

# Armed clash erupts near Israeli consulate in Istanbul

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At around noon on Tuesday, April 7, three assailants armed with long-barreled weapons engaged in an armed clash with police officers stationed outside the plaza housing the Israeli consulate general in Levent, Istanbul. Following the clash, which lasted approximately five minutes, one of the assailants was killed and the other two were wounded and taken into custody. Two police officers sustained minor injuries.

The armed clash occurred on the day that the US-Israeli war against Iran reached a critical threshold for the entire world, carrying the risk of spreading throughout the region and beyond. President Donald Trump had threatened to destroy Iranian civilisation and had given the country until Tuesday night to surrender.

The authorities initially refrained from disclosing to the public which organisation the attackers were affiliated with. In a statement, Interior Minister Mustafa Çiftçi said that the deceased attacker was “linked to a terrorist organisation that exploits religion” and that the attackers had traveled to Istanbul in a rented vehicle from ?zmit.

Meanwhile, media reports have indicated that the attacker killed in the clash was named as Yunus Emre Sarban and that his assets were frozen in 2021 due to his alleged links to the Islamic State (ISIS). However, no group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Istanbul Governor Davut Gül noted that the consulate building was out of service and described the incident as “an act that smacks of provocation.” President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated, “We will not tolerate attempts to undermine the Türkiye’s climate of trust through despicable and calculated provocations.”

US and Israeli officials, meanwhile, condemned the attack on the grounds that it targeted Israel and praised the Turkish police. U.S. Ambassador to Ankara

Thomas Barrack stated the following in a post on his X account: “The United States condemns in the strongest terms today’s attack on the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul. Attacks on diplomatic missions are attacks on the international order—and an assault on the principles that bind nations together. We commend Türkiye and Turkish security forces for their swift and decisive response.”

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, “We strongly condemn the terrorist attack on the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul today” and added: “We appreciate the Turkish security forces’ swift action in thwarting this attack. Israeli missions around the world have been subjected to countless threats and terrorist attacks. Terror will not deter us.”

The fact that the US and Israel condemn “terrorist attacks” and “attacks on diplomatic missions,” while also talking about the international order, is a prime example of imperialist hypocrisy. After all, these are the very same powers that launched an illegal and criminal war with the aim of eliminating Iran’s leadership, slaughtering thousands of civilians in the process, and threatening to destroy its civilisation and “send the country back to the Stone Age.” Although the two-week ceasefire that began on April 8 has temporarily halted the war of annihilation against Iran, Israel’s invasion of Lebanon and the genocide in Gaza continue.

The circumstances surrounding this attempted armed attack remain unclear, and there is no substantial evidence to support the claim that it was targeting Israel. Following the tensions that arose with Türkiye after Israel’s invasion of Gaza in October 2023, it withdrew its diplomatic personnel from the consulate general in Istanbul and the embassy in Ankara.

Regarding the ISIS claim, the US and its regional

allies, including Türkiye, utilised ISIS militias—originating from Al-Qaeda—as proxy forces, particularly in the regime change war launched in Syria in 2011. Although this officially ended with the formation of the US-led “anti-ISIS coalition” in 2014, the alliance with Al-Qaeda-linked jihadists continued. However, always being linked to various intelligence agencies and being highly controversial, ISIS has not yet carried out any serious actions that directly target Israel or Israeli assets.

A total of 10 people were taken into custody in Istanbul and Kocaeli in the hours following the attack, which once again brought ISIS’s activities in Türkiye into the spotlight.

On December 29, Turkish police launched operations against ISIS in 15 provinces, and a large-scale armed clash then broke out between the police and ISIS suspects in Yalova. Three police officers and six ISIS members were reportedly killed in the clash, while eight police officers and one watchman were injured. A further 357 people were detained in operations conducted the day after the attack.

While President Erdoğan announced that 1,399 operations had been carried out against ISIS in 2024 alone, *Cumhuriyet* newspaper columnist Mustafa Balbay claimed that, “according to data shared by the US with Türkiye, the number of ISIS members in Türkiye exceeds 10,000.” ISIS has previously been involved in numerous attacks and massacres in Türkiye, primarily bomb attacks targeting Kurdish and leftist groups.

From the mujahideen, who fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, to the groups that played a role in the overthrow of the regimes of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad, jihadist forces have received financial, logistical and military support for years from the imperialist powers, primarily the United States. In addition to fighting as proxies, these forces sometimes served as a pretext for imperialist attacks.

The fact that Ahmed al-Sharaa, the former Al-Qaeda leader for whom the US had previously offered a \$10 million bounty, was received by Trump at the White House last November as the “interim president of Syria” was a striking result of this policy.

This situation must be considered in the context of the United States’ drive for full dominance over

Central Asia and the Middle East. Through this policy, the Turkish ruling elite also pursues its own reactionary interests. Deeply involved in the imperialists’ regime change wars, the Turkish ruling elite played a central role in the deployment and arming of jihadist forces. Particularly in the Syrian civil war, the Central Intelligence Agency and Turkish intelligence facilitated the passage, training, and arming of jihadists from Libya, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Europe across the border into Syria.



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