

Columbia University researchers confirm Turkey's links to ISIS

By Harut Sassounian

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A team of Columbia University researchers from the United States, Europe, and Turkey confirmed last week that the Turkish government has provided to ISIS: military cooperation, weapons, logistical support, financial assistance, and medical services. This detailed investigation was headed by David L. Phillips, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. He had served as Senior Advisor and Foreign Affairs Expert for the U.S. Department of State.

Here are brief excerpts from the extensive research documenting the direct links between Turkey and ISIS:

1) Turkey Supplied Military Equipment to ISIS

- An ISIS commander told The Washington Post on August 12, 2014: "Most of the fighters who joined us in the beginning of the war came via Turkey, and so did our equipment and supplies."
- Kemal Kiliçdaroglu, head of the Republican People's Party (CHP), disclosed on Oct. 14, 2014, documents from the Adana Office of the Prosecutor, revealing that Turkey supplied weapons to terrorist groups. He also produced transcripts of interviews with truck drivers who delivered the weapons to the terrorists.
- According to CHP Vice President Bulent Tezcan, Turkish agents drove three trucks loaded with rockets, arms, and ammunition to ISIS in Syria, on January 19, 2014.

- Cumhuriyet newspaper quoted Fuat Avni as stating that Germany and the United States had audio tapes confirming that Turkey provided financial and military aid to terrorist groups associated with Al Qaeda on Oct. 12, 2014.
- Documents made public on Sept. 27, 2014, revealed that Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Sultan financed the transportation of arms to ISIS through Turkey.

2) Turkey Provided Logistical Assistance to ISIS Fighters

- According to a June 13, 2014 article in Radikal newspaper, Turkish Interior Minister Muammer Guler issued the following directive: "Hatay is a strategic location for the Mujahidin crossing from within our borders to Syria. Logistical support for Islamist groups will be increased, and their training, hospital care, and safe passage will mostly take place in Hatay."
- The Daily Mail reported on August 25, 2014 that many foreign militants joined ISIS in Syria and Iraq after traveling through Turkey.
- Britain's Sky News obtained documents showing that the Turkish government stamped passports of foreign militants seeking to cross the Turkish border into Syria to join ISIS.
- A senior Egyptian official indicated on Oct. 9, 2014 that Turkish intelligence is passing to ISIS satellite imagery and other data.

3) Turkey Trained ISIS Fighters

- CNN Turk reported on July 29, 2014 that in the heart of Istanbul, places like Duzce and Adapazari have become gathering spots for terrorists.
- Turks who joined an ISIS affiliate were shown on July 28, 2014, at a public gathering in Istanbul.
- A video showed an ISIS affiliate holding a prayer-gathering in Omerli, a district of Istanbul.
- According to Jordanian Intelligence, Turkey trained ISIS militants for special operations.

4) Turkey Extended Medical Care to ISIS Fighters

- An ISIS commander told The Washington Post on August 12, 2014, "We used to have some fighters – even high-level members of the Islamic State – getting treated in Turkish hospitals."
- On Oct. 12, 2014, Taraf newspaper reported that Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat, a founder of Pres. Erdogan's ruling party (AKP), divulged that Turkey supported terrorist groups and still supports them and treats them in its hospitals.

5) Turkey Supported ISIS Financially Through Purchase of Oil

- On Sept. 13, 2014, The New York Times reported on the Obama administration's efforts to pressure Turkey to crack down on the extensive network of oil sold by ISIS.
- Fehim Taştekin wrote in Radikal on Sept. 13, 2014 about illegal pipelines transporting oil from Syria to Turkey.

6) Turkey Assisted ISIS Recruitment

- Kılıçdaroğlu announced on Oct. 14, 2014 that ISIS offices in Istanbul and Gaziantep are recruiting fighters. On Oct. 10, 2014, the Mufti of Konya stated that 100 men from his city had joined ISIS four days ago.
- OdaTV reported that Takva Haber served as a propaganda outlet for ISIS to recruit Turkish-speaking men in Turkey and Germany.
- Minister of Sports, Suat Kılıç, an AKP member, visited Salafi Jihadists who are ISIS supporters in Germany. These Jihadists recruit supporters by distributing free copies of the Quran and raising funds to sponsor suicide attacks in Syria and Iraq.
- OdaTV released a video showing ISIS militants riding a bus in Istanbul.

7) Turkish Forces are Fighting Alongside ISIS

- American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh asserted in the London Review of Books that "Prime Minister Recep Erdogan was known to be supporting the al-Nusra Front, a Jihadist faction among the rebel opposition, as well as other Islamist rebel groups."

- On Sept. 20, 2014, Demir Celik, a Member of Parliament representing the People's Democratic Party (HDP), stated that Turkish Special Forces had joined ISIS in the battlefield.

8) Turkey Helped ISIS in Battle for Kobani

- Anwar Muslim, Mayor of Kobani, revealed on Sept. 19, 2014 that trains full of Turkish forces and ammunition were delivered to ISIS. On September 30, 2014, a CHP delegation visited Kobani, where locals declared that everything from the clothes of ISIS militants to their guns comes from Turkey.
- A Nuhaber video showed on Sept. 25, 2014 Turkish military convoys, carrying tanks and ammunition, moving freely under ISIS flags in the Jarablus region of Syria and the Karkamis border crossing.
- Salih Muslim, PYD leader of Kurdish fighters, reported that 120 militants had crossed into Syria from Turkey on Oct. 20-24, 2014.
- According to an op-ed written by a YPG Kurdish commander in The New York Times on Oct. 29, 2014, Turkey regularly allows ISIS militants and their equipment to pass freely over its border.
- Diken reported on Oct. 1, 2014: "ISIS fighters crossed the border from Turkey into Syria in full view of Turkish soldiers."

9) Turkey and ISIS Share a Worldview

- RT reported on Oct. 3, 2014 on Vice President Joe Biden's remarks detailing Turkish support to ISIS.
- Hurriyet newspaper quoted a Turkish civil servant on Sept. 26, 2014: "I was shocked to hear words of admiration for ISIL from some high-level civil servants."
- An AKP council member posted on his Facebook page: "Thankfully ISIS exists.... May you never run out of ammunition...."
- Erdogan's son Bilal and Turkish officials met with ISIS fighters, according to Sariyer Gozlem.

It is absolutely unacceptable that while ISIS is committing

mass murder in Paris and other European cities, its NATO 'ally,' Turkey, is continuing to aid and arm these terrorists. It is high time that Turkey is expelled from NATO and its leaders are indicted and brought to justice for their role in these heinous crimes.