

Netherlands Opposition Party Has Documents Proving Turkey Sent Arms to Al Qaeda Terrorists in Syria

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The Dutch opposition Christian Democratic Party (CDA) announced that it has confidential documents proving that Turkey had sent weapons to al-Qaeda militants in Syria and that it conveyed the documents to the Dutch government, according to a BBC Turkish report published on Sunday.

CDA deputy Pieter Omtzigt said his party acquired the confidential documents in November and shared them with Dick Schoof, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). According to the report, the documents are duplicates from an ongoing criminal investigation in Turkey into the 2014 interception and search on three Syria-bound trucks that belonged to the National Intelligence Organization (MIT).

Turkish gendarmes and several prosecutors are accused of unlawfully intercepting and conducting search on the MIT trucks, which, according to media claims, transported arms to radical Islamists in Syria.

The BBC Turkish report said former Adana Governor Hüseyin Avni Coş, who was in office at the time of the interception of the MIT trucks, said in a testimony that the arms-filled trucks belonged to MIT and were being sent to Syria upon orders from then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Omtzigt asked Dutch Minister of Security and Justice Ivo Opstelten whether he conveyed the documents to Foreign Minister Bert Koenders ahead of his recent visit to Turkey. Koenders visited Turkey on Jan. 5-7.

Meanwhile, CDA deputy Raymond Knops, a member of the Dutch Parliament Foreign Affairs Contact Group, accused the Dutch government of “playing ostrich” regarding Turkey’s relations with terrorist groups in Syria. Knops submitted a parliamentary question addressing Koenders regarding the claims of Turkey aiding al-Qaeda in Syria with weapons and ammunition. In his parliamentary question, Koenders cited the report by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

Koenders stated that the UNSC report had highlighted that the weapons and ammunition held by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the al-Nusra Front were largely transported via Turkey through secret ways. According to Koenders, this information has also been confirmed by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The Dutch lawmaker asked, “Do you find it disturbing that weapons and ammunition have been sent to terrorist organizations in Syria through the land of NATO member Turkey?” Koenders described launching air strikes on ISIL while Syrian jihadists receive arms via Turkey as “mopping the floor while the faucet remains open.”

Last Thursday, five Turkish prosecutors who investigated the claims of illegal arms shipments to opposition groups in Syria by the MIT trucks were suspended by a top judicial board.

The suspension of the prosecutors came a day after the government obtained a blanket gag order from Adana Fifth Criminal Court of Peace, preventing the Turkish media from reporting on documents that were leaked on Twitter on Jan. 12 by anonymous Twitter user @LazepeM, who claimed the information came from the General Staff and gendarmerie investigations.

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