders for use in different regions, and their action, must be evaluated entirely in the context of service-related duties.

(5) It must be remembered that the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) Internal Service Regulations contain clear provisions regarding the expectations of subordinates: Article 4 states that every subordinate is obliged to obey orders with sincere willingness and absolute obedience; Article 5 emphasizes that superiors are assumed to be more knowledgeable and experienced, and that subordinates must trust that their superiors are acting in their best interest; Article 8 mandates that subordinates must execute their superior's orders willingly and without delay; and Article 10 strictly prohibits subordinates from commenting on orders received, requires unconditional compliance, and forbids murmuring or displaying behavior that could indicate doubt or disagreement when receiving the order.

(6) In this context, it is unrealistic to expect military personnel receiving orders to delay their duties in order to verify the legitimacy of the order, given the prevailing security environment, their training, their trust in their superiors, the principle of absolute obedience, and established military customs and traditions.

(7) For instance, in an indictment presented in Appendix H, an order was issued for appropriate units of the 1st Gendarmerie Commando Brigade Command to “immediately and without delay deploy to Ankara.” The brigade's prompt mobilization with its ready elements

in accordance with the order is, in form and substance, a typical service-related response to a military order. Had the order instead required deployment to another province or to a border region for an overseas operation, the course of action would have been no different. Since it was not possible for the personnel to know the order was related to a coup attempt, and given that the order required immediate movement, they had no time to question or investigate its intent. Any hesitation in such situations would be completely unacceptable under military custom.

To expect subordinates to recognize a coup attempt based on minor technical inconsistencies in a written order is also a strained and unrealistic interpretation, inconsistent with military traditions and the realities of Turkey. Moreover, assuming that the coup plotters would commit technical errors is illogical, as the individuals accused of orchestrating the attempt were generals and staff officers considered among the most competent in the TAF. At most, technical mistakes in such orders might lead subordinates to believe the documents were prepared hastily and under time pressure—an impression that aligns with the general character of counterterrorism operations in any case.

(8) Moreover, as explained in the legal section of this study, “knowing” refers to actual, conscious awareness. Within the current legal framework, a person’s ability to anticipate or foresee a potential unlawful intent does not equate to legal knowledge. In other words, for a subordinate to be held liable, it must be proven that they knowingly and intentionally carried out an order that constituted a criminal act. Even if, hypothetically, the Brigade Commander was aware of the true nature of the order, it would be unrealistic—especially under the operational secrecy typical of a coup—for the rest of the personnel to have been informed.

(9) According to the Military Penal Code, the responsibility for service-related orders that constitute a criminal act lies with the issuer of the order. The subordinate can only be held liable if it is proven that they were aware the order was given with criminal intent. Attempts to override this clear legal standard by suggesting that personnel “should have realized it was a coup based on the actions of civilians outside or from social media posts” are not valid within the framework of military logic. In any military operation, maintaining operational security and protection from external influences is of paramount importance, and proactive measures are taken to ensure this. As evidenced by the sinking of the Kocatepe warship, what matters most for soldiers is always their superiors and the orders they receive. The statement in the training document attached to the General Staff report (Appendix G)—“Psychological preparation will be made for possible insults or provocative acts at the scene”—should also be interpreted within this context.

(10) Furthermore, Article 7 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) states under the principle of “No punishment without law” that “No one shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when it was committed.” Within this framework, no one could reasonably have foreseen that actions performed as reflexive responses to heightened alert and security conditions due to terrorism would later become the subject of criminal prosecution. It is evident that personnel who executed orders related to

security, drills, or similar service-related duties—orders that appeared entirely lawful—acted within legal boundaries and cannot be held criminally responsible. Consequently, punishing them for actions that were not criminal at the time and could not reasonably have been foreseen to become criminal afterward constitutes a violation of Article 7 of the ECHR.

8. Summary

a. On the night of July 15, a military coup attempt occurred that remains highly controversial in terms of its nature, objectives, targets, methods, actors, and outcomes—surrounded by deep suspicion. In fact, considering the circumstances, even the term “coup attempt” serves merely to establish terminological consistency. It describes an event whose every phase appears manipulated, which could not be thoroughly investigated due to an atmosphere of fear and pressure, and which contradicts official narratives—even when viewed solely through available data.

b. Above all, it was entirely natural—given the conditions and from a standard military perspective—for personnel to comply with orders related to security or exercises on that night. Receiving orders related to counterterrorism, participating in operations, staying on duty or being recalled, being dispatched to other units for various purposes, or being temporarily assigned elsewhere are all standard practices in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and not subject to questioning by personnel. Particularly in a context where terrorist attacks had begun targeting city centers and intelligence reports warned of potential new attacks, reluctance to carry out orders related to security or exercises would have been contrary to military customs and traditions.

c. The legal framework also mandates that soldiers are bound by absolute obedience; they do not have the option to modify, delay, or disobey orders. The body of the report analyzes this obligation in detail, supported by relevant legal grounds. It is explicitly stated in the regulations that a subordinate is not permitted to offer commentary on an order, nor even to murmur or show behavior that might imply disagreement or doubt about the validity of the command.

d. Considering this defining feature of military service—namely that subordinates are compelled to obey absolutely in all circumstances—the legal framework includes protective provisions through the concepts of “exception” and “mistake” to safeguard subordinates. Within this framework:

(1) Under the exception clause, even if the subject of the order constitutes a crime, liability for the subordinate executing it depends on whether they had actual knowledge of its criminal nature;

(2) Similarly, the mistake clause protects a subordinate who believed, in good faith, that a legal justification existed for the unlawful act they carried out.

In principle, under these provisions, if an order is related to a service duty, the individual executing it should not be held criminally liable; full responsibility should

rest solely with the person who issued the order. However, it appears that the courts—seemingly motivated to punish as broad a group as possible—have not adequately considered either of these legal safeguards.

e. As extensively discussed in the report, absolute obedience is of paramount importance for the Turkish military—so much so that an entire regiment can march to its death without hesitation upon receiving an order, or an officer may resort to suicide for failing to carry out an order. However, the traditions and the deep-rooted sense of absolute obedience, which the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) proudly uphold and have deemed worthy of ultimate sacrifice, appear to have been exploited as a trap to implicate and convict thousands of its members.

f. Therefore, military personnel should not be prejudicially questioned for having followed orders. On the contrary, those who facilitated and encouraged participation in these activities, and especially those who had prior knowledge of the coup attempt yet failed to prevent it despite having the means to do so, should be the ones held accountable. The allegations of a “controlled coup” or a “setup,” which are widely discussed by the public though expressed in hushed tones due to an atmosphere of fear and repression, must be thoroughly investigated.

g. These allegations have been extensively examined in the report based on information and documents obtained from open sources and court case files. Based on the individuals and incidents summarized below, it is strongly believed that activities possibly constituting a “controlled coup” or a “setup” may indeed have taken place. Within this context:

(1) The Chief of General Staff, Hulusi Akar, was the foremost individual who should have taken the initiative to prevent the coup attempt before it began. This must have been his highest priority. He was the one who should have treated every piece of information or rumor on the matter with the utmost seriousness.

(a) In this context, although he issued orders to ground aircraft and prevent the movement of tanks, and dispatched the Commander of the Land Forces along with prosecutors to inspect the Army Aviation Unit subject to the tip-off, he personally continued signing documents in his office as if everything were normal.

(b) He sent the 4th Corps and Ankara Garrison Commander, Metin Gürak, to the Armored School and Training Division Command to ensure that tanks would not leave the premises. However, he gave no instructions regarding the tanks under the command of the 28th Mechanized Brigade, which were under Gürak’s command. As a result, the tanks that rolled out onto the streets of Ankara that night were those belonging to Gürak. Gürak continued to be promoted in the aftermath of the coup attempt and currently serves as the Chief of General Staff.

(c) Despite the explicit provision in Article 647 of the Internal Service Regulations stating, “If a coup or uprising is likely to occur, it shall be ordered that all soldiers remain within their barracks,” he failed to issue such an order. A simple directive of this nature could have easily prevented the coup attempt before it even began.

(d) It is highly questionable that, upon learning of a potential coup attempt within the Turkish Armed Forces, he assigned personnel to monitor helicopters and tanks, and even ordered the closure of the national airspace as of 19:05, yet did not inform either the President or the Prime Minister.

(e) The footage showing his apprehension and transfer to Akıncı Air Base that night is far from satisfactory. Despite the presence of numerous cameras in the vicinity of the Chief of General Staff's office, only footage of him being led down a staircase has been released. In that footage, he is seen asking the noncommissioned officer alleged to have apprehended him for his cap, which he forgot in the office, and the officer promptly goes back to retrieve it. ⁷⁸ He is able to issue a command to someone said to be detaining him, and the command is executed without hesitation. On the other hand, it should be recalled that in the decision titled "Akın Öztürk (Turkey)" by the United Nations Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, it was recorded that approximately 70% of the unedited security camera footage was deleted.

(f) In his statement included in the indictment of the "Main Coup Trial," he declares that while at Akıncı Air Base, he asked to speak with his wife and was allowed to do so by phone. During the call, he told his wife he was at Akıncı Air Base. It would be highly unusual for coup plotters to allow such a phone call—especially one in which such sensitive information was disclosed. In fact, statements by other defendants note that he behaved as if he were still the commanding officer while at the base.

(g) Between 08:30 and 09:00, he requested to speak with the President or the Prime Minister, and this request was granted. He was then provided a helicopter and flown to the Prime Ministry under VIP conditions. Why was Hulusi Akar released, and why was he transported to a location of his choosing under such privileged circumstances? It is unclear who made that decision. Every general arrested that day, including Akın Öztürk—who was alleged to be the top figure behind the coup attempt—was shown in state-broadcasted media footage under severe torture. Given that no change has occurred in the conditions of the imprisoned individuals in the eight years since, it appears no bargain was made. Unless he himself was the decision-maker, his release under these circumstances seems utterly inexplicable.

(h) The Chief of General Staff stated that while leaving Akıncı Air Base, Akın Öztürk repeatedly asked to accompany him. If he was being held against his will, how was this request rejected? Why did he not take Akın Öztürk but instead brought Mehmet Dişli with him? Ultimately, the person he chose not to accompany him was, according to his own claims, the highest-ranking individual involved in the coup who must have authorized his exit. Furthermore, after arriving at the Prime Ministry, why did he not immediately demand the arrest of Mehmet Dişli?

(2) The second individual to display unquestionably suspicious behavior that night, alongside Hulusi Akar, was the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), Hakan Fidan.

(a) How could the Deputy Undersecretary of MİT—and later the Undersecretary himself—enter a military headquarters that could very well be the operational center of a coup attempt, and do so without any hesitation? Equally puzzling is why the coup plotters allowed him to leave just minutes before the coup officially began. Even more contradictory is the fact that shortly thereafter, they reportedly dispatched a helicopter to retrieve the MİT Undersecretary from MİT Headquarters.

(b) Despite receiving a tip-off regarding an assassination or abduction attempt against himself and, by his own assessment, recognizing the possibility of a coup attempt, why did the MİT Undersecretary see no reason to cancel his dinner plans with the Director of Religious Affairs (DİB) and a Syrian opposition leader? Could it possibly be related to the subsequent mobilization of the public through prayers (salâ) broadcast from mosque minarets, or the deployment of Syrians in public squares?

(c) Why did he fail to inform the President and the Prime Minister, who would unquestionably be among the first targets in the event of a coup attempt? Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım reportedly had to call the MİT Undersecretary himself around 22:30 to confirm whether a coup was indeed underway. Even at that hour, when the Prime Minister asked what was happening, the Undersecretary reportedly replied, “Nothing is going on, everything is normal, we are working.”

(3) The third individual whose actions raised significant suspicion that night was the Commander of the Air Force, General Abidin Ünal. Along with numerous other generals from the Air Force, he was reportedly detained by the coup plotters while attending a wedding ceremony in Istanbul. The Air Force played a central role in symbolic events associated with the coup attempt that night, such as low-altitude flights over cities and the bombing of the Parliament.

(a) Ünal states that he received information by phone at 19:06 that the airspace had been closed. However, he did not feel the need to contact any higher authority until 20:30. Not only did he fail to call the Chief of General Staff, but he also did not inform his own subordinates who were with him. It is highly unacceptable for a senior officer of his rank to treat an unprecedented order to close the entire national airspace as if it were routine, without making any effort to investigate or clarify the situation.

(b) The appropriate course of action would have been to immediately assess the situation and send the generals accompanying him to the wedding back to their posts. Instead of doing so, he appears to have attempted to obstruct those who had become aware of the developing situation through other channels and were trying to take precautions. For instance, between 19:30 and 20:00, the Commander of the Combat Air Forces, who had authority over all F-16s flying that night, was informed of the situation via a phone call to his deputy. As a result, he ordered the deputy commander, a Lieutenant General, to head to the Eskişehir First Main Jet Base Command (1BHMM) to intervene. However, when this movement was reported to Ünal, he reportedly responded, “There’s no need at this stage,” and had the Lieutenant General recalled.

(c) Through his notably passive conduct, Ünal appears to have tried to keep everyone, including himself, together in one place until the coup plotters eventually detained him. However, it is inconceivable that he would not have anticipated that, in a potential coup attempt, one of the first targets would be the high-ranking generals, particularly himself, gathered unguarded at a public event like a wedding.

(4) The conduct exhibited by the Chief of General Staff, the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), and the Commander of the Air Force following the intelligence received on July 15 cannot be evaluated merely as a “mistaken” course of action—it is far too incomprehensible for such a simple explanation. A coup attempt that could have been prevented before it even began appears to have been carried through smoothly to its scheduled start time due to the manner in which these individuals acted. When viewed in conjunction with the subsequent mass dismissals targeting the Gülen Movement—later referred to as FETÖ—it becomes increasingly plausible that the allegations of a setup or a controlled coup may indeed hold the truth.

Therefore, they should have been subjected to investigation without a doubt. However, rather than being investigated, they were insistently kept in their positions and even rewarded; eight years on, they continue to serve as ministers and members of parliament. This situation understandably implicates not only these individuals but also their hierarchical superiors, who themselves exhibited suspicious behavior that night, as potentially complicit in the alleged setup.

(5) On the other hand, police officers, whose duty was to protect civilian lives, persistently attempted to use unarmed citizens as human shields and even encouraged them to enter military barracks forcibly. Through radio transmissions, they repeatedly emphasized that the coup attempt was the undertaking of only a faction within the military. Nevertheless, their actions contradicted these statements, disregarding the fact that many soldiers within the barracks were completely unaware of the events unfolding.

These radio communications indicate that civilians were used as human shields, incited to attack soldiers, and encouraged to storm military compounds. Such practices, which are clearly unlawful, constitute a direct violation of Article 2/c of the European Convention on Human Rights, which safeguards the right to life.

(6) While existing legislation already permitted the deployment of the military in counterterrorism operations—and while KOKTOD (Public Order and Security) protocols were more than sufficient—who enacted an additional regulation immediately before the coup attempt, one that included new and more extensive provisions, and on what grounds was this done?

(7) Despite persistent requests from the defendants, the Chief of General Staff and the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization, who were at the very center of events from the moment the intelligence was received, were never summoned to testify at the hearings where the defendants stood trial. Consequently, Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which guarantees “the right to examine or have examined witnesses against them and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on their behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against them,” was clearly violated by the courts.

(h) From the indictment itself 79 through to the Supreme Court stage 80, it was acknowledged throughout the entire judicial process that no document or information could be obtained regarding the members of the so-called “Peace at Home Council,” which was alleged to be the command structure behind the coup attempt. Nevertheless, despite this, the claims regarding the council were never abandoned—presumably in order to preserve the narrative of a central command structure behind the coup—and continued to be based entirely on forced and speculative interpretations.

However, the United Nations Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, upon reviewing the case of General Akın Öztürk—who was convicted on the charge of being the leader of the coup attempt and of the Peace at Home Council—concluded that Öztürk had been arbitrarily detained without reasonable suspicion and denied a fair trial. It ruled that he should be released and compensated. This latest development appears to have completely undermined the already unsubstantiated claims surrounding the alleged council.

(i) Following the decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding Akın Öztürk, the situation now pertains to a coup attempt that no longer even has an alleged leader. Had there indeed been a clear leader, as claimed, the structure—reportedly bold enough

to openly offer leadership to Hulusi Akar—would likely not have felt the need to conceal him and would have mentioned him somewhere explicitly.

(j) Even after eight years, no document that could be regarded as a “Coups Plan” has been recovered. Yet, such an operation, which would require extremely precise coordination, should certainly have been preceded and followed by a text laying everything out without ambiguity. Observing the actions that were in fact carried out, one can see that this coup attempt was riddled with logical inconsistencies from beginning to end. It is implausible that the most elite cadre of the Turkish Armed Forces at the time—the intellectual core of the institution—could have designed such an irrational, aimless, and seemingly pre-destined-to-fail operation.

