

Turkish Coup Plot

Police Capture Two Ergenekon Death Squads

By [Global Research](#)

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Two assassination teams of Ergenekon, a clandestine terrorist organization nested within state organs and charged with plotting to overthrow the government, were captured yesterday by the police in 14 provinces throughout the country in raids organized as part of an investigation into the group.

Twenty police officers and military officers were detained in yesterday's operations on charges of being members of two assassination teams led by İbrahim Şahin, a former senior police official who was the deputy head of the National Police Department's Special Operations Unit. Şahin was arrested on Jan. 7.

A wave of detentions on Jan. 7 in the Ergenekon investigation revealed that the group was planning to assassinate Alevi and Armenian community leaders, the prime minister and members of the Supreme Court of Appeals — acts that would have dragged Turkey into chaos had they been carried out.

The many detentions of special operations officers were tied to statements from Şahin, reportedly made during his police testimony following his detention. In his initial testimony, Şahin said 7th Army Commander Gen. Bekir Kalyoncu, currently on active duty, had assigned him to set up a team of 300 officers to be employed in a new anti-terrorism department. Kalyoncu also promised that Şahin would be the undersecretary of the new unit. Şahin claimed he was working to set up this new structure. He said a document found in his home during the police search was a list of officers to be chosen for the special force. The document was titled "S-1" and listed military officers and police Special Operations Unit members under the age of 30. Analysts believe most of those detained yesterday were individuals from the list.

Yesterday's raids were launched on a warrant issued by Ergenekon prosecutor Zekeriya Öz on property of individuals affiliated with a workers' union and the ART TV network. Authorities began their search of a house in Ankara's Beysukent district belonging to Mustafa Özbek, the head of metals sector workers' union Türk Metal, at 7:30 a.m. Özbek, Türk Metal Deputy Chairman Ferruh Kavlak and Türk Metal Secretary-General Muharrem Aslıyüce. Union officials Süleyman Erdiñç and Pevrul Kavrat were also detained.

A group of Türk Metal Union members protested the detention of Özbek in front of the Ankara Police Department yesterday. Union members, holding signs, chanted: "We are wherever Özbek is. Don't be silent, you will be next. We are Turkish, we are strong, we are Atatürkists."

Journalist Ünal İnanç and Türkmeneli Association President Savaş Avcı were detained in İstanbul. Researcher Erhan Göksel, owner of the Verso Research Company, was also detained yesterday.

Answering reporters' questions while being taken away by the police for a health check-up, Göksel said he was not a member of Ergenekon. Özbek also made a brief statement in front of the Ankara Police Department, claiming that the detentions and raids were "unlawful."

A police chief and a police officer were detained in Antalya and sent to İstanbul to testify as part of the investigation, sources said. One other person was detained in Bursa.

Other detentions took place in operations in Antalya, Elazığ, Hakkari, Hatay, İstanbul, Iğdır, Isparta, Kahramanmaraş, Siirt, Şırnak and Tokat. The police also searched the Şirinoğlu Social and Strategic Research Center in Ankara

Commenting on his father's arrest, Özbek's son Haydar Özbek said: "We are living in a period when being a Turk in Turkey is a crime. I wouldn't be surprised if they arrest Nejat Uygur soon," he said, in an ambiguous comment about a veteran thespian.

Other searches and detentions

Murat Çavdar, a police officer from the Special Operations Unit, was detained in Tokat. In Isparta, a high-ranking military officer was detained. Three special operations officers were detained in Kahramanmaraş. In Bursa, a military officer was detained.

At least 10 people were detained in İstanbul, although the police did not announce an exact figure.

A gardener who worked for Lt. Col. Mustafa Dönmez, detained in the Jan. 7 raids, was taken to the İstanbul Police Department yesterday to testify. Twelve rifle grenades and 12 booby traps were found.

Meanwhile, President Abdullah Gül yesterday reacted to news stories about a luncheon he gave for military and government representatives earlier this week. Some newspapers had claimed that the president, presidents of high courts and the prime minister had spoken about the Ergenekon investigation during the luncheon. "Would the judges, the president and the prime minister violate the law? Would they speak about an ongoing case?" he asked, speaking to journalists yesterday during a brief press conference at the Çankaya presidential palace.

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