



The Syrian conflict and refugee crisis, and the internal conflict between the government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) are the main factors that have affected stability in Turkey in recent years. The country is locked in a state of emergency, with state security forces exercising increased powers.

**This country profile is based on the analysis of security incidents and concerns shared by four aid agencies through the Aid in Danger project. It provides a unique insight into the environment in which aid agencies work.<sup>1</sup>**

## Reported concerns affecting aid delivery in Turkey



- **Crime:** Violent crime – sexual violence. Petty crime – break-ins, burglaries and thefts.



- **Operational space:** Searches and questioning at hotels or airport immigration; checks on administrative requirements; occasional surveillance.



- **Terrorism:** SVIEDs and VBIEDs targeting airports, commercial centres and police infrastructure.



- **Killed, injured, kidnapped (KIK):** Four NGO staff members were killed, one injured and one missing since January 2015.



- **Weapons use:** 37% of NGO-related security incidents involved weapons use.<sup>2</sup>

## No particular changes to the country-typical patterns have been identified in recent months (October-December 2017).



- Few incidents were reported since October 2017.



- The main threats continue to be **crime** and issues related to **operational space**.



- No reports of aid worker deaths, injuries or kidnappings were identified between October and December 2017.

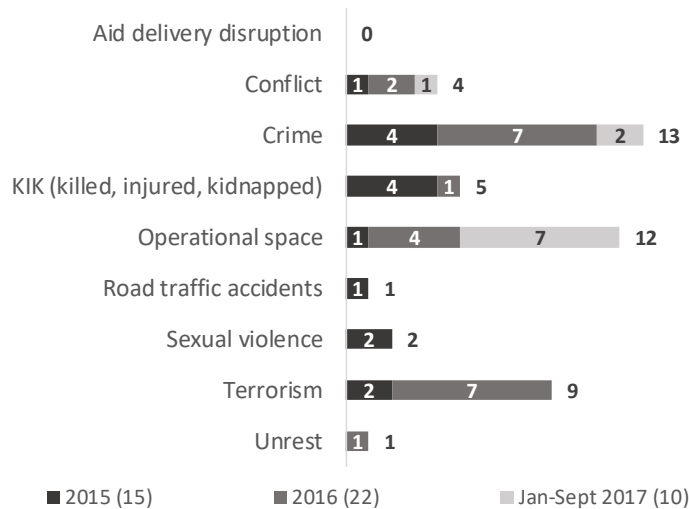
<sup>1</sup>All decisions made on the basis of or with consideration to such information remain the responsibility of the organisations taking such decisions. Travellers are advised to secure travel briefings prior to travel.

<sup>2</sup>Weapons use was reported during 19 conflict-, KIK-, operational space-, terrorism- and unrest-related incidents. Weapons were used in 100% of terrorism-related incidents; 100% of conflict-related incidents; 100% of unrest-related incidents; 80% of KIK incidents; and 6% of operational space-related incidents.



## Long-term threat patterns, January 2015-September 2017

A high number of incidents were criminally motivated, including break-ins, burglaries and thefts. The next highest affected operational space and involved NGO staff member arrests and detentions.



**Aid delivery disruption:** No incidents identified.

**Conflict:** All incidents were related to the conflict in Syria and led to security measures being taken to protect staff, assets and programmes.

**Crime:** Break-ins, burglaries, sexual violence and thefts.

**KIK:** The motives behind three attacks were linked to the work the affected staff members performed.

**Operational space:** Arrests and detentions frequently occurred at airport immigration and in residency documentation checks and searches at hotels and NGO offices.

**Road traffic accidents (RTAs):** No reported RTA incidents caused NGO staff deaths or injuries.

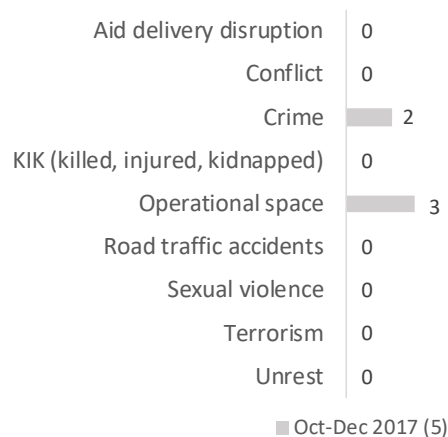
**Sexual violence:** From local males.

**Terrorism:** Security measures were taken after VBIED and SVIED attacks (see [Terrorism](#) on p. 5 for further details).

**Unrest:** Social and political unrest occurred linked to the failed July 2016 coup.

## Recent concerns affecting aid delivery, October-December 2017

Few incidents were reported since October 2017. Most recent incidents reflected Turkey’s country-specific patterns, with reports of arrests and detentions, and criminally motivated incidents that affected aid workers and NGO assets.