(k) Regardless of whether one believes in the existence of a plan, a leader, or supports the idea of a staged or controlled coup, there is one fact that must be recognized: the courts handling the July 15 trials did not deliver justice. In a country accustomed to experiencing coups roughly every ten years, the number of individuals convicted in connection with this particular coup attempt is over twenty-one times greater than the total number of those sentenced in all previous coup trials in the history of the Republic. This clearly indicates a fundamental problem in the judicial process. The July 15 trials are inconsistent with precedents and established legal interpretations due to the unprecedented number of military personnel convicted, the severity of the sentences handed down, and the failure to consider the unique positions and roles of the individuals within the military hierarchy.

(l) When taking into account that the defendants were only heard as a formality and that their requests were routinely disregarded, the July 15 trials appear less like coup trials and more like efforts to purge a specific group.

(m) A statement included in Decision No. 33/2024 by the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding Akın Öztürk (Turkey) illustrates the underlying motivations behind the judiciary's actions. According to the decision, the presiding judge of the 17th High Criminal Court, which oversaw the Main Coup Trial, participated in a workshop organized by the Police Academy in October 2017. It is reported that the judge unreservedly endorsed a conclusion from the workshop stating, “There is no need for concrete evidence when combating the Gülen Group; even the slightest suspicion should be exploited by the State.” A judge who affirms such a stance can clearly no longer be considered impartial.

(n) Questioning why the members of the TSK did not oppose the coup attempt upon hearing about it from television or social media is a misguided approach. The operational structure within the Turkish Armed Forces does not function in that manner. For a soldier, the most reliable source of information is always their commanding officer. In fact, during such critical times, soldiers who are found watching television or occupied with social media are often regarded as having a problematic understanding of duty. Moreover, even if some individuals did suspect that a coup might be taking place, the chaotic environment and concerns for personal safety might have prevented them from immediately taking sides—something that is entirely understandable under the circumstances.

(o) When court records are examined, it is evident that many of the personnel accused of participating in the coup described engaging in activities on the eve of July 15 that would be considered highly atypical for individuals preparing for such a critical event—such as planning vacations, making hotel reservations, dining out with family, grocery shopping, packing for a reassignment, watching television, or simply sleeping. One would expect individuals who were preparing for a night filled with extreme danger to exhibit stress and take precautionary measures. Furthermore, many of the accused made phone calls that night using their own registered mobile phones, leaving easily traceable HTS records—behavior far too natural and unaware to be explained as carelessness by someone intending to stage a coup.

(p) Regardless of any plan or leadership structure, or whether the coup was real, staged, or a trap, the judiciary’s collective approach of punishing all personnel indiscriminately casts a shadow over all the proceedings. The use of dehumanizing methods such as the “FETÖMETRE” to identify alleged members of the Gülen community—methods that arguably constitute crimes against humanity—and reliance on contrived evidence and forced interpretations to eliminate this community, undermine the legitimacy of all related trials.

(r) No matter how one views it, what is described in official narratives as a coup attempt involving 8,500 participants—but which, after the trials, appears to have involved closer to 5,000—was a foolish operation with no leader, no plan, and no clear objective. From the outset, its failure was inevitable. Considering that a mass purge began the very next day and eventually led to the dismissal of 125,000 public servants—and over 400,000 when including the private sector—it becomes evident that allegations of a controlled or staged coup should be taken very seriously.

(s) If one strips away the sensationalized and sloganized elements of that night, such as the aircraft that made no real contribution to the coup, the now mythologized bombing of parliament, and the small, disoriented military units deployed without a clear purpose, there remains no real picture of an actual coup. Lehigh University academic Professor Henri Barkey describes this very situation in an article for The Washington Post:

“I’m not saying all this to claim that the Gulenists had no involvement in the coup. Some Gulenists were seen inside or near military bases. If they were involved, it’s likely that Gülen himself was aware. However, given the sheer clumsiness of the operation and the sluggish response of those who could have stopped it, the possibility that this was a trap from the very beginning cannot be ruled out.” 81

9. Conclusion and Evaluation

(a) As detailed extensively in the summary section, while judicial proceedings have formally concluded, it can be stated with confidence that there are serious and deep-rooted doubts regarding whether justice has truly been served. There are indications that traps may have been set by individuals or groups in control of official processes. The actions—or inactions-of—the Chief of General Staff, the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), and the Commander of the Air Force on that night, both in terms of transmitting the intelligence they received and their efforts to prevent the coup, are highly

suspicious. It should not be assumed that the questionable conduct was limited to these individuals alone. In order to remain within the scope of the report and to avoid unnecessary controversy, claims that are not supported by concrete information and verifiable sources have been either presented solely as allegations or entirely excluded from the report.

(b) The careless nature of the coup attempt trials and the multiple violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) have been addressed in the relevant sections of the report. Furthermore, the concept of entrapment, as referenced in European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law, appears to have been repeatedly applied throughout the course of the coup attempt. What occurred went even further than traditional forms of entrapment, where agents provoke criminal behavior from within suspected groups. A brief summary of the practices falling under this scope is as follows:

(1) Intelligence regarding a potential coup attempt was not conveyed to the responsible authorities.

(2) Despite legal obligations, no effective measures were taken to prevent the coup. Through such inaction, the process was allowed to unfold until the official start time of the attempt. Immediately afterward, measures such as continuous salāh (Islamic calls to prayer) throughout the night, organized civilian demonstrations, and extensive media broadcasts were rapidly implemented to construct the image of a heroic resistance.

(3) Through police radio announcements, the public was manipulated, directed toward military areas, and used as human shields.

(4) The public was incited and agitated through collaboration with NGOs that appear to have been trained in advance.

(5) Mass purges were initiated based on pre-prepared lists. Despite claims that approximately 5,000 people participated in the coup attempt, over 400,000 individuals were ultimately dismissed from public and private sector roles.

(6) As evidenced by the record prepared by the Chief Public Prosecutor on the night in question, which contains numerous inaccuracies and falsehoods, the judiciary exhibited a highly careless and negligent approach. The dismissal of thousands of members of the judiciary in the very first hours of the coup attempt suggests that the judicial system may have been used as an instrument to punish certain individuals and groups already marked for targeting.

(7) A climate of fear and intimidation was created to prevent any investigation into these unlawful practices, including torture images that were disseminated by the state itself, practices that clearly violated both national and international legal frameworks. Opposition media outlets were either shut down or transformed into pro-government platforms. Those that remained were forced to operate within narrowly defined limits in order to avoid the same fate.

(8) In conclusion, the government, perceiving that the Gülen Movement had become excessively powerful within state institutions, undertook a broad and sweeping purge. The July 15 Coup Attempt was utilized to lend legitimacy to this extraordinary purge campaign. Within this context, it is understood that a small faction of military personnel—described even by Brigadier General Sönmezaş, who admitted to participating in the coup and consistently pointed to the Chief of General Staff as its leader—was involved. It appears that this group was manipulated and directed, taking an active role in the planning and preparation of the coup attempt. This constitutes a highly advanced example of entrapment, as defined in European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence.

(c) More important than determining who planned the coup attempt and with what motivations is the fact that a large number of Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) personnel, completely unaware of the actual intentions behind the events, were misled into believing they were simply carrying out service-related orders. These individuals were deceived and drawn into a trap. This was achieved quite easily by leveraging their experience in counterterrorism, the prevailing security environment, the expectation of new terrorist attacks, existing legal regulations, and military traditions.

(d) Obedience to orders given for security or training purposes, KOKDOT procedures, activities carried out within the scope of barracks security, and any troop movements conducted under orders from higher command—all fall within the framework of lawful and service-related instructions. This is true both legally and according to military customs. Claiming that personnel should have interpreted minor technical or procedural errors in these orders as signs of a coup is inconsistent with military realities. Furthermore, it is contradictory to accuse nearly all generals and almost the entire staff officer cadre of participating in a coup, while simultaneously citing technical flaws in the orders they issued as evidence of a coup attempt. The individuals in question were among the brightest and most competent minds in the Turkish Armed Forces—those who prepared and approved these documents. If such documents contained technical errors, lower-level personnel would likely have interpreted them simply as a result of haste or urgency, something that is characteristic of counterterrorism operations.

(e) If these entirely lawful military procedures were used as a cover to deceive and entrap individuals, then this must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible held accountable. But even before that, the flawed and careless trials conducted by courts that either lacked an understanding of military hierarchy and tradition or willfully ignored them, motivated by a desire to impose punishment, must be revisited. Thousands of families may have suffered irreparable material and emotional harm as a result.

It must not be forgotten that we are talking about trials in which nearly 5,000 soldiers, including 3,000 sentenced to life or aggravated life imprisonment, were convicted. In other words, these proceedings resulted in 21 times more convictions than the total number of people punished in all previous coup attempts combined throughout Turkey's history of recurring coups every decade.

(f) Regardless of whether it is termed a “setup” or a “controlled coup,” it has become evident that justice cannot be achieved through trials conducted by ordinary courts. Moreover, it is clear that judicial proceedings carried out in parallel with a process in which members of the judiciary were subjected to mass dismissals and military courts were abolished cannot be deemed reliable. It is unacceptable for even a single individual to be wrongfully punished, let alone the possibility that thousands may be serving life sentences unjustly.

(g) The most ideal solution for remedying potential injustices would be retrial processes conducted in full compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), where alleged violations are addressed, defendants are allowed to call witnesses of their choosing, and military experts are included in the proceedings. At this point, it may understandably be argued that the judicial process has concluded and that retrials are no longer legally possible. However, the situation at hand involves an extraordinary process—one that may have been manipulated by those who orchestrated a trap, possibly influencing the legislature, executive, and judiciary alike. To accept such a manipulated process as valid under ordinary legal procedures would amount to acquiescing to grave injustices committed against potentially thousands of innocent individuals.

SIGNATURE

ANNEXES:

Annex-A – (Major terrorist incidents carried out in 2015 and 2016)

Annex-B – (Letter from the General Staff regarding security measures)

Annex-C – (Letter from the 1st Army Command concerning terrorist intelligence)

Annex-D – (Full text of Articles 11/d and 11/j of Law No. 5442)

Annex-E – (Assessment of the Coup Attempt from the Perspective of Operational Principles)

Annex-F – (Prosecutor’s record concerning the night of July 15)

Annex-G – (General Staff KOKTOD review memorandum)

Annex-H – (Deployment Order)

Annex-I – (Relevant legal provisions)

Annex-J – (Expert witness résumé)

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Significant Terrorist Attacks in 2015 and 2016 Before the Coup Attempt

Below is a list of major terrorist attacks carried out in Turkey in 2015 and 2016, leading up to the attempted coup:

- On June 5, 2015, just two days before the general elections, a bomb attack targeted the HDP rally in Diyarbakır. Claimed by ISIS, the attack resulted in the deaths of five people and injuries to more than 400 others.
- On July 20, 2015, a suicide bombing in the Suruç district of Şanlıurfa claimed the lives of 34 individuals. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack. Two days later, two police officers were found shot dead in their home in the Ceylanpınar district of Şanlıurfa. The Suruç massacre and the subsequent killing of the officers were widely interpreted as marking the de facto end of the “peace process.”
- On October 10, 2015, two suicide bombings took place in front of Ankara Train Station during the Peace, Labor, and Democracy Rally. This attack, also claimed by ISIS, is recorded as the deadliest in Turkey’s history, killing 103 people and injuring more than 500.
- On January 12, 2016, a suicide bombing in Istanbul’s Sultanahmet Square killed 12 people and injured 16. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On January 14, 2016, a car bomb attack targeted the Çınar District Police Headquarters in Diyarbakır. Claimed by the PKK, the bombing killed six people and injured 38.
- On February 17, 2016, a car bomb attack was carried out on Merasim Street in Ankara, near the Turkish Parliament, the General Staff Headquarters, major military command centers, and military housing. The bomb targeted Turkish Armed Forces personnel buses during their departure. Claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK), the attack killed 29 people, including civilians, and injured 61. This incident, which occurred approximately five months before July 15, significantly affected military personnel and their families, leading to heightened psychological distress and an increased state of alert within the military against terrorist threats.
- On March 13, 2016, a car bomb exploded near the Güvenpark bus stops in Ankara, killing 36 people and injuring more than 300. The site of the bombing was located approximately one kilometer from the previously mentioned key military and governmental institutions.
- On March 19, 2016, a suicide bombing took place in front of the Beyoğlu District Governor’s Office in Istanbul, killing five people and injuring 36.
- On March 31, 2016, a bomb attack targeted a police vehicle near the main bus terminal in Diyarbakır. The PKK claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed seven police officers and injured 13 officers and 14 civilians.
- On April 27, 2016, a suicide bombing occurred near Ulu Mosque in Bursa. One person was killed and 13 were injured. TAK claimed responsibility for the attack.

- On May 1, 2016, a car bomb attack was carried out by ISIS in front of the Gaziantep Police Headquarters. Three police officers were killed, and 22 people, including 18 police officers, were injured.
- On May 12, 2016, in the Dürümlü hamlet of the Sur district in Diyarbakır, a truck loaded with explosives was detonated, killing 16 people and injuring 23. The PKK claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On June 7, 2016, a suicide bombing in the Vezneciler neighborhood of Istanbul's Fatih district killed 13 people, including the attacker, and injured 35. TAK claimed responsibility.
- On June 8, 2016, a car bomb attack targeted the Midyat District Police Headquarters in Mardin. Four people, including two police officers, were killed, and 34 were injured. The PKK claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On June 28, 2016, a deadly attack occurred at Istanbul Atatürk Airport's International Terminal. Claimed by ISIS, the attack resulted in the deaths of 45 people and injuries to approximately 250 others.

As evidenced, Turkey, having battled terrorism for the past four decades, experienced an intense wave of attacks in the year leading up to July 15. Claimed by groups such as the PKK, ISIS, and others, these attacks resulted in numerous casualties and were among the deadliest in the country's modern history. While some attacks specifically targeted military units, others occurred near military facilities or in areas under military jurisdiction, such as border regions.

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**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
TURKISH GENERAL STAFF
ANKARA**

REF NO: GENSEK. 26702250-1260-391-16/Des Kt. 1057-9301

SUBJECT: Security Measures

TO: General Staff Directorate of Intelligence

1. As a result of the armed and suicide bombing attack carried out at Istanbul Atatürk Airport on 27 June 2016, heavy casualties were sustained. Intelligence reports indicate that such attacks may continue in the near future, and that terrorist organizations have granted their substructures unlimited autonomy to carry out such actions.
2. Given the increasing reports suggesting that terrorist organizations may attempt high-profile attacks particularly against the Turkish General Staff and Ministry of National Defense compounds, and taking into consideration that the General Staff and Ministry of National Defense headquarters buildings are located in close proximity to surrounding roadways, it has been assessed that it would be appropriate to close to civilian vehicle traffic (excluding official and public transportation vehicles) the southbound lane of İnönü Boulevard — specifically from the General Staff Junction to Necatibey Junction, in the direction of Eskişehir — and to establish police checkpoints along this stretch. A map outlining the proposed measures is presented in **Annex-A**.
3. In light of the recent terrorist acts and received intelligence, it is assessed that the prompt implementation of the proposed measure is of critical importance.

Respectfully submitted.

Major C. GÜRCAN

Ops. Training & Intel. Section Officer

Colonel C. AYDIN

Chief, General Staff Correspondence Group

ENCLOSURE: Annex-A (Proposed Map)

M. Metin ÖZBEK

**Major General
Secretary General**

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Point of Contact: Infantry Major Caner Gürcan (4358-4508)

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MESSAGE FORM

Communications Center
Message Control Section
Message Instructions

Group-Prefix	Priority Level	Date-Time Group	Classification Level	File Number
	URGENT	141945C JUL 16	CLASSIFIED	ISTH.: 54801010- 2210-15441- 16/IH&S (4)

FROM:
FIRST ARMY COMMAND

TO:
War Academies Command, Third Army Command, Northern Sea Area Command, Naval Training Command, Gendarmerie Regional Commands, Provincial Gendarmerie Intelligence Commands, Air Force War Academies Command, Commando Brigade Commands, Military Intelligence Headquarters, Coast Guard Regional Commands, Logistics and Training Center Commands

KGK:
UAA

SUBJECT:
INTELLIGENCE REPORTS / INFORMATION RECEIVED

REFERENCE:
Letter from the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), dated 04 July 2016, Ref. No: 2016/414, titled "Potential ISIL Action".

