

Generals Arrested in Turkish Coup Plot

Dozens more detained in new wave of raids on Ergenekon

By [Global Research](#)

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Seven retired generals were detained yesterday along with at least 30 others as part of the ongoing Ergenekon investigation. A former senior prosecutor and the former head of the Higher Education Board were among those detained.

Nearly 40 individuals were detained yesterday in simultaneous police operations staged in six cities as part of the ongoing investigation into Ergenekon, a shady clandestine network of groups and individuals accused of plotting to overthrow the government. The new detainees include military officers, an academic with left-wing political activist background, the former head of the Police Special Operations Unit, seven retired generals and the former head of the Higher Education Board (YÖK).

The raids, ordered by a court on a query from prosecutors investigating Ergenekon, started in the early morning hours yesterday in six cities, including Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Sivas. The first person to be detained was Yalçın Küçük, a professor who in various left-wing journals and parties defended an ideology called the National Democratic Revolution. Küçük's computer and some of his documents were seized during the operation.

In response to the question, "Do you know why you were detained?" from a journalist as he was being taken to the Ankara Police Department for interrogation, Kuçuk replied, "The dictatorship."

Another person who was detained was Erdal Şenel, a retired senior general who worked as the legal undersecretary of the General Staff. Şenel was still in his post during the Feb. 28, 1997, period, which started with an unarmed military intervention that forced the government to resign.

Retired Gen. Kemal Yavuz; retired Col. İlyas Çınar; former head of the Special Operations Unit of the National Police Department, İbrahim Şahin; and Independent Republican Party (BCP) Deputy Chairman Engin Aydın were also detained. Tuncer Kılınç, another retired general, was also detained. Eleven people, including a navy captain and a senior police officer, were detained in Sivas in yesterday's operations. The police officer was identified as E.E., while the identity of the navy captain was withheld.

The police found 22 hand grenades, four revolvers and one Kalashnikov rifle in the house of a lieutenant colonel detained yesterday as part of the operation in the city of Adapazarı, officials said.

Police intelligence indicated that the 10 people detained in Sivas on suspicion of Ergenekon membership were planning sensational assassinations, Sivas Gov. Veysel Dalmaz

announced yesterday at a news conference. Two hand grenades, a pen-shaped gun, 36 bullets, a large number of unlicensed rifles and other ammunition were found during the raids, the governor said.

Speaking to the police after his client's arrest, Yalçın Küçük's lawyer Levent Gök said the search in Küçük's home was conducted under a search-and-capture warrant issued by the İstanbul 9th High Crime Court. Gök said both of Küçük's homes were searched by the police, who seized all the CDs and documents inside the houses.

Gök said his client had maintained his high spirits and had been cooperative. "He, with his known views, is a public figure, a very select and special intellectual. He is a valuable writer of ours who has greatly contributed to democracy in our country. All of Turkey knows Mr. Küçük's views both from his published articles, books and appearances in the media.

"He, too, has failed to understand why this order to search his home was given. He is a lover of our republic, a modern and contemporary individual who believes in democracy. We believe that pressure and threats against our intellectuals and writers will negatively influence the democratic environment in our country," he said, adding that his client would be questioned at the Ankara Police Department.

The police also searched the house of former Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals Sabih Kanadoğlu yesterday, but Kanadoğlu was not detained.

Dalan to cut short US trip

Bedrettin Dalan, a former mayor of İstanbul and president of the İstek Foundation's board of trustees, is also being sought as part of the Ergenekon investigation warrant. But when the police searched Dalan and his assistants' offices and an office at Yeditepe University owned by the İstek Foundation, they found that Dalan was abroad in the US. In a statement made later in the day, Dalan said he would be cutting his trip short and coming back to Turkey early because of the investigation.

CHP deputies react to Ergenekon investigation

Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal called a press conference yesterday over the detentions, criticizing the operation as an attempt to move Turkey from its historical path to a new direction.

"The situation we are faced with shows that we are looking at a political case and not a legal trial," he said. "In this case, we don't see the application of the law but rather a political settling of accounts by the use of the law. You cannot oppose any state of law in such a systematic way. We have seen this only in periods of regime change. Similar to the period before Khomeini and Hitler. Respected figures in society change places. We are faced with such a picture again," he said.

He said the investigation was an attempt to scare those protecting the republic and deter others that might follow in their footsteps. "This is an effort to make reputable people in society answer [for history]. These people are being placed in the same position as members of the mafia. Why is this seen as a special case at a special court?" he asked, saying the trial was seeking to make people answer for being decent moral people who love their country.

“There is no doubt that the government is behind the trial. I have been saying this all along,” he said. Baykal also accused the government of trying to change the structure of the media in the country. He said the effort had at its target a change in the principles and values of the republic. “The republic is being dragged into radical change. ... There is more need than ever before to defend the republic. It is obvious that all these events are a part of this,” he said.

He said it was being done to avenge the past, but did not elaborate. “The kind of revenge that this is can be assessed individually by everyone,” he said.

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Mehmet Ali Şahin, in a statement he made on the recent operation, denied allegations that the detentions were politically motivated. “It is a completely judicial process. It is not a political process. I am following it from the press just like you do,” he told press members while addressing their questions at Parliament yesterday.

The trial of Ergenekon

A criminal court in Istanbul began trying 86 suspects, 45 of whom are being held in prison, in the Ergenekon terrorist organization case on Oct. 20. Among the suspects are several retired generals, including one who headed an ultra-Kemalist organization that organized massive anti-government rallies in 2007; other retired army officers; a number of mafia bosses who were also ultranationalist youth leaders in the '70s and '80s; an ultranationalist lawyer who filed charges of “insulting Turkishness” against various intellectuals — including writer Orhan Pamuk — over statements that contradicted the state’s position; journalists; drug lords; the spokesperson of a dubious organization called the Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate; academics, including the former rector of the İstanbul University; and a Council of Forensic Medicine expert, among others. A number of people currently jailed on charges of Ergenekon membership were also detained or called to testify in the Susurluk investigation of 1996, which revealed similar shady links between a police chief, a politician and the crime world.

The indictment, made public in July, accuses the Ergenekon network of being behind a series of major political assassinations over the past two decades. The victims include a secularist journalist, Uğur Mumcu, long believed to have been assassinated by Islamic extremists in 1993; the head of a business conglomerate, Özdemir Sabancı, who was shot dead by militants of the extreme-left Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) in his high-security office in 1996; secularist academic Necip Hablemitoğlu, who was also believed to have been killed by Islamic extremists, in 2002; and a 2006 attack on the Council of State that left a senior judge dead.

Alparslan Arslan, found guilty of the Council of State killing, said he attacked the court in protest of an anti-headscarf ruling it had made. But the indictment contains evidence that he was connected with Ergenekon and that his family received large sums of money from unidentified sources after the shooting.

The indictment also says retired Gen. Veli Küçük, believed to be one of the leading members of the network, had threatened Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist slain by a teenager in 2007, before his murder — a sign that Ergenekon could be behind that murder as well. Küçük was also detained but later released in the Susurluk affair of 1996.

Suspects began appearing in court on Oct. 20, facing accusations that include “membership in an armed terrorist group,” “attempting to destroy the government,” “inciting people to rebel against the Republic of Turkey” and other similar crimes.

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