**Aid delivery disruption:** No incidents identified.

**Conflict:** No incidents identified.

**Crime:** Theft of NGO property.

**KIK:** No incidents identified.

**Operational space:** Arrests and detentions of NGO staff members; accusations against NGO via social media.

**Road traffic accidents:** No incidents identified.

**Sexual violence:** No incidents identified.

**Terrorism:** No incidents identified.

**Unrest:** No incidents identified.

# Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



**Crime:** Violent crime – sexual violence. Petty crime – break-ins, burglaries and thefts.



- Crime rates are stable. There are a number of organised criminal gangs throughout the country whose activities range from small-scale prostitution rackets to drug cultivation and burglary.
- Petty crime, including thefts and burglaries, is more frequent at lower-budget guesthouses or on the street.
- Local taxi scams are reported to be run out of international airports.
- Pickpocketing in crowded urban centres is common. Internationals in urban centres are at most risk of opportunistic petty crime.



- Areas of concern in Istanbul districts include: Tarlabasi near Taksim Square, due to the presence of Tinerçi gangs; Selamsiz; Gaziosman Pasha; Okmeydani; and Caglayan, just north of Taksim Square.



- Agency-reported crime incidents included actual and attempted break-ins, burglaries, sexual violence (see [Sexual violence](#) on p. 3 for further information) and thefts.

## Type of location

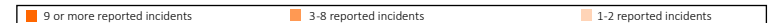
- **Residences:** Nearly half of crime incidents occurred at NGO guesthouses; computer equipment and phones taken.
- **Offices:** Break-in at NGO office; unspecified items taken.
- **Public buildings:** Tablet theft from NGO staff members at Istanbul Atatürk Airport.
- **Roads:** Personal vehicle broken into; unspecified items taken.



## Weapons use in crime incidents

- **Unarmed:** No crime incidents were reported where the perpetrators were armed.

## Aid in Danger project reported locations





**Operational space:** Searches and questioning at hotels or airport immigration; checking of visa requirements; occasional surveillance.



- The increase in police and army powers under emergency regulations and the permanent presence of special forces personnel in Taksim Square and Kizilay mean that illegal rallies in cities are quickly shut down using force.
- Heightened security measures have facilitated the rise in authority actions.
- In general, the attitude towards internationals is welcoming; however, the government is extremely sensitive to foreign nationals and business entities it believes to be influencing Turkish politics.
- Curfews have been regularly imposed since 2015, particularly in Diyarbakir and Mardin (south-eastern Turkey).



- Over 60% of operational space-related incidents reported NGO staff member arrests and detentions by state authorities. Most involved NGO staff members being held for questioning at airport immigration, police searches of hotels and NGO offices, and the checking of visa requirements. In addition:
- Authorities investigated the registration status of several INGOs and the visa status of staff members in Hatay and Gaziantep (southern Turkey):
  - An NGO licence was revoked; an NGO was fined for employing volunteers; another NGO closed its operations.
  - Five international and Syrian NGO staff members were detained over work permit- and residency-related issues.
- INGOs working on projects with a perceived political angle reported harassment and surveillance by unidentified perpetrators in vehicles; accusations were also made against an NGO on social media.



**Sexual violence:** From local males



- Two incidents of aggressive sexual behaviour towards female NGO staff members were reported.
- Both incidents occurred in Gaziantep while staff members were walking to and from NGO offices.
- Perpetrators were reportedly local males.



**Terrorism:** SVIEDs, VBIEDs, RPGs, mortar shelling, and Molotov cocktails targeting both civilians and police/security forces.

## ISIS

- The group remains a threat, despite a general decrease in threat levels due to the gradual decline in the territory it occupies.
- Previous targets include airports, commercial centres, nightclubs, and the police and military.



- No incidents were identified that involved staff deaths and injuries or NGO property damage during terrorism-related incidents involving IS militants between January 2015 and December 2017.
- However, several NGOs took security measures to protect staff, assets and programmes after IS-claimed attacks in 2016. These include the March 2016 attack in Istanbul city centre, the June 2016 coordinated attack on Istanbul Atatürk Airport, and the May 2016 attack on police in Gaziantep.

## PKK

- There is a reduced threat of PKK attacks due to government forces pushing the group into the mountainous east of the country and the group's diminishing strength.
- The main targets are Turkish security forces; however, civilians have also been affected.
- Notable attacks on government and police personnel include the 2016 attack on a military post in Hakkari (near the Turkey-Iraq border), the December 2016 attack on police outside the Besiktas football stadium, and the January 2017 bombing of a courthouse in Izmir.
- Although not specifically targeted, civilians were either wounded or killed in all of these attacks. The PKK and the splinter group TAK have targeted civilians in the past, such as the 2016 bombing of a wedding in Gaziantep.