Based on recent intelligence reports and information received concerning possible terrorist acts planned by terrorist organizations across Istanbul, the findings and assessments are enclosed herein.

Upon review of recent reports and received information, it has been assessed that terrorist organizations may potentially conduct the following types of attacks:

- Bomb attacks against naval bases/ships using yachts loaded with explosives or disguised as fire trucks, positioned near fuel tankers,

- Attacks using explosive-laden vehicles disguised as ambulances, municipal garbage trucks, military vehicles, or belonging to major retail chains,
- Kidnapping or assassination attempts targeting retired or active senior military personnel,
- Suicide bombings at tourist locations, particularly Aksaray, Laleli, Hagia Sophia, and Sultanahmet Mosques,
- Bomb attacks on Marmaray subway lines, ferry terminals, and select port facilities,
- Bomb or armed attacks on Hasdal Barracks and the War Colleges Command,
- Arson attacks in forested areas throughout Istanbul, particularly in Arnavutköy, Sancaktepe, and Sultanbeyli,
- Bomb or armed attacks on service vehicles, official residences, and service buildings belonging to military and law enforcement units.

Additionally, in light of a warning conveyed in the referenced MIT letter, there is intelligence indicating that further attacks may be carried out at transport hubs such as train stations or bus terminals — similar to the recent attack at Atatürk Airport. This situation requires heightened vigilance throughout Istanbul.

According to the conducted analysis, the intelligence and reports appear to be concentrated in the following districts: Sultangazi, Gaziosmanpaşa, Kağıthane, Şişli, Beşiktaş, Beyoğlu, Fatih, Bakırköy, Kadıköy, Sancaktepe, Sultanbeyli, and Kartal.

It has been assessed that it would be appropriate for all unit commanders within Istanbul garrisons — especially those located in the regions where intelligence is concentrated — to urgently review and reinforce their security measures.

ENCLOSURE:

Annex-A (Intelligence Assessment Map)

Drafted / Coordinated By

Acting Head of Internal Security and Protection Section

Colonel M. ÇAKAN

Reviewed and Approved By

Head of Intelligence

Colonel A. KOÇ

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Brigadier General Eyyup GÜRLER
Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations

Page: 1/1

Message Received From: TSG

Message Transmitted By: TSG

PROVISIONS OF ARTICLES 11/D AND 11/J FROM LAW NO. 5442 – THE LAW ON PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Article 11/D

(Amended: 29/8/1996 – Law No. 4178/1) In cases where governors are unable or deem it impracticable to prevent or suppress incidents within the province using their own forces, or if they believe that the measures taken cannot be implemented effectively with these forces, they may request support from the Ministry of the Interior and, if necessary, from the nearest land, sea, or air force command units, including border units of the Land Forces Command, using the fastest possible means. The governor may determine whether to request such forces from the Ministry of the Interior, military units, or both. The governor's request for assistance must be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, requests may initially be made verbally, provided they are later formalized in writing.

If military support is requested by the governor, the requested forces must be stationed in a location suitable for rapid response based on potential incidents, or directly at the site of ongoing incidents. (Amended sentence: 17/6/2003 – Law No. 4897/1) The scale of the requested military force, depending on the nature of the incidents, shall be determined by the commander of the military unit in coordination with the governor; the duration of deployment shall be determined by the governor in coordination with the commander of the military unit. In the case of independent assignment of military forces, the duties will be carried out under the commander's responsibility and instructions, using the authorities granted by the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law, as well as the general public security powers held by law enforcement agencies. Coordination and cooperation between military support and security forces will be determined by the governor, taking into account the views of the military unit commander. However, in cases where certain tasks are performed jointly with the gendarmerie or police, command and control will be assumed by the most senior military commander. In incidents affecting multiple provinces, if forces are allocated from the same or different military unit commands upon request of the respective governors, cooperation, coordination, force transfers, chain of command, and other necessary matters will be executed in accordance with principles determined by the President. The Minister of the Interior may temporarily assign one of the concerned governors to ensure coordination. If incidents occur in border provinces or adjacent areas and it is determined that the perpetrators have taken refuge in neighboring countries, the relevant military commander, upon request from the governor and with the President's approval through the General Staff, may plan and execute limited cross-border operations using land, sea, air, or gendarmerie units, with the consent of the neighboring country. (Amended sentence: 13/7/2013 – Law No. 6496/16)

The activities of Turkish Armed Forces units assigned under this paragraph are considered part of their military service and duties. Urgent and essential expenses arising from the aforementioned circumstances shall be covered by funds approved by the President and allocated from the Ministry of the Interior's budget. The principles for distribution and use of funds to be transferred annually to provinces will be set by the Ministry of the Interior. No payment order is required for the purchase, lease, or use of goods, vehicles, or equipment obtained from institutions or individuals under this article, including wages and similar costs. Approval by the Minister of the Interior or the governor is deemed sufficient. (...) Payments will be executed according to a regulation issued by the Ministry of the Interior with the opinion of the Ministry of Finance.

Newly Added Paragraph J

(Added: 23/6/2016 – Law No. 6722/12) In cases where general law enforcement capabilities are exceeded or where counterterrorism operations are deemed necessary due to terrorist actions seriously disrupting public order, the Turkish Armed Forces may be deployed by Presidential decision upon recommendation by the Ministry of the Interior. The Presidential decree must specify the scope and duration of the mission, operational area, extent of intelligence authority, limitations on the use of support weapons, the relationship between assigned military units and civilian authorities and general law enforcement, as well as responsibilities of relevant public institutions, planning and oversight of the operations, and other necessary provisions. The scale, organization, deployment locations, command structure, force transfer arrangements, and other required elements for the assigned Turkish Armed Forces units will be determined by the General Staff.

The assigned Turkish Armed Forces units and personnel shall carry out their duties under the responsibility and command of their commanders, using the powers granted by the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law No. 211 dated 4 January 1961 and those held by law enforcement for maintaining public order. Within the scope of the duties to be carried out in the provinces under this paragraph, cooperation, coordination, and oversight between military units, general law enforcement agencies, and relevant public institutions and organizations shall be carried out by the governors. In cases where military units carry out specific tasks jointly with general law enforcement forces, command, control, and coordination shall be assumed by the senior-most commander of the military units.

Intelligence required for duties under this paragraph shall be collected and shared without delay by intelligence units, in accordance with their respective authorities.

The intelligence information required by the authorized unit commander in the execution

of duties assigned under this paragraph shall be collected as a priority by the intelligence agencies within the scope of their authority and shared without delay.

In operations conducted under this paragraph, in cases where delay poses a risk, entry may be made — by written order of the authorized unit commander — into residences, workplaces, or other enclosed areas not open to the public, including their annexes, which are entered by individuals fleeing from security forces, solely for the purpose of ensuring the safety of life of the people or their property or effecting the apprehension of the individual. The commander's decision shall be submitted for judicial approval within twenty-four hours. Activities of Turkish Armed Forces personnel under this paragraph are considered part of military service. Alleged offenses arising from such duties shall be treated as military offenses. For other public servants and officials, Law No. 4483 on the Prosecution of Civil Servants and Other Public Officials applies. Until authorization for investigation is granted, measures such as detention, arrest, or imprisonment may not be applied. Damages resulting from the nature or performance of duties under this paragraph shall be compensated by the State. Lawsuits for compensation, including those involving personal fault, torts, or other liabilities, can only be filed against the State. The State may seek recourse, within one year, against those who have abused their duties by acting contrary to the requirements of their position, for compensation it has paid; against members of the Turkish Armed Forces with the approval of the Minister of National Defense; against civilian administrative officials and law enforcement personnel with the approval of the Minister of the Interior; and against other public officials and employees with the approval of the relevant minister.

With respect to offenses allegedly committed during the performance of duties under this paragraph, arising from the nature of the duty or in connection with the duty itself:

a) Initiating a criminal investigation against military personnel, on the grounds that the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the judicial courts, is subject to prior authorization: for the Chief of the General Staff and Force Commanders, authorization must be granted by the President; for other military personnel, by the Minister of National Defense; and for the Gendarmerie General Commander, the Coast Guard Commander, and other personnel of these commands, by the Minister of the Interior.

b) In cases where public prosecutors claim special statutory authority to initiate investigations directly against civil servants and other public officials, such investigations are also subject to prior authorization: for those serving in the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior and its affiliated agencies, as well as for provincial governors, authorization must be granted by the Minister of the Interior; for those serving in a region or province, and for sub-governors, by the governor; and for those serving at the district level, by the district governor.

The provisions in the fifth and sixth paragraphs also apply to temporary and voluntary village guards and Turkish Armed Forces personnel assigned under Article 11/D. Urgent and essential expenditures arising from the execution of duties under this paragraph shall be covered by appropriations in the budgets of the Ministry of National Defense or the Ministry of the Interior, as appropriate.

Assessment of the 15 July 2016 Coup Attempt in Terms of Operational Principles

It is of utmost importance to examine the 15 July coup attempt through the lens of military operational principles, based on the activities carried out during the night in question. This need arises particularly due to the ongoing and unresolved claims surrounding the event, such as “a controlled coup” or “a trap set for the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK).” Many individuals who were primarily responsible for receiving intelligence and preventing the coup that night—and who have been accused of neglecting their duties—still occupy the highest offices within the state. The prevailing political climate, which aggressively suppresses discussion of these issues and labels those who raise questions as “traitors,” only serves to deepen public suspicion rather than dispel it.

There exists no available and verified coup plan relating specifically to the 15 July coup attempt. Therefore, based on the actual events that unfolded during the night, a brief assessment has been made regarding how well the attempted coup aligns with fundamental military operational principles.

Operational principles serve as guiding ideas that can be utilized at all levels for the command and control of military operations. While it is not necessary to apply all principles in every case, nor do they carry a hierarchical order among themselves, they should be considered as an integrated whole. Their application may vary depending on the situation and type of operation.

Although there are minor differences between military manuals, operational principles are generally outlined in the field manual KKT 100-5 OPERATIONS (COMMAND AND CONTROL), and include: objective, offensive, maneuver, center of gravity, economy of force, simplicity, surprise, unity of command, and security. 1

a. Objective

Every military operation must be directed toward a clearly defined, decisive, attainable, and actionable objective. Objectives vary by strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The strategic-level objective must clearly represent the desired end state, while subordinate objectives should be evaluated in terms of the contributions they make toward that strategic goal.

In other words, objectives at the strategic level reflect the overall aim of the operation, which is to break the enemy’s will to fight and force their submission. Operational-level objectives seek to translate abstract expectations into the operational environment and aim to achieve dominance on the battlefield through large-scale maneuvers. The adversary’s center(s) of gravity are typically selected as operational-level objectives. At the tactical level, objectives are concretely defined elements such as specific areas or enemy units within the battlefield. The value of an objective is determined by the extent to which it supports the higher command’s objective and ultimately contributes to the desired end state.

In the specific context of the 15 July Coup Attempt, the likely strategic-level objective would have been to bring the entire state administration under control. Operational-level objectives would include taking control of the executive leadership positions—namely the

President and the Prime Minister—along with key ministers, prominent bureaucratic figures, and the institutional power they command. Supporting actions such as blocking roads, seizing specific locations, or detaining individuals or groups should be considered tactical-level objectives.

In such a case, the initial actions should have included detaining the head of the administration—the President, the Prime Minister, key ministers, and top bureaucrats—while maintaining the highest possible level of operational secrecy up to that point.

Instead, the first moves were directed at targets whose capture would have had no meaningful impact on the overall outcome, and which served only to prematurely expose the coup attempt and provoke public outrage. It is clear that tactical-level actions, such as the closure of the Bosphorus Bridge or the seizure of certain police stations, contributed nothing to the achievement of higher-level strategic or operational objectives.

Because efforts were dispersed in this manner, insufficient force and attention were directed toward the critical strategic and operational targets. Moreover, due to the early exposure of the coup attempt, some of the locations that were ultimately targeted yielded no results.

b. Offensive and Maneuver

The principle of offensive operations is based on swiftly seizing, maintaining, and exploiting the initiative. An offensive posture compels the enemy to react rather than act, thus allowing one's own operations to proceed independently of the adversary's tempo or decisions. It is crucial to direct offensive actions in a way that exploits the enemy's vulnerabilities, as this is the most effective means of achieving a decisive result.

Maneuver refers to the movement of forces relative to the enemy's position to gain positional advantage. It aims to place the adversary in a disadvantageous situation through the flexible employment of combat power. However, it is not limited to movement alone; it also requires the appropriate application of the principles of flexibility, center of gravity, economy of force, and surprise. At the operational level, maneuver entails shaping the conditions of battle to one's advantage and avoiding engagement under unfavorable circumstances.

When viewed in the context of 15 July, the only component that displayed an offensive posture—albeit with targets that were tactically and strategically meaningless, such as bombing the parliament and low-altitude flyovers—was the air force. In contrast, the ground forces, which were expected to serve as the main executors of the coup, appeared to be dominated by hesitation and a lack of decisiveness in every movement. Observing the behavior of the tanks alone is enough to draw this conclusion.

Numerous photos published in the press showed tanks being repeatedly stopped in the streets, civilians climbing onto them, and crew members being assaulted, even though even specially trained anti-tank units would avoid approaching them recklessly. Any crew member who has received even basic tank training would know that by sealing the turret hatches, no one could enter the vehicle, and that they could disperse crowds simply by maneuvering the

turret or repositioning the tank. Yet, we are speaking of tanks and armored vehicles that were halted simply because civilians stood in their path—scenes that bear little resemblance to the image of a competent armored force.

Operations should have been designed to exploit the enemy's weak points. However, staging the coup attempt at a time when civilians were still in the streets placed the soldiers directly against the population—arguably the adversary's strongest asset in terms of public support—thereby guaranteeing defeat from the outset.

Moreover, the initial use of tanks, aircraft, bridge closures, low-altitude flights, and bombings did not serve the primary objective of capturing and controlling the executive leadership.

In short, far from implementing the principles of offense and maneuver, those who took to the streets appeared so unprepared that they could not even fulfill the basic requirements of individual soldier or tank-level training.

c. Center of Gravity and Economy of Force

The principle of center of gravity refers to the concentration of combat power at the place and time where a decisive outcome is expected. It is perhaps the only viable way to win a battle with limited forces. In order for a military operation to succeed, it is essential to establish a center of gravity and concentrate overwhelming combat power where and when decisive results are anticipated. This principle is applied in harmony with the principle of economy of force, which aims to sustain operations in other areas with a minimum sufficient level of forces.

During the 15 July Coup Attempt, approximately 5,000 personnel took part—equivalent to roughly 1% of the Turkish Armed Forces' total strength of 570,000. When contrasted with the 99% of the military that did not support the coup, the government's control over a police force exceeding 250,000, and potential public resistance, this figure represents a critically insufficient force. Accordingly, beyond the principle of surprise, the principles of center of gravity and economy of force emerge as vital prerequisites for success.

As noted in the section on objectives, the decisive points of engagement should have been the President, key ministers, and senior bureaucrats. The main and most concentrated efforts should have been directed at these targets. Until such results were achieved, the most critical operational success factor should have been the maintenance of maximum secrecy. However, the premature focus on targets such as bridges, police stations, and provincial party headquarters—none of which represent decisive objectives—and the allocation of significant effort to them clearly violate these principles. This misallocation is not only a waste of operational effort but also exposes and endangers the movements of units intended for primary objectives.

As a single illustrative example, sending already limited tanks as reinforcements to the General Staff Headquarters, which was not even being used as the central command node for the coup's planning and execution, cannot be justified under these principles.

d. Simplicity

At all levels of command, the preparation of clear and straightforward orders is crucial to the success of any operation. While this principle applies to all types of military operations, it is even more critical in the context of a coup attempt against the constitutional order. Such an operation involves coordinated action against a wide range of individuals, institutions, and facilities that must be brought under control. Those tasked with executing these actions may not know one another personally and may be encountering each other for the first time. Moreover, since elements from completely distinct service branches—Land, Naval, Air, and Gendarmerie Forces—would be operating simultaneously within the same environment, absolute clarity and mutual understanding are essential.

A review of the coup plan prepared for and implemented during the 12 September 1980 coup reveals a document in which actions to be taken from "G-2 Day" onward were detailed in a clear and comprehensive manner. The plan, drafted in full operational format, included annexes specifying the suspension and sealing of activities of all political parties, associations, trade unions, and professional chambers within assigned areas of responsibility. It also listed specific addresses where searches would be conducted and records seized. Furthermore, it identified in detail which individuals were to be detained by which units, enabling immediate and automatic execution upon activation of the plan. 2

In contrast, no such document has been recovered in relation to the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. Not only has no operational plan been seized, but no statements, evidence, or materials confirming the existence of such a plan have emerged. Although some witness testimonies refer to pre-coup planning meetings, the absence of a formalized written plan, especially for an operation involving thousands of participants, renders these meetings operationally meaningless.

