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## Turkey sees 45 percent rise in domestic security spending

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Energy Minister Taner Yıldız recently attracted a lot of reaction when he declared: "I want to be a martyr."

Mehmet Alkan, a member of the Turkish Gendarmerie who lost his brother, was one of those who reacted, saying at his brother's funeral: "You can't say you want to be a martyr and then walk around with an armored guard surrounded by 30 body guards."

Many people on social media ask Yıldız how many bodyguards he walks around with. I don't know whether Yıldız will make public just how many bodyguards he has, and whether other ministers will follow suit. But a new academic study gives us an idea about the sheer scope of security spending in Turkey. At the end of the day, Yıldız's retinue of guards are part of this issue too.

The report is titled, "Turkey's Domestic Spending: 2006-2014," published by the Public Spending Monitoring Platform of Istanbul Bilgi University's NGO center.

Professor Nurhan Yentürk, who is the spokesperson of the platform, wrote the report.

The platform, made up of 52 NGOs, has been monitoring public spending for the past five years.

It has been sending its reports to parliamentarians for the past four years. The questions submitted by deputies are often based on information provided by this platform.

The latest report shows crystal clear that the budget earmarked for domestic spending between 2006 and 2014 increased by 45 percent.

What does domestic security spending cover? The Interior Ministry, the General Directorate of Security, the Gendarmerie, the National Security Council (MGK), coast guards, etc.

The highest growth registered between 2006-2014 on domestic security spending was seen by the Interior Ministry, which saw a rise in spending of 215 percent. Meanwhile, the General Directorate of Security makes up 48 percent of the overall domestic security spending.

Professor Yentürk underlines an important point in the report: No statistics or publications can explain the rise in the "secret services expenditures" and the Prime Ministry's covered allowance. But expenditures in both have seen a big jump since 2012.

Also important is the rise in expenditures stemming from the increase in the number of personnel at the various domestic security institutions. The increase in both the Interior Ministry and the National Intelligence Agency (MİT) is largely due to personnel expenditure.

Professor Yentürk complains in the report that "there is no source we can even turn to in order to find out whether the rise in spending is related to arms transfers to Syria or the purchase of tear gas."

Indeed, no one can claim that we have the world's most transparent government.

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