

# Turkey sacks 18,500 state employees over alleged 'terror' links

More than 8,998 police officers and 3,077 army soldiers among public employees dismissed by emergency decree.



Some 18,632 people have been sacked, including 8,998 police officers, 3,077 army soldiers [Burak Kara/Getty Image]

Turkish authorities have ordered the dismissal of more than 18,500 state employees over alleged links to “terrorist” organisations, according to an emergency decree published in the country’s official legal database.

The Official Gazette said on Sunday that 18,632 people had been sacked as part of a crackdown following a failed military coup two years ago, including 8,998 police officers, 3,077 army soldiers, 1,949 air force personnel and 1,126 from the naval forces.

Some 1,052 civil servants and 199 academics were also among those dismissed, and at least three newspapers, a television channel and 12 associations were shut down.

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The decree also said 148 employees who were dismissed in the past had been reinstated.

Turkish media dubbed the latest decree as the "last," with officials indicating the state of emergency could end as early as Monday.

The state of emergency has been renewed seven times and the latest is officially due to end on July 19.

Turkey has been under state of emergency since July 2016 following an attempted coup that tried to overthrow President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

## **Erdogan to be sworn in**

He was re-elected to presidency on June 24 and is set acquire some additional new powers on Wednesday as part of a transition to an executive presidency that will culminate on July 9 with his taking the oath of office for a new five-year term. Erdogan is expected reveal his administration on Wednesday too.

Under the newly introduced system, president, who leads the state's executive branch, will be able to appoint vice presidents, ministers, high-level officials and senior judges, as well as dissolve parliament, issue executive decrees and impose a state of emergency. The prime ministry does not exist in the new system.

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Lifting the state of emergency was one of the Turkish president's election campaign promises.

The government has arrested or sacked more than 100,000 people, saying the purges and detentions are aimed at removing supporters of Fethullah Gulen, a religious leader Ankara blames for the coup attempt, from state institutions and other parts of society.

Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in the United States, has denied any involvement in the failed coup in which more than 230 people were killed.

Turkey's Western allies and rights groups have repeatedly condemned the government's detentions and purges, claiming that Ankara was using the state of emergency as a pretext to punish dissidents.

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