- No incidents were identified that involved staff deaths and injuries or NGO property damage during terrorism-related incidents involving PKK militants between January 2015 and December 2017.
- However, several NGOs took security measures to protect staff, assets and programmes after the PKK-claimed March 2016 attack near the Garnizon military training facility in Osmaniye province using surface-launched weapons. In addition:
- Security advisories were issued after rioting caused by the arrest of suspected PKK members; crowds reportedly retaliated with Molotov cocktails and stones.





## Reported KIK incidents (5)

The table below lists KIK incidents reported between January 2016 and December 2017. KIK incidents are any incidents that resulted in a staff member being killed, injured or kidnapped. KIK includes beaten, kidnapped, killed, missing, tortured, and wounded.

2016-03	<b>Hatay province</b>	NGO staff member reported missing after crossing into Syria at the Bab al Salam border crossing from Turkey.
2015-12	<b>Gaziantep</b>	Syrian NGO staff member from the human rights group Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently was shot in the head and killed while walking down a street.
2015-11	<b>Gaziantep</b>	Two INGO national staff members were assassinated near Gaziantep, reportedly as a result of the work that they were performing for the INGO.
2015-06	<b>Diyarbakir province</b>	LNGO national staff member linked to a political party was shot and killed as he left his office.
2015-02	<b>Istanbul</b>	RCRC Istanbul national driver was shot in the stomach by unidentified gunmen who shot at a car in which the head of the Turkish Red Crescent in Istanbul was also travelling

## Weapons use in KIK incidents



- Four out of five KIK incidents involved NGO staff members being killed or injured by firearms.
- There were no reports of explosive weapons use killing or injuring an NGO staff member.



**Conflict:** Cross-border violence remains a risk in the border areas with Syria.



- Military activity, including shelling and gunfire, has resulted in several civilian fatalities and injuries.
- Possibility of domestic terrorism in response to the Turkish government's military action in northern Syria and continued efforts to bolster the Syrian regime.
- Specific areas of concern on the Syria-Turkey border include Antakya, Gaziantep and Kilis provinces.



- No incidents were identified that involved staff deaths and injuries or damage to NGO property during conflict-related incidents between January 2015 and December 2017.
- However, several NGOs took security measures to protect staff, assets and programmes in Antakya, Gaziantep and Kilis provinces due to conflict-related events, including an IED explosion that killed the FSA-affiliated Suqur Al Ghab leader, and rockets and artillery fired near the Bab Al Salam border crossing.



**Unrest:** Civil unrest motivated by political issues can disrupt the delivery of aid.



- Civil unrest has been a common occurrence in Turkey's major cities; there is a risk to bystanders, whether they are directly involved or not.
- Demonstrations are generally the result of anti-government sentiment, the most recent of which was motivated by perceived government corruption, a lack of public consultation, media censorship, and the violation of democratic rights.
- Protests can turn violent and public insurrection can be met with a strong police response. Authorities are known to use tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets and live ammunition. Excessive force is likely.
- During the 2013 two-week protests in Gezi park, Istanbul, 11,000 people required medical treatment for tear gas exposure after 150,000 tear gas canisters and 3,000 litres of water were reportedly used by police.
- Particularly active periods for protests include the May Day rallies on 1 May and the Persian New Year on 20-21 March. The anniversary of the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 may also become a prominent date for future protests.



- Areas of concern include: Taksim Square and Istikal Street in Istanbul; the Kizilay and Tunali areas of Ankara; and areas near the watchtower in Izmir.
- The government's response is most noticeably present in Ankara, due to the proximity of Kizilay to government offices.



- Several NGOs took security measures to protect staff, assets and programmes following the failed July 2016 coup.
- No NGO staff member deaths or injuries were reported in the context of political unrest and demonstrations.



### **Road traffic accidents (RTAs):** Slight reduction in national RTAs rates.



- Over 1 million traffic collisions were reported in each of the last three years, with the total number of accidents falling slightly year on year.
- National statistics show a high number of reported RTAs around religious holidays and during Friday prayers.
- Urban road conditions are mostly good; roads in more rural areas are less well maintained.
- Outside the main cities, traffic laws are rarely enforced, partly due to Turkey's geographical size and the difficulty of policing such a vast area. Emergency breakdown cover is also sporadic for the same reasons.



- Locations of significant interest include Karasar and Geminbeli Gecidi in Sivas province, the D915 in Trabzon province, and the Kemaliye Tas Yolu road in Eastern Anatolia.



- One vehicle aid-worker-related road traffic incident was identified by the Aid in Danger project.
- The incident, reported in Hatay province, did not cause NGO staff member injuries or deaths.