The lack of any written directive for executing an operation of such complexity indicates that the principle of simplicity was entirely disregarded.

e. Surprise

Surprise, in essence, refers to achieving greater success than the effort expended by attacking the enemy at an unexpected time and place. Elements such as speed, deception, operational security, and the use of varied techniques and tactics further enhance the effect of surprise.

As noted earlier, approximately 5,000 personnel—around 1% of the Turkish Armed Forces' total strength of 570,000—participated in the coup attempt. When viewed in contrast to the remainder of the military that opposed the coup, the government-controlled police force of over 250,000, and the likely support of the public, this number appears negligibly small.

Given the weakness of the force involved, the only element that could have potentially enabled success through asymmetric effect was the element of surprise. However, initial actions such as deploying tanks to one of the most visible and symbolic locations—the Bosphorus Bridge—or conducting low-altitude flights over the cities completely undermined

the possibility of surprise. As if to ensure the elimination of any residual chance of success, the coup was launched at a time when the public was still actively on the streets, thereby placing soldiers directly in confrontation with civilians.

What should have occurred, instead, was the simultaneous execution of precision operations to apprehend key targets in a manner that would generate the full effect of surprise, followed immediately by the swift and uncompromising implementation of subsequent phases of the operation.

The fact that the coup plotters failed to detain any senior political or bureaucratic officials in critical positions—apart from their own military commanders—clearly demonstrates the complete absence of a surprise effect. Publicly announcing the coup attempt through highly visible means such as aircraft and tanks, without first securing the highest levels of state leadership—the actual primary targets—renders the operation incomprehensible.

f. Unity of Effort (Unity of Command)

At every level of warfare, the effective employment of military forces toward a common objective requires both unity of command and unity of effort. Unity of command means that all forces operate under a single, responsible commander. Granting one commander the authority to coordinate and direct all forces working toward a shared goal is a critical step in achieving unity of effort.

In the context of a military coup, unity of command is even more essential than in conventional operations. This is because the action is directed not against a foreign adversary, but against the constitutional order itself—namely, the existing political authority and all elements subordinate to it. In such a case, even the slightest lapse in coordination is certain to compromise the mission.

The absolute prerequisite for achieving unity of effort is the existence of a fully developed and clearly articulated operational plan—yet, to date, no document that can be considered such a plan has been recovered. Subordinate units executing operations must rely on this plan for everything they require during the mission: intelligence, maneuver schemes, logistics, communication protocols, and command procedures. As the operational level decreases, the level of detail in orders increases, initiative becomes more limited, and the orders take on the form of a document to be followed without question by subordinate commanders.

The initial messages marking the start of the coup attempt were transmitted from the General Staff Headquarters. Subsequently, implementation practices suggest that Akıncı Air Base was accepted as the command center. However, there are no orders or directives that confirm to subordinate units where exactly the coup was being directed and controlled from.

Moreover, the selection of Akıncı Air Base as the central command node for the coup was, in itself, a flawed choice. Within the Turkish Air Force, the only operational command center capable of coordinating fighter aircraft, support aircraft, surface-to-air missile systems, anti-aircraft weapons, and radar assets is the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) located

in Eskişehir. Air power cannot be effectively commanded and controlled from any other location with the same level of capability.

On the other hand, following the initiation of the coup attempt, intensive vertical and horizontal coordination would have been expected between the General Staff, the Force Headquarters, and Akıncı Air Base. However, no such extensive communication appears to have taken place. Each headquarters seems to have operated independently, based on its own assessments and within its own initiative.

One of the indispensable components of unity of command is the establishment of a rapid and uninterrupted communications infrastructure. Yet it is understood that no formal communication planning was carried out for the 15 July coup attempt—an operation for which no written plan has been found—and that communication relied largely on direct mobile phone calls. This is particularly concerning given that the operation involved elements from the Land, Naval, Air, and Gendarmerie Forces—units that are significantly different in structure and function. In such a coup attempt, where many of the participating personnel did not even know each other, fast and uninterrupted communication would have been of critical importance. Accordingly, one would have expected a broad digital communications infrastructure, possibly including secure social media channels or digital platforms, to have been established in advance.

In the Turkish Armed Forces, every type of operation is prepared in accordance with a five-part standard operational plan/order format. The fourth section of this format is titled “Command and Communications” and outlines the command structure and communication procedures to be followed during the operation. Although no such operational document has been presented in relation to the 15 July Coup Attempt, based on the way events unfolded, one could reasonably infer that—even if such a document exists—its fourth section was likely left blank. Whichever angle one examines, not only was there no unity of command, but even the basic existence of a functional command system or a clearly established authority issuing orders appears highly doubtful.

g. Security

Security requires that the enemy is never allowed to gain an unexpected advantage. The purpose of security is to keep combat power at a constant state of readiness by taking preventive measures against hostile actions, influence, or surprise maneuvers.

In the context of the 15 July Coup Attempt, it is evident that the principle of security was not taken into account—from the decision to determine leadership only after the coup had commenced, to launching the operation during one of the busiest hours of the evening, to the selection of targets and actions that immediately compromised secrecy.

For example, observing the movements of units deployed outside of their barracks, it would not be incorrect to conclude that those issuing the orders had given little, if any, thought to operational security. In many areas, soldiers appeared helpless, were confronted and even physically assaulted by civilians, and exhibited behavior indicating they had no understanding of why they were there. It is apparent that units and elements sent out to conduct a coup during

hours of heavy civilian presence were not given any clear instructions on force protection, including the use of decisive force when necessary. Tanks moving in convoy formation were stopped repeatedly by civilians. Such an occurrence suggests that those responsible for the units involved in the coup attempt were unaware of even the most basic principles of military conduct—an implication that renders the entire operation profoundly illogical.

Violations of operational security within units and groups due to lack of training and inexperience are too numerous to count, as identifying the correct course of action under such conditions was nearly impossible. Take, for instance, the infamous closure of the Bosphorus Bridge, which was broadcast live across the country in the early moments of the coup. Reinforced with tanks, elements from a military high school were deployed onto the bridge to establish a blockade. However, the manner in which they were positioned from the outset deprived them of any flexibility in movement or maneuver.

Before conducting such a combined operation involving tanks and infantry, specific training in tank-infantry cooperation is required. Yet the military high school students—likely performing a combat mission for the first time and perhaps having only seen tanks from a distance—were deployed alongside tanks as support elements. This decision is a clear indication that operational security was entirely disregarded.

Conclusion

Based on the assessments presented in the sections above, it can be confidently stated that nearly all principles of military operations were ignored during the activities carried out on the night of the 15 July coup attempt. To date, no formal operational plan has been recovered. However, even if such a plan did exist, it is clear from the observed implementation that it did not conform to the operational planning logic and traditions of the Turkish Armed Forces. In any case, it can be reasonably concluded that the planning could not have been conducted by qualified personnel within the TAF.

MINUTES / OFFICIAL REPORT

On **15 July 2016** in **Ankara**, at around **21:00 hours**, unusual activity began to be observed within certain military units. At the same time, it was broadcast on news channels that the **Bosphorus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridges in Istanbul** had been closed to traffic by **Gendarmerie Forces**. According to information obtained from the Police Department Units in Ankara, a group of military personnel had attempted to stage a **coup outside the chain of command**.

Following these reports, **fighter jets** began flying over Ankara skies at around 21:00 hours, conducting low-altitude flights intended to intimidate the public. **Helicopters took off and carried out attacks on certain public buildings**. Fighter jets and helicopters opened fire on public institutions. The **National Intelligence Organization (MİT) buildings in Yenimahalle, Ankara** were surrounded by military units; armored units of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) surrounded critical public institutions in Ankara with weapons, targeting officials within and opening fire, causing fatalities.

The **Special Forces Command in Gölbaşı** was bombed; the **Intelligence Department of the National Police** came under air attack; the **Ankara Police Headquarters** was besieged and entered by armored units; fighter jets conducted low-altitude flights and bombings; the **Presidential Complex** was surrounded; the **Secretary General of the Presidency and several public officials were taken hostage** by military forces involved in the coup.

Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was seized by military units; broadcast flow was stopped, and a statement was read out announcing that the **Turkish Armed Forces had taken control of the government**. Similarly, some private television channels were seized by military units. **Armed clashes broke out at the General Staff Headquarters in Ankara**, and some military personnel were taken hostage. The **Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM)** was bombed, resulting in casualties. Fighter jets participated in these bombings.

It was understood that a **faction within the Turkish Armed Forces attempted a coup d'état**, prompting civilians to take to the streets and try to resist the coup attempt. Fighter jets dropped sonic bombs over crowds to intimidate them. A press release was issued on the official website of the General Staff, and a **three-page public statement** outlining the alleged justification for the coup was published.

All ministries received a secret and urgent order titled **"Flash Message"** with reference numbers: **TEM 16 date-time group; YSK 26702250-1920-97480-16 PER.PL.YNT.D.GEN.AMIRAL/1** signed by the so-called **"President of the Peace at Home Council."** This document was reportedly drafted by **Staff Colonel Cemil TURHAN** and **Brigadier General Mehmet PARTİGÖÇ**. Martial law commanders were appointed in every province, and appointments were also made for **military prosecutors and judges** to martial law courts. Additionally, under the heading **"Other Appointments,"** new appointments were made to positions within the Force Commands, the General Staff, and other military authorities.

It was publicly announced that the individuals attempting the coup had assigned themselves to various military posts. The exact number of those killed during the bombings and the attempted

coup was not yet known, but it was confirmed that **many civilians, police officers, and soldiers** were killed during these events.

Similarly, in **Istanbul and other provinces**, military aircraft and helicopters carried out comparable actions. It was understood nationwide that **cadres affiliated with Fethullah Gülen, organized within the military**, attempted to overthrow the existing government and seize state power by violating the Constitution.

Accordingly, this official record has been drawn up **ex officio** to document the events and for use in the investigation of these incidents.

Prepared on 16 July 2016 at 01:00 hours.

Signed

Serdar Coşkun

Public Prosecutor

SECRET
T.R.
GENERAL STAFF
ANKARA

HRK: 26702250-9140-139083-16/Hrk.Pl.D.Te.Müc.Ş.(Tek.İnc.Koor.) 31 October 2016

SUBJECT: Request for Information and Documents.

TO: GENERAL STAFF LEGAL ADVISORY

REF: Annex-A

1. Within the scope of the investigation regarding the military coup attempt carried out by members of the FETÖ/PDY organization on 15 July 2016;

a. Whether the activity "Support of Law Enforcement Forces in Social Events" (KOKTOD) is a legal activity, its scope, legal basis, related directives, if any, and sending of documents,

b. If the activity of supporting law enforcement forces in social events is legal:

- (1) Whether armored unit planning was done within this activity,
- (2) Whether armored units had ammunition,
- (3) Whether personnel of different ranks from different forces were assigned under this activity,
- (4) Whether every military unit is assigned under this activity,
- (5) Specifically, which units were assigned within Ankara Province,

these items were requested by reference (a).

2. Upon examination of the subject;

a. Regarding the legal aspect of supporting law enforcement forces in social events;

(1) Article 11/D of the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442 stipulates:

"If Governors deem it impossible to prevent or suppress incidents that may occur or have occurred in the province using the forces under their command, or if they are unable to implement the necessary measures with such forces, they shall, in order to utilize the law enforcement units of other provinces or other forces allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of Interior and, if necessary, from the nearest land, naval, or air force command — including the border units of the Gendarmerie General Command or the Land Forces Command — by the fastest means available."

(2) The procedures regarding such force requests by Governors were determined by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 2013/5234 dated 05 August 2013.

(3) The relevant Council of Ministers Decision;

(a) Article 6, Paragraph 1 of this Decision states: "Military units properly trained and equipped for the nature of the events shall be taken as the basis for meeting the governor's request."

(b) Article 6, Paragraph 3 states: "To ensure military units can be kept ready and quickly dispatched upon the governor's request, the force commands from which governors can request support shall be determined by the General Staff, taking into account the opinion of the Ministry of Interior, and sent to the the Ministry of Interior"

(4) Within this scope:

(a) The Unit Chart regarding from which units governors can request support was updated and submitted to the Ministry of Interior with reference (b), and deemed appropriate as informed by reference (c). The mentioned chart was disseminated to the Force Commands and Gendarmerie General Command on 07 March 2016 and sent to the Ministry of Interior with reference (ç).

(b) Regarding meeting the governor's request for forces:

(i) In order to train units suitable to the nature of incidents, the manual titled "MT 145-3 (B) Use of Military Units in Social Incidents (2008)", which is used by units participating in the support of law enforcement forces during social incidents, was updated by the Land Forces Command in consideration of current conditions, in accordance with reference (d). [This publication was deemed appropriate by the General Staff as per reference (e), and its publication and use by all Forces was ordered with reference (f).] In 2015, it was published under the title "KKT 117-5 Training for Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in Social Incidents" (Land Forces Command Manual). The said publication (Annex-B);

(aa) Based on the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442, the Council of Ministers Decision No. 2013/5234 dated 5 August 2013, and other applicable legal regulations in force, the publication is utilized by all Force Commands for the purpose of defining the activities to be conducted within the scope of deploying military units to support law enforcement forces during public incidents, as well as the principles, procedures, and techniques of the related training.

(bb) It covers the units that will participate in supporting law enforcement forces during public incidents, as well as all personnel involved in the planning, deployment, and execution of activities related to the use of these units.

(ii) In order to ensure coordination and cooperation with law enforcement forces, the General Staff has instructed that Support Plans be prepared by unit commands assigned the duty of supporting law enforcement forces;

(aa) To be prepared in a manner that includes units belonging to other forces located within their respective provinces/districts, and to ensure that the necessary training is conducted,

(bb) To be prepared in a manner that includes provisions for mutual reinforcement among the assigned units and the deployment of subordinate units located in different provinces; and, in cases where reinforcement is required from military units in neighboring provinces that do not have their own subordinate units, the inclusion of such units in the plan shall be carried out in coordination with the relevant unit.

(c) Approval by the higher command has been ordered in accordance with reference (g).

(5) The primary and mandatory condition for the execution of support activities by units participating in the support of law enforcement forces during public incidents is the receipt of a written request from the civil authorities, or, in urgent cases where delay would be detrimental, a verbal request (which must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours if made verbally) by the military unit. In addition, the scale, type, and characteristics of the unit appropriate to the request must be determined by the relevant command and coordinated with the civil authorities.

(6) Within the framework of the legislation mentioned above, supporting law enforcement forces during public incidents is a lawful activity.

b. Regarding the planning of Armored Units:

(1) All vehicles in the inventory of the Turkish Armed Forces such as tanks, Armored Combat Vehicles (ACVs), Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), Improved Armored Personnel Carriers (IAPCs), Tactical Wheeled Armored Vehicles (TWAVs), Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles (MRAPs), Riot Control Vehicles (TOMAs), Armored Mortar Carriers (AMCs), Armored TOW Carriers (ATCs), and Armored Construction Vehicles, among others, are collectively referred to as armored vehicles.

(2) An armored unit is defined as a unit that, in accordance with its Organization, Equipment, and Personnel structure, possesses armored vehicles in its inventory. Within this context, some support plans for law enforcement forces have included the planning of armored units; however, it has been specified that only the personnel of these units would be utilized as dismounted elements. In certain plans, it has been observed that the use of armored vehicles is included solely as a last resort, to be employed if necessary.

(3) The units and support weapons to be used in response to incidents are coordinated with the governor within the scope of Article 6, Paragraph 5 of the Council of Ministers Decision No. 2013/5234 dated 5 August 2013, which states: "The military force command shall determine, in coordination with the governor, the required amount of force, including reinforcements from higher commands."

c. No explicit statement has been found in the plans indicating that the armored units would be equipped with live ammunition.

d. Personnel of different ranks from different branches have not been assigned between units. However, in accordance with the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442 and the Council of Ministers Decision No. 2013/5234 dated 5 August 2013, the plans include liaison personnel from different branches assigned to serve in the “Provincial Public Order Management Centers.”

e. The units that will be assigned to duties during public incidents are published annually by the General Staff—taking into account unit disbandments and relocations—after obtaining the opinion of the Ministry of Interior, and are disseminated to the Force Commands and the Gendarmerie General Command, and reported to the Ministry of Interior.

f. It was notified to the Ministry of Interior by reference (b) that the Ankara Governorship would request forces from the 4th Corps Command. In the Support Plan for Law Enforcement Forces prepared by the 4th Corps Command, it was planned—by reference (ğ)—that the units listed in the Annex-B chart would be deployed within the province of Ankara.

