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Country Report on Terrorism 2018 - Chapter 5 - Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front

Aka DHKP/C; Dev Sol; Dev Sol Armed Revolutionary Units; Dev Sol Silahlı Devrimci Birlikleri; Dev Sol SDB; Devrimci Halk Kurtulus Partisi-Cephesi; Devrimci Sol; Revolutionary Left.

Description: Designated as a FTO on October 8, 1997, the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) was formed originally in 1978 as Devrimci Sol, or Dev Sol, a splinter faction of Dev Genc (Revolutionary Youth). It was renamed in 1994 after factional infighting. “Party” refers to the group’s political activities and “Front” alludes to the group’s militant operations. The group advocates a Marxist-Leninist ideology and opposes the United States, NATO, and the Turkish establishment. It strives to establish a socialist state and to abolish Turkish prisons.

Activities: Since the late 1980s, the group has primarily targeted current and retired Turkish security and military officials. In 1990, the group began to conduct attacks against foreign interests, including U.S. military and diplomatic personnel and facilities. The DHKP/C assassinated two U.S. military contractors and wounded a U.S. Air Force officer in the 1990s, and bombed more than 20 U.S. and NATO military, diplomatic, commercial, and cultural facilities. DHKP/C added suicide bombings to its repertoire in 2001, with attacks against Turkish police in January and September of that year. Since the end of 2001, DHKP/C has typically used IEDs against official Turkish and U.S. targets.

After the death of its leader, Dursun Karatas, the DHKP/C reorganized in 2009 and was reportedly in competition with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party for influence in Turkey. The group was responsible for many high-profile attacks in 2012 that included a suicide bombing of a police station in Istanbul. This tactic continued in 2013 when, on February 1, a DHKP/C operative exploded a suicide vest inside the employee entrance to the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. The explosion killed a Turkish guard and seriously wounded a Turkish journalist. In March 2013, three members of the group attacked the Ministry of Justice and the Ankara headquarters of the Turkish Justice and Development political party using grenades and rocket launchers.

In 2015, the DHKP/C claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed a police officer and wounded another. In March, Turkish prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz was taken hostage and died from multiple gunshot wounds inflicted by the DHKP/C after police attempted to rescue him. In August, two women opened fire on the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul; one woman was identified as a member of the DHKP/C.

On January 20, 2017, a DHKP/C militant launched an anti-tank missile into Istanbul police headquarters, which did not result in any deaths or injuries. Turkish police initiated a series of raids after the attack and apprehended the militant two days later.

In November 2018, a court in Istanbul issued an arrest warrant for members of the DHKP/C who were believed to be in Europe and connected with the 2015 death of Turkish prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz.

Strength: Membership includes an estimated several dozen members inside Turkey, with a support network throughout Europe.

Location/Area of Operation: DHKP/C is located in Turkey, primarily in Adana, Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. Other members reside and plan operations in European countries.

Funding and External Aid: The DHKP/C finances its activities chiefly through donations and extortion. The group raises funds primarily in Europe.

ecoi.net summary:

Brief description of Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (Excerpt of chapter 5 of the country report on terrorism 2018)



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