

Turkish parliament adopts law strengthening secret service

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The Turkish parliament on Friday adopted a controversial draft law on the National Intelligence Organization (MIT). The action is a further step by the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in building up a powerful police/intelligence apparatus against the working class and youth.

According to the new law, the MIT can carry out wiretappings without a court order and engage in operations against possible overseas threats without legal oversight. The MIT will also have unlimited access to the databases of ministries and state institutions and will be able to collect data on citizens. The new law also requires private companies to hand over consumer data and technical equipment when requested.

Under the law, a prosecutor must first ask the MIT's opinion, i.e., permission, before launching an investigation. A prosecutor will not be able to launch any investigation against intelligence officials if the MIT says the point at issue concerns a duty or operation of the organization.

The law introduces severe penalties for obtaining and publishing MIT documents. If a person obtains, leaks or forges a confidential intelligence document, he or she can face a prison sentence of between four and ten years. In the event of the publication of a document related to MIT members, the publisher will be faced with imprisonment of between three and seven years. If the material is released via printed or visual media, the sentence will be increased to up to 12 years.

The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), declared that it would bring the law before the Constitutional Court for annulment.

The new MIT law has the aim of providing a retrospective legal cover for so-called "unidentified" murders that occurred in the 1990s, as well as the "Oslo

talks"--a series of meetings held secretly in 2010 between senior operatives of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and MIT officials.

The law is also a response to the corruption and bribery investigation of December 17, the search warrant issued for so-called "MIT lorries," and the leaked conversation between high-level officials in the Turkish Foreign Ministry about a false flag operation in Syria.

The December 17 scandal, which implicated business people and members of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), including four ministers and family members of the the prime minister, was a severe blow to the government. Erdogan sought to discredit the investigation by calling it a "foreign plot" and an "attempt to damage the government made by a parallel state nested within the state."

It was the same with the MIT lorries, which apparently deliver weaponry and equipment to the Islamist terrorists fighting in Syria. The government restrained the judiciary and law enforcement officials from a full investigation. The prime minister then ordered the removal and reassignment of thousands of police officers as well as hundreds of prosecutors and judges who contributed to the investigation.

On March 27, just three days before local elections, it was revealed via a recorded leak that at a March 13 national security meeting, four top government officials--Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Feridun Sinirliolu, National Intelligence Organization (MIT) Chief Hakan Fidan and Deputy Chief of General Staff Gen. Yasar Güler--had discussed the organization of a false flag attack on the tomb of Süleyman Shah, which has been sovereign Turkish territory within Syria since 1921. According to the words of the Turkish intelligence

chief, revealed in the leaked recordings, such an attack would serve as a *casus belli* for Turkey to declare war on Syria.

The new MIT law is a response by the AKP government both to its internal “liberal Islamist” rivals (the pro-US Gülen movement) and to growing international pressures and divisions bound up with the crises in Syria and Ukraine.

The AKP government, whose relations with its Western allies have sharply deteriorated, is strengthening its domestic rule to repress workers and youth seeking a way out of growing social inequality, poverty and the danger of war, and to present itself to the Western powers as the only strong and reliable force within Turkey to serve their imperialist interests.



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