

Ten Admirals Detained in Turkey as Erdogan Warns of New Coup



Credit: Turkish Presidency

Turkey detained 10 retired admirals on Monday, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned of a new coup following a letter signed by more than 100 retired admirals warning about a possible threat to a treaty governing the use of Turkey's key waterways.

The Ankara chief public prosecutor's office said arrest warrants have been issued for the 10. Prosecutors also ordered four other suspects to report to Ankara police within three days, opting not to detain them because of their age.

The development comes a day after the letter was sharply condemned by the government, which said the move is "reminiscent of coup times" in Turkey's past.

Admirals question Erdogan's project

Turkey's approval last month of plans to develop a shipping canal in Istanbul

comparable to the Panama or Suez canals has opened up debate about the 1936 Montreux Convention.

The admirals said in their letter that apart from its environmental impact, the new canal venture could undermine the Montreux accord.

The convention guarantees the free passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits of civilian vessels in times of both peace and war.

It also regulates the use of the strait by military vessels from non-Black Sea states.

The new canal would allow ships to transit between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea without passing through part of the straits that are covered by the treaty.

Turkey warns of a coup following letter

The declaration has drawn strong reactions from the government and officials.

Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalın said the statement is “reminiscent of coup periods” and made the former soldiers “a laughingstock.”

“Know your place and stay where you are,” he added.

“These retirees, who’ve not been seen for years, are creating chaos with their agendas,” Parliament Speaker Mustafa Şentop said.

Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu said the admirals should not use their ranks and uniforms as a means to push their political rhetoric.

2016 Turkey coup

On 15 July 2016 a coup attempt against Erdogan was carried out by a faction within the Turkish Armed Forces that organized themselves as the Peace at Home Council.

They attempted to seize control of several places in Ankara, Istanbul, Marmaris, and elsewhere, such as the Asian side entrance of the Bosphorus Bridge, but failed to do so after forces loyal to the state defeated them.

The Council cited an erosion of secularism, elimination of democratic rule, disregard for human rights, and Turkey's loss of credibility in the international arena as reasons for the coup.

The government said the coup leaders were linked to the Gülen movement, which is designated as a terrorist organization by the Republic of Turkey and led by Fethullah Gülen.

During the coup attempt, over 300 people were killed.

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