

## **The Structure of PKK/KONGRA-GEL and its Activities in Europe**

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Today, terrorism is a widespread concern challenging the modern world. In fact, no nation in the contemporary world can be considered safe from terrorism. The phenomenon of international and domestic terrorism has been one of the chief dilemmas of the post-Cold War era especially and increasingly after the 9-11 attacks. It is, especially after the 9-11, understood that there is a necessity for international collaboration, partnership and cooperation against this global threat as obviously one nation cannot deal with this global threat. Terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and PKK/KONGRA-GEL include thousands (intelligence sources indicate that the armed members of Al-Qaeda and PKK/KONGRA-GEL are more than five thousand) of trained activists and members, most of whom are ready to carry out armed activities around the globe.

As in the contemporary world no nation can be considered totally safe from terrorism, Turkey has been plagued by frequent violence from terrorist activities since the late 1950s. Historically, various fundamental groups, including movements of both leftist and rightist organizations, as well as alleged separatist ethnic terrorists, have been responsible of terrorism in Turkey. Among them the PKK/KONGRA-GEL has been the bloodiest terrorist organization for the last thirty-five years.

This presentation studies the history and formation of the terrorist organization PKK/KONGRA-GEL, its establishment over the years and its activities both in Turkey and around the world. Then, the activities of the PKK/KONGRA-GEL in Europe are studied in three different fields including its propaganda and media activities, its recruitment efforts and its financing activities in Europe. The presentation details the widespread and well organized structure of the terrorist organization PKK/KONGRA-GEL. This may also constitute a very

good example how a terrorist organization such as the PKK/KONGRA-GEL or Al-Qaeda can base itself by using the civil liberties to support and cover its terrorist activities behind hundreds of different foundations, organizations and associations those seem legal and not breaching any laws but in fact very useful tools of the terrorist organizations. The presentation concludes with suggestions in order to better deal with the problem of PKK/KONGRA-GEL terrorism.

Today, terrorism remains the most important problem of the world. It is, especially after the 9-11, understood that there is a necessity for international collaboration, partnership and cooperation against this global threat as obviously one nation cannot deal with this global threat. Terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and PKK/KONGRA-GEL include thousands (intelligence sources indicate that the armed members of Al-Qaeda and PKK/KONGRA-GEL are more than five thousand) of trained activists and members, most of whom are ready to carry out armed activities around the globe. Moreover, today's organizations cannot completely control and guide such a large number of terrorists as closely as in the past, which results in more uncontrolled violence. Additionally, these newer terrorists are harder to identify because many live with innocent people like relatives or other families for their own security, which makes the law enforcement job more difficult and which allows the terrorists to hide in the crowds easier than ever.

Two factors make controlling terrorists and tracking their precise movements difficult: less communication among the group members and obviously as a result of the lacking communication, less identified goals and targets for the terrorists. Leaders and the senior members of the terrorist organizations are closely watched by the intelligence agencies and due to this, it is more difficult for the leaders of the terrorist organizations to control and communicate with thousands of terrorists. Consequently, organizations became loosely knit and under-controlled. So, the organizations would choose a broader enemy instead of a distinct one such as the United States which at the same time broadened the possible number of targets including civilians abroad.

Consequently, because of the reasons listed above, the terrorist organizations became more dangerous because they are less controlled and have more members. Today, terrorists try to kill as many innocent people as possible without any hesitation by using more sophisticated methods including suicide bombings. Furthermore, the publicity of these violent attacks only serves to encourage future activities for the terrorists.

All terrorist organizations need to raise funds to continue to their violent activities. Clearly, illegal means are often used to finance their organizations or their activities. Drug trafficking is one of the most-used method of illegal money options for terrorist organizations. Robbery, extortion, kidnapping, blackmailing, arms smuggling, and money laundering follow drug trafficking. Terrorists need financial support to carry out their activities, to buy weapons and ammunition, and to continue to their daily lives. It is also essential that the financing methods of the terrorists interrupted and they are left without any means to maintain their activities.

Consequently, the world needs to get together to deal with the global problem of terrorism regardless of the terrorist groups **background, ethnicity, ideology and nationality**. Nations harboring terrorists for whatever reasons will **definitely be the worst victims of the same terrorists** in the near future as they will not be able to control and maintain to harbor those groups indefinitely.