3. It is considered appropriate that the information and documents requested by reference (a) be forwarded to the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office upon the decision of the General Staff Legal Advisory Office.

Respectfully submitted for your information.

(SIGNED)
Mehmet OKKAN
Major General
Chief of Operations

ANNEXES:

Annex-A (References)

Annex-B [376 pages (Restricted) – KKT 117-5 Training for Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in Public Incidents (2015) PDF]

Annex-C [1 page (Classified) – Facsimile of Annex-B to the Ankara Province Law Enforcement Support Plan (Areas of Responsibility)]

REFERENCES

REFERENCE:

- (a) Order of the Turkish General Staff dated 19 September 2016, ADMÜŞ.:26702250-9140-1374-16, titled "Request for Information and Documents"
- (b) Correspondence of the Turkish General Staff dated 02 February 2016, HRK:26702250-3080-15031- 6/Hrk.PI.D.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "List of Unit Commands from Which Governors May Request Forces"
- (c) Correspondence of the Ministry of Interior dated 12 February 2016, No: 23635644-531.01.943, titled "List"
- (d) Correspondence of the Turkish General Staff dated 07 March 2016, HRK:26702250-3000-32617-16/Hrk.PI.D.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "List of Unit Commands from Which Governors May Request Forces"
- (e) Order of the Turkish General Staff dated 18 July 2014, HRK/İ67b2250-3100-82712-14/Hrk.PI.D.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "MT 143 (C) Document on Supporting Law Enforcement in Public Order Incidents"
- (f) Message Order of the Turkish General Staff, dated 15 October 2015, GENKUR 161015B SUB 15 TSG HRK.Ş 26702250-30380-14455-15/Hrk.PI.D.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "Measures to be Taken Against Terrorist Activities"
- (g) Correspondence of the Turkish General Staff dated 26 May 2015, HRK:26702250-3000-69924-15/PI.Hrk.D.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "KKT 117-5 Training on Supporting Law Enforcement in Public Order Incidents"
- (h) Correspondence of the Turkish General Staff dated 26 November 2013, HRK:26702250-3000-108187-13/PI.Hrk.Te.Müc.Ş., titled "Principles Regarding Governors' Requests for Military Forces"
- (i) Correspondence of the 4th Corps Command dated 01 July 2015, HRK:77773196-3080-1069370-15/PL, titled "Support Plan for Law Enforcement Forces in Ankara Province"

SIGNED

Ali ÇINAR

Maintenance Captain

Technical Investigation Coordination Officer

NO	UNIT	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY
1	Armored Troops School and Training Division Command	Districts of Nallıhan, Gündül, Beypazarı, Kazan, Çamlıdere, Ayaş, Kızılcahamam, Sincan, Etimesgut, and Yenimahalle; other districts as ordered.
2	Artillery and Missile School Command	Districts of Polatlı and Haymana; other districts as ordered.
3	Signal School and Training Center Command	Districts of Mamak, Bala, and Gölbaşı; other districts as ordered.
4	28th Mechanized Infantry (BG) Brigade Command	Districts of Çubuk, Kalecik, Akyurt, Çankaya, Keçiören, Altındağ, and Pursaklar; other districts as ordered.
5	Naval Forces Headquarters Communications and Electronic Systems Command	District of Elmadağ; other districts as ordered.
6	Land Forces Exercise Center Command	Districts of Şereflikoçhisar and Evren; other districts as ordered.

SIGNED

Coşkun KAYA
Infantry Colonel (Staff)
Director of Operations and
Training Branch

**Republic of Turkey
General Staff
Turkish Land Forces Command
Ankara**

KKT 117-5

**Training on Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in
Public Order Incidents**

**Land Forces Printing House Directorate
Ankara – 2015**

For Official Use Only (FOUO)

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
GENERAL STAFF
TURKISH LAND FORCES COMMAND
ANKARA**

HRK : 22282378-0160-989027-15/Pl. ve Hrk.D.Te.Müc.Ş.

22 June 2015

SUBJECT: KKT 117-5 Practical Draft of the Training Program for Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in Public Order Incidents

CHIEF ORDERLY OFFICER

1. The training manual numbered KKT 117-5, titled "Training on Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in Public Order Incidents," has been prepared as a practical draft for trial implementation.
2. Upon receipt of this Manual, the draft shall be tested by the Land Forces units under the responsibility of the Land Forces Operations Directorate (K.K.Hrk.Bşk.İği) for a period of five months. The results of these trials, without time limitation, shall be reported to the Turkish Land Forces Command by 14 October 2015, using the "Publication Development Recommendation Form" in written or electronic form.
3. The KKT 117-5 "Training on Supporting Law Enforcement Forces in Public Order Incidents Manual" shall be forwarded to the Ministry of National Defense (MSB) and the Ministry of Interior for coordination purposes, subject to the approval and orders of the General Staff (Gnkur.Bşk.İği).
4. Based on the results of the field application and the feedback and recommendations received, the Manual will be finalized and officially published. Upon publication of the final version, the current draft shall be rendered void.

(Signed)
HULUSI AKAR
General
Commander of the Turkish Land Forces

-|-

SECTION FIVE

ORGANIZATION, PERSONNEL, AND EQUIPMENT

1. ORGANIZATION:

Units to be employed in missions supporting law enforcement during public order incidents shall primarily be drawn from within their own establishments and, at most, at the battalion level. In order to achieve the desired deterrent effect on the target audience during these operations, a combined systems approach is adopted, based on existing capabilities (organizational structure, equipment, vehicles, materials, etc.). Armored wheeled or tracked vehicles shall not be deployed independently. As with tank-infantry cooperation, these elements shall be organized and employed in a manner that allows them to support each other and compensate for their respective weaknesses. Training shall be conducted in accordance with this principle. When necessary, exemplary organizational structures may be implemented.

Regimental and higher-level commands are responsible for organizing, equipping, and training an adequate number of units to meet potential force requests originating from their headquarters location or from nearby garrisons where extraordinary or sudden events are likely to occur. These commands must also be prepared in terms of how quickly, by what means, and in what manner the designated force will be mobilized.

In accordance with Article 11/D of Law No. 5442 on Provincial Administration, when a request for forces is made, the deployed force must be quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient in relation to the nature and scale of the incident. Therefore, it should be noted that not all organized units will be dispatched to the incident area. However, the force deployed at the moment of intervention must be adequate enough to eliminate the necessity of using firearms as a last resort.

Based on this understanding, when law enforcement support missions for public order incidents are assigned, each command shall assess—considering the specific characteristics of the units under its authority—whether certain existing tasks within its organization should be cancelled in order to enhance mission effectiveness. These evaluations shall be carried out by the relevant unit commanders.

2. PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT:

a. Units smaller than a company shall not be independently employed in response to public order incidents in areas where they do not have line-of-sight contact with one another.

An example of a battalion structure for supporting law enforcement during public order incidents is shown in **Figure 5-1**. Units shall support law enforcement during such incidents using their own organizational structures. In this context, they shall be organized in accordance with the relevant formation described in **Annex-G**, depending on which specific organizational model they are implementing.

Units smaller than a company shall not be independently employed in response to public order incidents in areas where they do not have visual contact with one another. It is essential that military units support law enforcement using their own organizational structure, equipment, and materials.

b. Considering the operational approach to the use of military units in public order incidents, it is essential that units intervene using their own organizational structure and equipment. However, as needed, a company from the battalion designated to support law enforcement during public order incidents, or forces assigned to intervene in events at border areas where smuggling activities escalate into public disturbances, shall be equipped with materials and gear typically used by law enforcement—such as face-protective visored helmets, body-protective suits, transparent shields, batons, plastic-core projectiles, gas cartridges, weapons that fire plastic capsules, and their related ammunition—in order to apply a softer form of force during initial contact with the crowd. Use of specialized items from this equipment shall be restricted to certified expert personnel. In cases where this special equipment is not available, personnel shall be equipped with their own Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) gear—such as ballistic protective helmets, ballistic vests, or assault vests if ballistic vests are unavailable, and infantry rifles—with the aim of ensuring maximum protection.

An example of such an equipped unit, showing the personnel and material status of a company tasked with supporting law enforcement during public order incidents, is provided in **Annex-G**. The rules of engagement and procedures for using **Water Cannon Vehicles (TOMA)**, **rubber bullets**, and **pepper spray** are detailed in **Annexes Ğ, H, and I**, respectively.

c. The individual protective masks and filters to be used by the units assigned to the mission (The filter must be capable of providing protection against potential chemical agents) shall be provided by the unit itself, in quantities sufficient for all personnel. If these cannot be procured or in urgent situations required by the mission, a request shall be made to the provincial governor's office.

d. By the Military Unit Command from which Forces are Requested by the Governorship:

(1) Based on the nature of the mission, the weapons and equipment to be carried by the units shall be determined (the items listed in the following tables are examples). Additionally, newly procured **Radiographic Screening System** vehicles may be requested from higher command depending on the situation and their suitability.

(2) Specific measures shall be taken regarding who will receive the ammunition, where and how it will be transported, and under what conditions it will be distributed to personnel.

Special measures shall be taken regarding who will receive the ammunition, where and how it will be transported, and under what conditions it will be distributed to personnel.

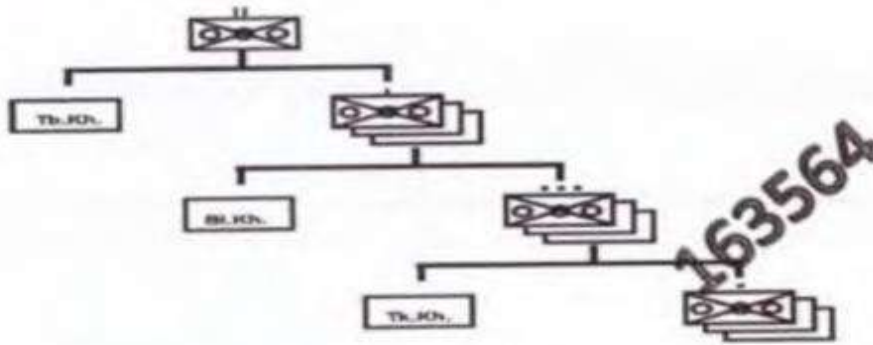


Figure 5-1: Sample Motorized Battalion Organization for Supporting Law Enforcement During Public Order Incidents

Serial No.	Personnel	Rank	Quantity	Weapon	Ammunition	Equipment
1	Battalion Commander	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, binoculars, radio, mobile phone, flashlight, BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
2	Physician *1 – General Practitioner	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	BKB*2, BKY*2, G.M.*3
3	Security and Guard Personnel	Sergeant	1	Infantry Rifle	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	BKB*2, BKY*2, G.M.*3
4	Personnel Officer	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	Megaphone, radio, flashlight,

						BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
5	Intelligence Officer	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, radio, flashlight, BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
6	Operations and Training Officer	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, radio, flashlight, BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
7	Logistics Officer	Officier	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, radio, flashlight, BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
8	Computer Operator	Corporal	2	Infantry Rifle	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	<i>Uses a standalone (non-networked) computer.</i> BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
9	Weapons Maintenance Technician	NCO	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	BKB*2, BKY*2, G.M.*3
10	Wheeled/Tracked Vehicle Operator & Technician	NCO	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	Radio, flashlight, BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3
11	Light Vehicle Driver	Private	6	Infantry Rifle	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	Also serves as a radio and telephone operator. BKB2, BKY2, G.M.3 (Battalion

						Commander, Battalion HQ staff officers, Driver for ambulance, and maintenance vehicle.)
12	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	Medical NCO	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, first aid kit, radio, mobile phone, flashlight, BKB2, <i>BKY2</i> , G.M.3
13	Radio Operator & Maintenance Technician	NCO	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	Video camera, photo camera, BKB2, <i>BKY2</i> , G.M.3
14	Sniper	Specialist Corporal	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	City map, BKB2, <i>BKY2</i> , G.M.3
15	Sniper Assistant	Specialist Corporal	1	Assigned Weapon	Weapon Allowance Ammunition	BKB2, <i>BKY2</i> , G.M.3, <i>camera</i>

Table 5-1: Sample Battalion Headquarters Organization

*1 An ambulance is assigned to the established medical team, taking into account the operational environment.

*2 BKB2, *BKY2*: Abbreviations for ballistic protective helmet and ballistic protective vest, respectively.

*3 G.M.: Commercial-type gas mask.

(XXI) Training shall be conducted on the donning, use, and maintenance of batons, shields, and body protective equipment and materials.

(XXII) Logistical support shall be provided before and during the operation.

(XXIII) Training shall be conducted on the principles and employment of snipers.

(g) Units assigned under the Plan for Supporting Law Enforcement Forces (KKDP) shall be trained on support tasks to law enforcement during public order incidents, including urban planning exercises and training on scale models. Personnel shall be familiarized in detail with critical locations and designated areas of potential employment.

(ğ) In carrying out the assigned mission, training and preparations shall be conducted considering the possibility that persons or groups armed by terrorist organizations may be used against military units.

a. Activities to Be Carried Out During Readiness Conditions:

(1) Alert Phase:

This phase can last from half an hour to several days. For unit deployments outside the garrison, this duration may vary from six hours to one month. Matters such as cancellation or extension of the readiness condition are communicated via a supplementary order.

During this phase, the unit completes its preparations and remains ready to deploy. Ammunition and supply materials are kept in a state ready for distribution. Delivery and receipt procedures are conducted in accordance with the units' Standing Instructions for Delivery/Receipt, based on developments related to the mission.

Detailed information is provided to the units regarding orders received from higher command about the situation and the assigned mission. Name rosters are checked. Personnel are psychologically prepared regarding potential verbal abuse or inappropriate behavior they may encounter at the scene and how to respond appropriately. Speeches by company and platoon commanders serve to prepare units for upcoming tasks.

If no deployment order has been issued to the units, personnel are to rest as much as possible without compromising their readiness status.

The readiness condition may vary between 30 minutes, one hour, two hours, and from six hours up to one month. Any cancellation or extension of the readiness condition shall be communicated through an additional order.

(a) Thirty-Minute Readiness Condition:

(I) All personnel shall assemble in the designated staging areas **near their vehicles**, fully equipped with **weapons and gear**, and final inspections shall be carried out,

(II) Ammunition shall be distributed,

(III) Radio nets shall be opened/activated,

(IV) All equipment and supplies shall be **loaded onto vehicles**, and vehicles shall assume the designated **movement/deployment formation**.

(2) The personnel, weapons, ammunition, equipment, and vehicle status of the Host Unit are shown in Table 6-d.

PERSONNEL	WEAPON	AMMUNITION	EQUIPMENT
S1 (Officer)	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	City map, binoculars, whistle, and flashlight BKB ve 8KY*1, G.M.*2
Headquarters Support Company Commander (Officer)	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	City map, binoculars, whistle, and flashlight, BKB ve BKY*1.G.M*2
Reconnaissance Team Commander (Officer)	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	Radio set, city map, whistle, binoculars, radio BKB and BKY*1.G.M.*2
Liason Officer/ (NCO)	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	City map, binoculars, whistle, and flashlight, radio, BKB and BKY*1, G.M.*2
One representative from each company	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	Radio, BKB ve BKY*1.G M *2
C4ISR Personnel	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	Radio, BKB ve BKY*1, G.M.*2
Light Vehicle Driver	Unit-assigned weapon	Per-weapon ammunition allowance	BKB'ye BKY*1, G.M *2

Table 6-1 — Personnel, Weapons, Ammunition, Equipment and Vehicle Status of the Host Unit

BKB ve BKY *1: Ballistic protective helmet and Ballistic protective vest

G.M.*2 Gas Mask

c. Reconnaissance, Security, and Liaison:

(1) Principles of Reconnaissance, Public order incidents are events that develop suddenly and spread rapidly. Therefore, the unit commander assigned to such incidents conducts reconnaissance continuously, both before and during the incidents.

(a) Reconnaissance Activities to Be Conducted Before the Incidents:

(I) What is the condition of the roads between the barracks and the probable areas of operation?

(aa) How many routes of movement are there?

(bb) Along the routes of movement, where are the points susceptible to being blocked?

(cc) If the points susceptible to being blocked are closed, which side streets will be used to reach the areas of operation?

(çç) Which critical points along the route are susceptible to obstructing the unit's movement?

(dd) Which locations are susceptible to being closed to traffic? For each location, by what measures can traffic be reopened?

(c) Use / Utilization

(I) It is suitable for units assigned support duties.

(II) It is used when isolating personnel.



Figure 6-3 — Shoulder Carry: Rifle Slung Over the Shoulder with Muzzle Pointing Down

(4) High Ready (Figure 6-4)

(a) Command: HIGH READY

(b) Grip/Carry: On the command **HIGH READY**, assume the ready posture. The right hand holds the rifle by the buttstock; the left hand grasps the forestock (with the rifle sling facing to the left), holding it just below the upper sling swivel. The upper part of the left arm is kept parallel to the ground, and the forearm is positioned as vertical to the ground as the body allows.

Elbows are kept close to the body as the individual's posture allows. The butt of the rifle is positioned slightly to the right of the chest. The rifle is held against the body with the right side of the stock oriented forward so that it points ahead.



Figure 6-4 — High Ready

5. Support of Law Enforcement Forces by Mechanized Units During Public Order Operations: Squad/Platoon/Company Tactical Formations:

a. Tactical Formations of the Mechanized Squad in Supporting Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations:

The squad employs two types of dispersal formations: the line formation and the wedge formation.

(1) Line Formation of the Mechanized Squad Supporting Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations (Figure 6-15)

(a) Areas of Use:

- (I)** In road block operations
- (II)** In pushing back or removing a crowd or assembly from the area
- (III)** It is used to separate groups or crowds from one another.

(b) Command:TH SQUAD, DISEMBARK, DIRECTION , LINE FORMATION IN FRONT OF (BEHIND) THE VEHICLE. QUICK MARCH or DOUBLE TIME MARCH.

(c) Execution: The squad dismounts from the vehicle. Rifleman No. 2 takes position five paces in front of the vehicle in the direction given in the command. The remaining riflemen move to his left in numerical order and form a line formation.



Figure 6-15 Line Formation of the Mechanized Squad

(2) Wedge Formation:

(a) Employment:

- (I)** In splitting a crowd or dispersing it to the flanks,
- (II)** In apprehending leaders and perpetrators within the crowd and during evacuation,
- (III)** It is used to clear a route.

(b) Command:TH SQUAD, DISEMBARK. DIRECTION , WEDGE FORMATION IN FRONT OF/BEHIND THE VEHICLE. QUICK MARCH or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(c) Execution: The squad dismounts from the vehicle. Rifleman No. 2 moves to the position ordered by the squad leader, five paces in front of or behind the vehicle.

Even-numbered riflemen move to the right, and odd-numbered riflemen move to the left, taking their positions as shown in Figure 6-16.



Figure 6-16 Wedge Formation

b. Tactical Formations of the Mechanized Platoon in Supporting Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations:

The distance between squads generally varies between 5 and 10 paces. These distances are increased or decreased by order of the platoon leader depending on the nature of the mission, the width of the operational area, and the level of threat. While the platoon executes a formation, the squads may adopt different formations as ordered.

The entire platoon may be employed as an assault element or divided to serve as assault and support elements. The support element is employed as close support. The close support element is generally used in the line formation.

The platoon's dispersal tactical formations consist of two types: line and wedge formations.

(1) Line Formation:

(a) Employment:

(I) During roadblock operations

(II) In pushing back or removing a crowd or assembly from the area.

(III) It is used to separate groups or crowds from one another.

(b) Command:TH PLATOON, DISEMBARK, FRONT ... , IN FRONT OF/BEHIND THE VEHICLES. ...TH SQUAD, CLOSE SUPPORT, OTHER SQUADS LINE FORMATION, PLATOON LINE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(c) Execution:

(I) Mechanized Platoon Line Formation: The platoon dismounts from the vehicles. Five paces in front of or behind the vehicles, the 1st squad faces the direction indicated in the command. The other squads move to the left of the 1st squad in numerical order and take their positions as shown in Figure 6-17.



Figure 6-17 Mechanized Platoon Line Formation

(II) One Squad in Close Support, Platoon Line Formation: The platoon dismounts from the vehicles. Five paces in front of or behind the vehicles, the 1st and 2nd squads take positions as shown in Figure 6-18, while the 3rd squad forms up in line formation



Figure 6-18 One Squad in Close Support, Platoon Line Formation

(2) Wedge Formation:

(a) Employment:

(I) In splitting a crowd and dispersing it to the flanks,

(II) In apprehending leaders and perpetrators within the crowd and during evacuation.

(III) It is used to clear a route.

(b) Command: ...TH PLATOON, DISEMBARK. FRONT ... IN FRONT OF/BEHIND THE VEHICLES. ...TH SQUAD IN CLOSE SUPPORT, OTHER SQUADS IN WEDGE FORMATION, PLATOON WEDGE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(c) Execution:

(I) Platoon Wedge Formation: The platoon dismounts from the vehicles. Five paces in front of or behind the vehicles, the 1st squad forms a wedge

formation; the 2nd squad positions on the right and the 3rd squad on the left, both behind the 1st squad, taking their positions as shown in Figure 6-19.



Figure 6-19 Platoon Wedge Formation

(II) One Squad in Close Support, Platoon Wedge Formation: The platoon dismounts from the vehicles. Five paces in front of or behind the vehicles, the 1st and 2nd squads take up echelon formation, while the 3rd squad forms a wedge formation, taking their positions as shown in Figure 6-19.



Figure 6-19 One Squad in Close Support, Platoon Wedge Formation

c. Tactical Formations of the Mechanized Company in Supporting Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations:

When the company commander issues the order to break the company from march formation and assume tactical formations, he gives the command from a position near the head of the column—stepping to the right or left as necessary to indicate the front or direction. During the execution of the formations, he positions himself where he can best exercise command and control of the company.

The distance between platoons varies between 10 and 20 paces depending on the nature of the mission, the width of the operational area, and the level of threat. These distances are increased or decreased by order of the company commander.

When the company is executing any formation, the platoons transition to other formations on command. The company's tactical formations consist of two types: line and wedge.

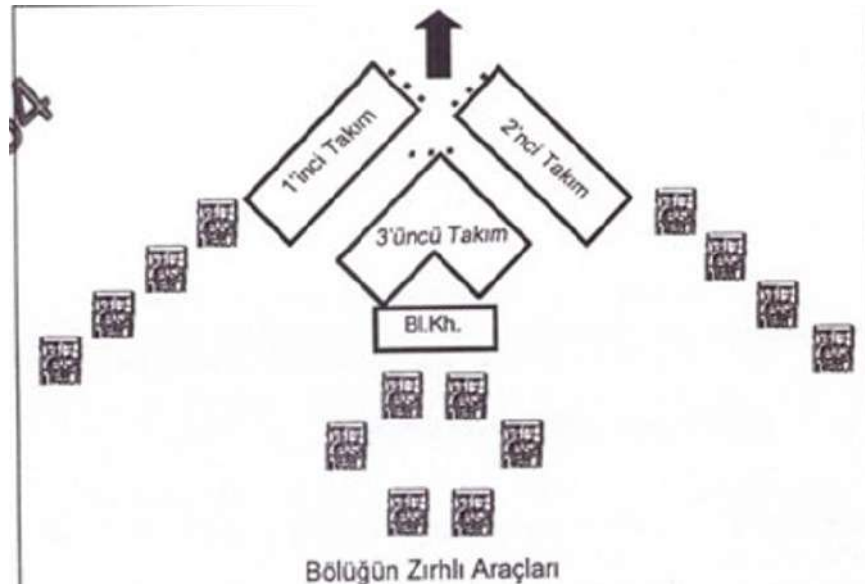


Figure 6-23 Company Wedge Formation — One Platoon in Close Support

6. Tactical Formations of Squad and Platoon Elements Equipped with Tactical Wheeled Armored Vehicles in Support of Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations:

The squad supporting law enforcement forces during public order operations with Tactical Wheeled Armored Vehicles (TWAV) consists of nine non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. When the squad operates dismounted, the TWAV driver and the Remote Weapon Station (RWS) gunner remain in the vehicle, and the squad continues its mission with seven personnel. The platoon supporting law enforcement forces with TWAVs during public order operations consists of one platoon headquarters and three TWAV-equipped law enforcement support squads. Each law enforcement support squad is equipped with one Cobra vehicle (see Figure 6-1).



Figure 6-1 Tactical Wheeled Armored Vehicle (TWAV)



Figure 6-2 Mine-Resistant Partial Protection Vehicle (MRPPV)

As an example, the company supporting law enforcement forces during public order operations in column formation consists of four Mine-Resistant Partial Protection Vehicles (MRPPV) (see Figure 6-3) and two Cobra vehicles.

Depending on the vehicle inventory of the unit, the unit commanders prepare different transportation plans.

Correct adoption and mission-appropriate employment of TWAV-equipped squad/platoon tactical formations depend on each member knowing their position within the formation and executing it rapidly. Tactical formations vary according to the crowd's strength and degree of cohesion/determination, its purpose or any physical objective, and whether the crowd is armed. The standoff distances, positions, intervals, and spacing of the TWAVs specified in this section relative to dismounted units shall be adjusted by the unit commander based on his assessment of the situation. The fundamental principle is to commit a force of adequate size into the appropriate tactical formation and to intervene decisively and without hesitation.

a. Tactical Formations of the TWAV-Equipped Squad in Support of Law Enforcement Forces During Public Order Operations:

(1) Line Formation:

(a) Line Formation with Vehicle in Front and Squad to the Rear:

(I) Employment:

(aa) During roadblock operations,

(bb) In pushing back or removing a crowd or assembly from the area,

(cc) It is used to separate groups or crowds from one another.

(II) Command:

(aa) At the halt:TH SQUAD, FRONT ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, LINE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(bb) While moving:TH SQUAD, DIRECTION ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, LINE FORMATION, MOVE OUT!

(III) Execution: The squad follows the TWAV in line formation, five paces behind it, maintaining a high-ready position as shown in Figure 6-24.

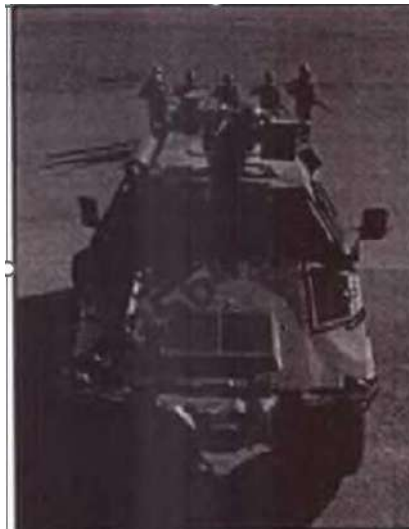


Figure 6-24 Line Formation with Vehicle in Front and Squad to the Rear

(b) Line Formation with Squad in Front and Vehicle to the Rear:

(I) Employment:

(aa) During roadblock operations,

(bb) In pushing back or removing a crowd or assembly from the area,

(cc) It is used to separate groups or crowds from one another.

(II) Command:

(aa) At the halt:TH SQUAD, FRONT ... , SQUAD IN FRONT, VEHICLE IN REAR, LINE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(bb) While moving:TH SQUAD, DIRECTION ... , SQUAD IN FRONT, VEHICLE IN REAR, LINE FORMATION, MOVE OUT!

(cc) Execution: The squad advances in line formation, five paces ahead of the TWAV, maintaining a high-ready position as shown in Figure 6-25. The vehicle follows.



Figure 6-25 Line Formation with Squad in Front and Vehicle to the Rear

(2) Wedge Formation:

(a) Wedge Formation with Vehicle in Front and Squad to the Rear

(I) Employment:

(aa) In splitting a crowd and dispersing it to the flanks,

(bb) In apprehending leaders and perpetrators within the crowd and during evacuation,

(cc) It is used to clear a route.

(II) Command:

(aa) At the halt:TH SQUAD, FRONT ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, WEDGE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(bb) While moving:TH SQUAD, DIRECTION ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, WEDGE FORMATION, MOVE OUT!

(III) Execution: The squad follows the TWAV in wedge formation, five paces behind it, maintaining a high-ready position as shown in Figure 6-26.

(cc) Execution: The squad advances in line formation, five paces ahead of the TWAV, maintaining a high-ready position as shown in Figure 6-25. The vehicle follows.



Figure 6-25 Line Formation with Squad in Front and Vehicle to the Rear

(2) Wedge Formation:

(a) Wedge Formation with Vehicle in Front and Squad to the Rear

(I) Employment:

(aa) In splitting a crowd and dispersing it to the flanks,

(bb) In apprehending leaders and perpetrators within the crowd and during evacuation,

(cc) It is used to clear a route.

(II) Command:

(aa) At the halt:TH SQUAD, FRONT ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, WEDGE FORMATION, MARCH! or DOUBLE TIME MARCH!

(bb) While moving:TH SQUAD, DIRECTION ... , VEHICLE IN FRONT, SQUAD IN REAR, WEDGE FORMATION, MOVE OUT!

(III) Execution: The squad follows the TWAV in wedge formation, five paces behind it, maintaining a high-ready position as shown in Figure 6-26.

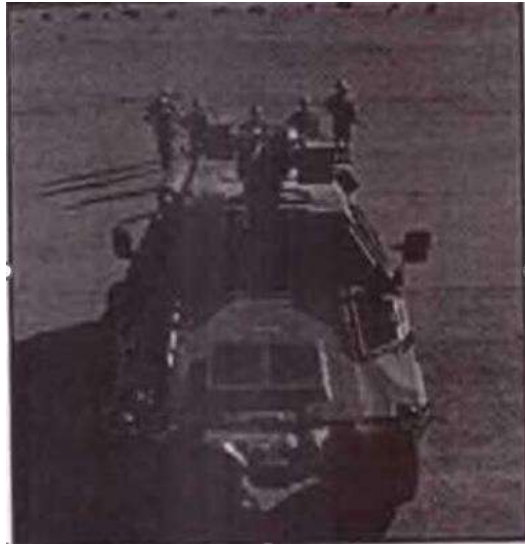


Figure 6-26 — Vehicle in Front, Wedge Formation Behind

(b) Wedge Formation in Front, Vehicle Behind:

(I) Areas of Employment:

(aa) Used for breaching and dispersing a crowd or group to the sides,

(bb) Used for apprehending and extracting leaders or offenders within a crowd or group,

(cc) Used for opening a route.

(II) Command:

(aa) At the Halt: "...th Squad, Front ..., Squad Forward, Vehicle in Rear, Wedge Formation, MARCH!" or "DOUBLE TIME, MARCH!"

(bb) While Moving: "...th Squad, Direction ..., Squad Forward, Vehicle in Rear, Wedge Formation, MOVE OUT!"

(III) Execution: The squad advances in wedge formation, maintaining approximately five paces ahead of the tactical wheeled vehicle (TWV), as illustrated in Figure 6-27. The vehicle follows in trace.

USE-OF-FORCE MATRICES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK LIST

Chart of Firearms Employment Modes							
WHO: Unit Commander, Outpost, Outpost, Outpost Sentry, Patrol, Transport Escort, Personnel Serving in Border Units, Those Assigned to Maintain Public Order (Unit Personnel Deployed upon the Governor's Request for Forces), and Those Protecting Themselves Against Resistance Encountered While Performing an Official Duty, or Protecting Military Personnel or Military Property.							
AUTHORITY: Unit Commander / Commanding Officer / Self							
Item No	CONDITIONS FOR THE USE OF FIREARMS	IN CASES OF SELF-DEFENSE (ARTICLE 25 OF LAW NO. 5237)		IN INTERVENTIONS DURING PUBLIC DISTURBANCES (PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER)			IN CASES OF ARMED CONFLICT (ARTICLES 87–90 OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES SERVICE LAW NO. 211)
		To you	To others	UNARMED	ARMED (NON-FIREARM ARMED)	ARMED WITH FIREARMS	ARMED WITH FIREARMS
1	You are authorized to use weapons only within the scope of lawful self-defense.		+	APPLY FORCE	+	+	+
2	May be used against hostile acts and hostile intent directed at you, unit personnel, or a specific individual, including lethal force.		+	APPLY FORCE	+	+	+

3	Before employing a firearm, and if time and the situation permit, attempt to give a warning.	+		+	+	
4	Before firing, warn "Surrender!" or "Stop!"	+		+	+	
5	Warning shot into the air! Warning shot at the ground!	-		+	+	
6	Then, fire at the target with measured and proportionate force.	-		+	+	+
	CONSIDERATIONS WHEN OPENING FIRE					
1	Aim at the target and fire!	+		+		+
2	Fire with measured and proportionate force to neutralize the threat!	+		+		+
3	Take all practicable measures to avoid injuring anyone other than the target (civilians).	+		+		+

1. **Constitution of the Republic of Turkey No. 2709**, published in the Official Gazette No. 17863 (repeated) dated **9 November 1982** (Article 34).
2. **European Convention on Human Rights**, published in the Official Gazette No. 8662 dated **19 March 1954** (Article 11).
3. **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law No. 211**, published in the Official Gazette No. 10703 dated **10 January 1961**.
4. **Martial Law No. 1402**, published in the Official Gazette No. 13837 dated **15 May 1971**.
5. **Law No. 1481 on the Prevention of Certain Acts Affecting Public Order**, published in the Official Gazette No. 13957 dated **15 September 1971**.

6. **Police Duties and Powers Law No. 2559**, published in the Official Gazette No. 2751 dated **14 July 1934** (Articles 9 and 20).
7. **Gendarmerie Organization, Duties and Authorities Law No. 2803**, published in the Official Gazette No. 17985 dated **12 March 1983**.
8. **Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911**, published in the Official Gazette No. 18185 dated **8 October 1983** (in its entirety).
9. **State of Emergency Law No. 2935**, published in the Official Gazette No. 18204 dated **27 October 1983**.
10. **Law on the Organization of the Security (Police) Directorate No. 3201**, published in the Official Gazette No. 3629 dated **12 June 1937**.
11. **Anti-Terror Law No. 3713**, published in the Official Gazette No. 20843 (repeated) dated **12 April 1991**.
12. **Law No. 5149 on the Prevention of Violence and Disorder in Sports Events**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25455 dated **7 May 2004** (Articles 11 and 19).
13. **Turkish Penal Code No. 5237**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25611 dated **12 October 2004**.
14. **Criminal Procedure Code No. 5271**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25673 dated **17 December 2004** (Articles 90 and 91).
15. **Provincial Administration Law No. 5442**, published in the Official Gazette No. 7236 dated **18 June 1949** (Article 11).
16. **Notification Law No. 7201**, published in the Official Gazette No. 10139 dated **11 February 1959** (Article 2).
17. **Private Security Services Law No. 5188**, published in the Official Gazette No. **25504** dated 26 June 2004.
18. **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Regulation**, published in the Official Gazette No. 10901 dated 8 September 1961.
19. **Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations**, published in the Official Gazette No. 18836 dated 8 August 1985 (in its entirety).
20. **Judicial Law Enforcement Regulation**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25832 dated 1 June 2005 (Article 5).
21. **Regulation on Judicial and Preventive Searches**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25832 dated 1 June 2005 (Articles 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 19, 20, 23, 28, 29, 31).
22. **Regulation on the Organization, Duties and Authorities of the Gendarmerie**, published in the Official Gazette No. 18254 dated 17 December 1983 (Article 32).
23. **Regulation on Apprehension, Detention and Statement Taking**, published in the Official Gazette No. 25832 dated 1 June 2005.

24. Police Riot Force Regulation, published in the Official Gazette No. 17914 dated 30 December 1982 (Articles 19, 20, 23, 24, 25).
25. Council of Ministers Decree No. 2013/5234, dated 5 August 2013.
26. Directive on the Procedures and Principles for the Conduct of Personnel Assigned to Public Order Incidents, issued by the General Directorate of Security on 12 September 2011 (Articles 5–12).
27. Circular of the Ministry of Interior No. 2013/28, dated 28 June 2013, titled “*Riot Police Personnel.*”
28. Circular of the Ministry of Interior No. 2013/33, dated 22 July 2013, titled “*Procedures of Conduct During Public Order Incidents.*”
29. Article 22 of the Anti-Smuggling Law No. 5607.
30. Military Penal Code No. 1632.
31. Turkish Armed Forces Disciplinary Law No. 6413.
32. Law No. 6136 on Firearms, Knives and Other Tools.
33. Law No. 6638 on Amendments to Certain Laws.
34. Circular of the Ministry of Interior (2012) titled “*Assignment of Negotiators During Public Order Incidents.*”

GENERAL PURPOSE SEIZURE RECORD

INFORMATION RELATED TO THE OFFENSE

Type of Offense	
Date of Offense	
Place (Location) Where the Offense Was Committed	
Whether a Decision Has Been Issued by a Judge or Public Prosecutor Regarding the Seizure	

On 05/03/20..., during inspections conducted in the Kaş/Antalya area, it was determined that the transit vehicle bearing license plate 06 MBF 06 was in violation of Articles 188 and 265 of the Turkish Penal Code. As all communication efforts to reach the competent judge or public prosecutor were unsuccessful, the vehicle/materials described in type and quantity below were seized by us in accordance with applicable procedures. 05/06/20...

QUANTITY / IF VEHICLE, ITS TONNAGE / BRAND / TYPE / OTHER DETAILS AND CHARACTERISTICS

//////////////////////////////////// TOTAL OF / ITEMS ONLY. //////////////////////////////////////

Recipient / Receiving Officer

Delivering Officer

EXPLANATIONS

2: If a **Specialist NCO** (*Uzman Erbaş*) cannot be assigned, an **NCO** (*Erbaş*) shall be designated instead.

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- 4: Squads not carrying shields and batons are assigned 40 units per person of the designated item.
- 5: Held by the first team leaders of the 1st and 2nd squads.
- 6: The platoon commander and platoon sergeant each carry three units.
- 7: Refers to a camera or mobile phone with camera capability..
- 8: Refers to a handheld spotlight.
- 9: Five units are issued..
- 10: Held by the second team leaders of the 1st and 2nd squads.
- 11: Carried by the first companies of the battalion.

SAMPLE TABLE OF ORGANIZATION, WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT FOR SUPPORT TO LAW-ENFORCEMENT FORCES																																
Item No	Duty	Rank	Weapon		Equipment																											
			Standard	Non-Standard	Standard													Non- Standard														
			Standard Weapon	Pistol	Tear-gas launcher (2 per platoon)	Tear-gas spray (per platoon: unspecified; Company HQ: 2 units)	Tear-gas hand grenade (per platoon: unspecified; Company HQ: 2 units)Ad.)	Night-vision goggles / Night-vision binoculars / Spare battery	Smoke canister / Signal flare	Radio	Composite Helmet (with Visor)	Ballistic Protective Vest (Armored)	Binocular	Video camera / Tripod / Spare battery	Mobile phone / Spare battery	Megaphone / Spare Battery (1 per Platoon)	Medical kit / Burn blanket	Flashlight / Spotlight / Spare Battery	Portable Fire Extinguisher, 2 kg	City/District Map	Handcuffs (100 per Platoon)	?	Gas Mask / Spare Filter	?	?	?	?	Non-marking Cover	Plastic-Core Cartridge (400 rounds per ?)	?	?	?
1	Battalion Commander	Officier																														
2																																
3																																
4																																
5																																
6																																
7																																
8																																
9																																
10																																
11																																
12																																

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FIREARMS USE AUTHORITIES OF MILITARY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT DURING PUBLIC ORDER INCIDENTS

SCENARIO-1

SITUATION:

In location C of province B, a group of individuals unlawfully gathered while carrying sharp and piercing instruments and chanting slogans, thereby disrupting traffic order. As the law enforcement forces failed to disperse the group, Governor M made an urgent request for assistance from the Garrison Command. Upon the governor's request, the military unit tasked with independently intervening against the group was commanded by Officer L. Considering the urgency of the situation, Commander L. ordered his troops to restore public order and disperse the group without issuing any prior warning, authorizing the use of firearms if necessary. Following this order, Infantry Private X, identifying O as the leader of the demonstration, shot and wounded O in the leg, rendering him ineffective. The group, frightened by the incident, dispersed immediately.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

*** Provincial Administration Law No. 5442, Article 11/D, Paragraph 1:**

"When governors determine that it is not possible to prevent or suppress incidents occurring or likely to occur in the province with the forces under their command, or that the measures they have taken cannot be implemented with these forces, they may, for the purpose of utilizing the law enforcement forces of other provinces or other forces allocated for this task, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior or from the nearest land, sea, or air unit command — including the border units of the Land Forces Command — through the fastest possible means. In such cases, the governor shall decide whether to request the necessary forces from the Ministry of the Interior, from the military units, or from both authorities. The governor's request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing."

*** Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law – Article 87 / II / 2**

"2. If an individual or group carries firearms or implements that would make an attack substantially effective, they shall be warned to lay down such weapons or implements. If the aggression, assault, or resistance continues despite this warning, firearms may be used, starting from the degree necessary to ensure compliance."

*** TSK Internal Service Regulation — Art. 87 / III / 1-2**

"III — Manner of Employing Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner effective for their respective types. Cutting and thrusting implements and firearms shall first be directed at the target; thereafter the buttstocks and grips of firearms may be used; subsequently cutting, thrusting implements and firearms may be employed in actual physical application. Employing a weapon does not necessarily mean discharging it. Firing is a last resort. First, a warning shot shall be fired into the air. Next, a shot shall be aimed at the legs. If resistance, assault or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat continues, fire may be delivered without aiming at a specific point ”

* **TCK Art. 6**

(f) For the purposes of this Code, the term ‘weapon’ shall be understood to mean:

- firearms;
- explosive materials;
- any kind of cutting, piercing or bludgeoning implement manufactured for attack or defence;
- other things which, even if not manufactured for attack or defence, are in fact suitable for use in attack or defence; and
- incendiary, corrosive, injurious, asphyxiating, poisonous, or disease-causing substances, and nuclear, radioactive, chemical or biological agents that may cause lasting illness. (...)”

SCENARIO–3

SITUATION:

In location C of province B, two opposing groups engaged in an armed clash. As the confrontation escalated, Governor N requested assistance from the Garrison Command.

During the intervention of the military unit assigned to separate the groups, Infantry Private A, acting without an order to fire from his unit commander, discharged his weapon to protect T, who was being attacked at a distance of about two meters by V, who was wielding a chain. The shot struck V in the chest, causing serious injury.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

* **Provincial Administration Law (Law No. 5442), Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1**

“When governors determine that it is not possible to prevent or suppress incidents occurring or likely to occur within the province with the forces under their command, or that the measures they have taken cannot be implemented with these forces, they may, in order to make use of the law enforcement forces of other provinces or other forces allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior or from the nearest land, sea, or air unit command — including the border units of the Land Forces Command — through the fastest possible means. In such cases, the governor shall decide whether to request the necessary forces from the Ministry of the Interior, from the military units, or from both authorities. The governor’s request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.”TSK İç Hiz. K. m. 87 / II / 1:

“The use of weapons during the performance of the duties set out in this Article is permitted only when there remains no other remedy or when necessity so requires.

If a person or group is unarmed, the commander of the unit responsible for public order shall, according to the degree of resistance, assault, harmful act or threat, give the necessary warning that weapons will be used. If that warning is not obeyed, weapons shall be employed beginning at the degree necessary to secure compliance.”

* **Article 87 – IV. Firing Orders and Independent Use of Firearms**

Firing shall, in principle, be subject to a specific order issued for that purpose.

However, even in the absence of such an order, every soldier may use his weapon. The determination of the time, degree, and manner in which the weapon is to be used shall be made personally by the soldier, taking into account the circumstances and conditions under which the incident occurs.

SCENARIO-4

SITUATION:

The military unit called in to disperse an armed group assembled at location C in province B is awaiting the unit commander's order to intervene beside the military vehicle to which they had been transported and which has been left under their guard.

Without aiming at the unit, the group pelted the military vehicle alongside which they were standing with stones, shattering the vehicle's windows. Corporal F, wishing to frighten and disperse the group, on his own initiative fired randomly in the direction of the group, causing group member N to be wounded in the abdomen.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

* **Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1 of the Provincial Administration Law:**

Governors, when they deem it impossible to prevent or have failed to prevent incidents that have occurred or are likely to occur within the province with the forces under their command, or when they consider it impossible to implement or have failed to implement the necessary measures with those forces, shall, in order to make use of law enforcement forces from other provinces or other units allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior or, including border units of the Land Forces Command, from the nearest land, naval, or air force command, by the fastest means available.

In such cases, whether the required forces are to be requested from the Ministry of the Interior, from military units, or from both authorities, shall be determined at the discretion of the governor making the request. The request for assistance made by the governor shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent circumstances, this request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law, Article 87 / I / (d):**

(d) He is authorized to use his weapon in order to repel any attack directed against any person or property entrusted to his protection.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87, III (1–2)**

III – Manner of Using Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner effective for their respective types. Initially, edged and thrusting weapons and firearms are to be brought to bear on the target; if

necessary, the buttstocks and grips of firearms shall be used; subsequently, edged, thrusting and firearms may be employed in active (hand-to-hand) use.

The use of a weapon does not necessarily imply discharging it. Firing is a measure of last resort. First, warning shots shall be fired into the air. Thereafter, shots may be aimed at the legs; if resistance or an assault, or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat, continues, firing without aiming at a specific target is permitted.

SCENARIO-7

SITUATION:

In order to enable intervention in support of the law enforcement forces responding to public disturbances in the city center of Province C, Governor K urgently requests assistance from the garrison command. The command assigns a unit under its authority to independently intervene in the incidents.

During the events, protester M is caught attempting to ignite a cloth placed in the fuel tank of a military vehicle. While being handcuffed, M attempts to flee. Private T, believing that the situation would result in his being held responsible, fires his weapon, striking M in the neck and causing his death.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

*** Provincial Administration Law, Article 11/D / Paragraph 1 / Subparagraph 3:**

(3) In cases where the military force is assigned to act independently, the assigned mission shall be carried out by the military force under the responsibility of its own commander and in accordance with his orders and instructions, by exercising both the authorities granted under the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law and those vested in law enforcement agencies for the maintenance of public security.

*** Law No. 2559 on the Duties and Powers of the Police — Article 16, Paragraphs VII (c) and VIII:**

(c) The police are authorized to use firearms to the extent necessary in order to ensure the apprehension of individuals for whom an arrest, detention, or compulsory appearance order, or a warrant of apprehension has been issued, or of a suspect caught in the act of committing an offense.

VIII. Before using a firearm within the scope of subparagraph (c) of paragraph seven, the police shall call out “stop” in a manner audible to the person concerned. If the person fails to comply and continues to flee, a warning shot may be fired. Should the person persist in escaping despite the warning, making apprehension otherwise impossible, the police may fire their weapon to the extent necessary to ensure the person’s capture.

SCENARIO-8

SITUATION:

In the city center of Province A, a large unarmed crowd gathered without authorization refuses to disperse and is blocking traffic. When the law enforcement forces prove insufficient, Governor H requests assistance from the garrison command.

Five individuals stand in front of the military intervention vehicle in a manner obstructing its movement but without resorting to violence. Ignoring repeated warnings to disperse, they remain in place. In response, Private M fires randomly in the direction of the demonstrators without aiming, resulting in the deaths of two individuals and the serious injury of another.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

* **Provincial Administration Law, Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1:**

When governors consider it impossible to prevent, or have failed to prevent, incidents that have occurred or are likely to occur within the province with the forces under their command, or when they deem it impossible to implement, or have failed to implement, the necessary measures with those forces, they shall, in order to utilize the law enforcement forces of other provinces and other units allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior and, if necessary, from the General Command of the Gendarmerie or from the nearest land, naval, or air force command — including border units of the Land Forces Command — by the fastest means available.

In such circumstances, whether the required forces are to be requested from the Ministry of the Interior, from military units, or from both authorities shall be determined at the discretion of the governor making the request. The governor's request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87 / II / 1**

The use of weapons in the performance of the duties set forth in this Article shall be permitted only where no other means remain or where necessity so requires.

If the individual or crowd is unarmed, the commander of the unit assigned to public-order duties shall, according to the degree of resistance, assault, harmful act or threat, give the necessary warning that force will be used. If that warning is not complied with, force shall be employed beginning at a level sufficient to secure compliance.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87, III (1–2)**

III — Manner of Using Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner effective for their respective types. First, edged and thrusting weapons and firearms shall be brought to bear on the target; thereafter the buttstocks and grips of firearms may be used; subsequently edged, thrusting and firearms may be used in active (physical/hand-to-hand) application.

The use of a weapon does not necessarily involve discharging it. Firing is a measure of last resort. A warning shot shall first be fired into the air. If necessary, shots may then be aimed at the legs; if resistance or an assault, or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat, continues, firing without aiming at a specific target is permitted.

SCENARIO-9

SITUATION:

In order to enable intervention in support of the law enforcement forces responding to public disturbances in the city center of Province D, Governor K urgently requests assistance from the garrison command.

During the military unit's intervention, protester N is observed preparing to set fire to a civilian vehicle. Corporal H, aiming to neutralize N, takes direct aim and shoots him in the leg.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

* **Provincial Administration Law, Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1:**

When governors consider it impossible to prevent, or have failed to prevent, incidents that have occurred or are likely to occur within the province using the forces under their command, or when they deem it impossible to implement, or have failed to implement, the necessary measures with those forces, they shall, in order to utilize law enforcement units from other provinces or other forces allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior and, if necessary, from the General Command of the Gendarmerie or from the nearest land, naval, or air force command — including border units of the Land Forces Command — by the fastest means available.

In such circumstances, whether the required forces are to be requested from the Ministry of the Interior, from military units, or from both authorities shall be determined at the discretion of the requesting governor. The governor's request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent situations, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87, III (1–2)**

III — Manner of Employing Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner appropriate and effective for their respective types. Initially, edged and thrusting weapons and firearms shall be directed at the target; thereafter the buttstocks and grips of firearms may be used; subsequently edged, thrusting and firearms may be employed in actual (physical/hand-to-hand) use.

The use of a weapon does not necessarily entail discharging it. Firing is a measure of last resort. First, a warning shot shall be fired into the air. If necessary, shots may then be fired

at the legs; if resistance or an assault, or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat, continues, firing without aiming at a specific target is permitted.

*** Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87 / IV / 1–2**

IV — Order to Open Fire and Independent Use of Firearms

Firing shall, in principle, be subject to a specific order issued for that purpose.

However, even in the absence of such an order, every soldier may use his weapon. The determination of the time, degree, and manner in which the weapon is to be used shall be made personally by the soldier, taking into account the circumstances and conditions under which the incident occurs.

SCENARIO-10

SITUATION:

In order to enable intervention in support of law enforcement forces responding to public disturbances in the city center of Province A, Governor K urgently requests assistance from the garrison command. The assembled group is unarmed, merely chanting slogans and making demonstrations.

During the events, a group of protesters engage in an act of undressing and direct verbal abuse and profane chants toward the nearby military unit deployed at the scene. The unit commander, K, calls upon the group to cease their actions. When this proves ineffective, he orders his soldiers to open fire. As a result of the gunfire, four individuals participating in the act of undressing are wounded in the legs.

Course of Action: ?**Legal Basis:***** Provincial Administration Law, Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1:**

When governors consider it impossible to prevent, or have failed to prevent, incidents that have occurred or are likely to occur within the province using the forces under their command, or when they deem it impossible to implement, or have failed to implement, the necessary measures with those forces, they shall, in order to utilize law enforcement units from other provinces or other forces allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior and, if necessary, from the General Command of the Gendarmerie or from the nearest land, naval, or air force command — including the border units of the Land Forces Command — by the fastest means available.

In such circumstances, whether the required forces are to be requested from the Ministry of the Interior, from military units, or from both authorities shall be determined at the discretion of the governor making the request. The governor's request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent cases, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.

*** Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87 / II / 1**

The use of weapons in the performance of the duties set forth in this Article shall be permitted only where no other means remain or where necessity so requires.

If the individual or crowd is unarmed, the commander of the unit assigned to public-order duties shall, according to the degree of resistance, assault, harmful act or threat, give the necessary warning that weapons will be used. If that warning is not complied with, force shall be employed commencing at a level sufficient to secure compliance.

*** Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87, III (1–2)**

III — Manner of Using Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner effective for their particular types. First, edged and thrusting weapons and firearms shall be brought to bear on the target; thereafter the buttstocks and grips of firearms may be used; subsequently edged, thrusting and and firearms may be employed in active (hand-to-hand) application.

The use of a weapon does not necessarily involve discharging it. Firing is a measure of last resort. A warning shot shall first be fired into the air. Thereafter, shots may be fired at the legs; if resistance, an assault, or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat continues, firing without aiming at a specific target is permitted.

*** Turkish Penal Code — Article 29 / Paragraph 1**

(1) A person who commits an offense under the influence of anger or intense sorrow caused by an unjust act shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of eighteen to twenty-four years in lieu of aggravated life imprisonment, or twelve to eighteen years in lieu of life imprisonment. In other cases, the sentence to be imposed may be reduced by one-quarter to three-quarters.

SCENARIO 11

SITUATION:

In order to enable intervention in support of law enforcement forces responding to public disturbances in the city center of Province D, Governor K urgently requests assistance from the garrison command. The garrison command assigns a unit to act independently.

During the events, Sergeant Major H pursues protester D, who flees from within a group identified as armed. After issuing a verbal warning to stop, Sergeant Major H fires his weapon, striking D in the waist. D is taken to the hospital and is left partially paralyzed as a result.

Course of Action: ?

Legal Basis:

* **Provincial Administration Law — Article 11 / D / Paragraph 1:**

When governors consider it impossible to prevent, or have failed to prevent, incidents that have occurred or are likely to occur within the province using the forces under their command, or when they deem it impossible to implement, or have failed to implement, the necessary measures with those forces, they shall, in order to utilize the law enforcement forces of other provinces or other units allocated for this purpose, request assistance from the Ministry of the Interior and, if necessary, from the General Command of the Gendarmerie or from the nearest land, naval, or air force command — including border units of the Land Forces Command — by the fastest means available.

In such circumstances, whether the required forces are to be requested from the Ministry of the Interior, from military units, or from both authorities shall be determined at the discretion of the governor making the request. The governor's request for assistance shall be fulfilled without delay. In urgent cases, such a request may be made verbally, provided that it is subsequently confirmed in writing.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87 / II / 2**

(2) If an individual or group is armed, or is carrying instruments capable of making an assault significantly effective, they shall first be warned to lay down their weapons or instruments. If the aggression, assault, or resistance nonetheless continues, weapons shall be used, beginning at a level sufficient to ensure compliance.

* **Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law — Article 87, III (1–2)**

III — Manner of Using Weapons

Weapons shall be employed in a manner effective for their respective types. First, edged and impact weapons and firearms shall be brought to bear on the target; thereafter the

buttstocks and grips of firearms may be used as striking implements; subsequently edged, impact and firearms may be used in actual (physical/close-quarters) application.

The use of a weapon does not necessarily involve discharging it. Firing is a measure of last resort. A warning shot shall first be fired into the air. Thereafter, if required, shots may be directed at the lower limbs; if resistance or an assault, or resistance amounting to a dangerous threat, continues, firing without aiming at a specific target is permitted.

1. WITHIN THE SCOPE OF SUDDEN DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRING NATIONWIDE;
ALL UNITS, INSTITUTIONS, AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES SHALL IMMEDIATELY AND WITHOUT HESITATION TAKE ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO FULFILL THE TASKS ASSIGNED TO THEM, TO ENSURE SECURITY, AND TO MAINTAIN FUNCTIONAL CONTINUITY.

2. IN THIS CONTEXT, ALL UNITS, INSTITUTIONS, AND HEADQUARTERS SHALL:

- A. Complete their preparations as soon as possible,
- B. Remain on standby to execute the orders to be issued by the General Staff Headquarters.

3. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, AS A PRIORITY:

- A. The 1st Gendarmerie Commando Brigade Command (Çakırsöğüt) and appropriate elements of the Special Forces Command shall immediately deploy to Ankara without delay,
- B. In order to ensure the rapid execution of the deployment, the commanders of both units are granted full coordination authority with the relevant force commands and other units.

PROVISIONS IN FORCE REGARDING ORDERS AND THEIR EXECUTION

1. Provisions in the Constitution

Unlawful Order

Article 137 – A person who is employed in public service in any capacity or form shall not carry out an order received from a superior if they consider the order to be contrary to regulations, Presidential decrees, laws, or the provisions of the Constitution, and shall notify the superior of this contradiction. However, if the superior insists on the execution of the order and renews it in writing, the order shall be carried out; in this case, the person who executes the order shall not be held responsible. 1

An order that constitutes a criminal offense shall never be executed; a person who executes such an order cannot be absolved of liability.

Exceptions stipulated by law concerning the execution of military services and urgent circumstances involving public order and public security are reserved.

[1] With Article 16 of Law No. 6771 dated 21/1/2017, the term "regulation" in this paragraph was replaced with "Presidential decree."

2. Provisions in the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237

Provision of Law and Order of a Superior

Article 24 –

- (1) A person who acts in accordance with the provisions of the law shall not be punished.
- (2) A person who executes an order issued by a competent authority, which is mandatory to carry out as part of their duty, shall not be held criminally liable.
- (3) An order that constitutes a criminal offense shall never be executed. Otherwise, both the issuer and the executor of the order shall be held liable.
- (4) In cases where the law prevents the verification of the order's legality, the responsibility shall rest with the person who issued the order.

Mistake

Article 30 –

- (1) A person who is unaware of the material elements of the legal definition of a crime at the time of committing the act shall not be deemed to have acted with intent. However, liability for negligence remains applicable.
- (2) A person who makes a mistake regarding the existence of circumstances that require more or less severe punishment shall benefit from such mistake.
- (3) A person who makes an unavoidable mistake regarding the conditions that eliminate or reduce criminal liability shall benefit from that mistake.

(4) A person who makes an unavoidable mistake concerning the wrongful nature of the act they committed shall not be punished.

3. Provisions in the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law No. 211

Article 6 – Service:

Service refers to the duties prescribed to be performed or prohibited under laws and regulations, and also includes tasks commanded or forbidden by a superior, either in writing or verbally.

Article 7 – Duty:

Duty is to perform what the service requires and to refrain from what it prohibits.

Article 8 – Order:

An order is the expression of a service-related instruction or prohibition, whether verbally, in writing, or by other means.

Article 13 – Discipline:

Discipline means absolute obedience to laws, regulations, and superiors, as well as respect for the rights of both subordinates and superiors in accordance with general decorum and military procedures.

Discipline forms the foundation of military service. To ensure its preservation and continuity, criminal and administrative measures are implemented through special laws and regulations.

Article 14 – Subordinate:

A subordinate is obliged to demonstrate full respect toward superiors in line with general decorum and military customs, to obey superiors without question, and in cases prescribed by laws and regulations, to obey higher-ranking officers absolutely.

A subordinate must carry out assigned duties and orders on time without alteration, exceeding authority, or delay. The responsibility arising from execution lies with the one who issued the order.

Any acts, statements, writings, or behaviors that threaten the sense of obedience are prohibited and subject to criminal sanctions.

Article 15 – Superior:

A superior may issue orders to any individual under their command.

Article 16 – Limitation of Authority:

A superior may not issue orders to subordinates unrelated to the service.

Article 20 – Integrity of Orders:

Orders issued by a superior shall not be altered by the subordinate.

4. Provisions in the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Regulation

Article 2 –

For full and proper discipline, it is essential that superiors and subordinates maintain mutual trust, affection, and respect for one another.

Discipline lacking such mutual confidence is dangerous and quickly deteriorates in times of crisis, resulting in failure and disaster.

Article 4 –

Absolute obedience, as required by the profession, must be rendered willingly by every subordinate.

Obedience should arise not merely from fear of a superior's legal authority but from genuine respect and admiration for the superior's knowledge, rank, position, and personal character.

This feeling of respect and admiration must be apparent in all behavior and demeanor of the subordinate at all times and places, and it should shine through their eyes. Instilling these sentiments is one of the principal duties of a superior.

Article 5 –

Every subordinate must believe that their superiors are more knowledgeable and experienced, that they have rendered greater service to the Armed Forces and the country, and that they always have good intentions toward them. The assurance of such belief forms the foundation of the spirit of obedience.

Article 8 –

A subordinate is obligated to carry out every order from a superior willingly and with all possible endurance, in a timely and complete manner. In addition to this, it is the duty of every subordinate to assist their superiors, both during and outside of official duties.

Article 9 –

Subordinates must always remain attentive in the presence of their superiors and look at them eagerly to demonstrate their readiness to execute any order that may be given during a task.

Article 10 –

It is strictly prohibited for a subordinate to express an opinion on an order received from a superior.

Any order received shall be executed without any reservation, condition, or hesitation, and without any subjective judgment.

Grumbling while receiving or after receiving an order, or displaying any behavior suggesting disapproval of the order, is subject to disciplinary punishment.

Article 13 –

A superior is rightfully entitled to expect and demand absolute obedience from their subordinates.

Article 25 –

It is the foremost duty of every superior to ensure that all orders, whether conveyed via bugle, other signals, orally, in writing, or through any form of communication device, are carried out punctually and precisely.

Superiors must be especially vigilant to prevent any delays and must train their subordinates to embrace their duties and perform them on time.

Any delay must never be tolerated or forgiven.

Article 33 –

Orders must pertain to service (as outlined in Articles 8 and 16 of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law) and must not violate laws or regulations.

However, except for cases falling within the scope of paragraph (b) of Article 41 of the Military Penal Code, a subordinate shall carry out an order even if they believe it to be unlawful or contrary to regulations, and may lodge a complaint afterwards.

5. Provisions in the Military Penal Code No. 1632

Article 12 –

For the purposes of this Law, the term “Service” refers to the performance by a subordinate of a military duty, whether explicitly defined or specifically ordered by a superior.

Article 13 –

For the purposes of this Law, the term “official” (memur) refers to a person obligated to perform the service defined in Article 12.

A “superior” (amir) is someone who holds the authority to issue orders by virtue of rank, position, or duty.

The term “senior” (üst) denotes superiority in rank and seniority.

Article 41 –

2. If an order given in relation to service constitutes a criminal offense, the person who issued the order shall be held responsible for its commission.

3. In the following cases, the subordinate shall also be punished as a co-perpetrator:

A. If the subordinate exceeded the limits of the order given;

B. If it was known to the subordinate that the superior’s order related to an act constituting a judicial or military offense.

Article 87 –1. Military personnel who fail to carry out an order related to service shall be punished with imprisonment from one month to one year. Those who explicitly refuse to carry out an order through words or actions, or who do not comply despite repetition of the order, shall be punished with imprisonment from three months to two years.

2. If the offenses described in the paragraph above are committed during mobilization, the punishment shall be up to five years of aggravated imprisonment; if committed in the presence of the enemy, up to ten years.

EXPERT WITNESS CURRICULUM VITAE

Full Name: Kadir USLU

Date of Birth: 20 April 1968

Place of Birth: Erzincan / Türkiye

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

- Işıklar Military High School:
A four-year program including one year of foreign language education. Graduated in 1986.
- Turkish Military Academy (Kara Harp Okulu):
A four-year undergraduate education. Graduated in 1990 with the rank of Second Lieutenant (Armor Branch). Also received Basic Parachuting Training here.
- Armor School and Training Center Command (Zh.Brl. Okulu):
Received one year of specialized training in the armored branch.
- Army War College (Kara Harp Akademisi):
Graduated in 2001 with the rank of Staff Captain after a two-year postgraduate level education. The War College curriculum enables doctoral-level research, especially in Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History, International Relations, International Cooperation, and National Security.
- Armed Forces Staff College (Silahlı Kuvvetler Akademisi):
Graduated in 2004 after a five-month course focused on joint and combined operations.
- Paris College Interarmées de Défense (CID):
Attended a six-month language course followed by a one-year program in Strategic Thinking and Planning, Interoperability, International Cooperation, and Defense Policies in Paris from 2005 to 2006. Graduated in 2006.
- Near East University / Near East Institute (2016):
Participated in the "Security Academy Certificate Programs" on national and international security and terrorism, conducted in two terms over a total of 3 months.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Position	Rank/Duration	Location
Tank Platoon Commander	2nd Lt., 1st Lt. / 4 years	Lüleburgaz
Military Police Platoon Cmd.	1st Lt. / 1 year	Tatvan
Maintenance Platoon Cmd.	1st Lt. / 1 year	Kırıkkale
Tank Company Commander	1st Lt. / 3 years	Tatvan, Kırıkkale
Intelligence Officer, HQ	Staff Capt. / 2 years	Girne / TRNC
Gen. Staff Greece/Cyprus	Staff Maj. / 2 years	Ankara

Desk

Instructor, Operations/Intel	Staff Maj. / 2 years	Istanbul
Mech./Mot. Infantry Battalion Cmd.	Staff Lt. Col. / 2 years	Tatvan / Bitlis
Military Attaché, Tehran	Staff Col. / 3 years	Tehran / Iran
Deputy Brigade Commander	Staff Col. / 2 years	Keşan / Edirne
Chief of Staff, TRNC Security Forces	Staff Col. / 2 years	Boğaz / TRNC
Planning/Operations Chief, TR Army HQ	Staff Col. / 1 year	Ankara
Advisor to Qatar General Staff	Staff Col. / 1 year	Doha / Qatar

Served in anti-terror operations as Tank Company and Motorized Battalion Commander.
Awarded the Internal Security Ribbon for participation in Counter-Terrorism Operations.
Received the Combat Operations Ribbon for operational success in Internal Security.

While serving as Chief of Staff of TRNC Security Forces since 2015, managed relations with the UN Peacekeeping Force in addition to routine HQ duties.

During his posting to the Turkish Land Forces Command between 2017–2018, he was directly involved in the planning and execution oversight of operations in Syria (Idlib and Afrin), among other responsibilities.

As a result of his service in various roles, he has received multiple commendations and ribbons, especially for achievements in training, operations, administration, and logistics.