

SEPARATIST TERRORISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE REPUBLIC: HISTORICAL PROCESS, ACTORS AND CHANGING DYNAMICS

Cumhuriyetin İlk Yüzyılında Ayrılıkçı ve Bölücü Terör: Tarihsel Süreç, Aktörler ve Değişen Dinamikler

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Abstract

This study examines the separatist terrorist movements that the Republic of Türkiye has faced in the first hundred years since its foundation in historical, social, political, and security contexts. In the early period of the Republic, the multi-identity structure inherited from the Ottoman Empire led to various reactions against the centralist and secular nation-state understanding; the Sheikh Said, Ağrı, and Dersim rebellions in this process were considered as uprisings targeting not only internal security but also the legitimacy of the Republic. In addition to military methods, the state also employed legal and administrative mechanisms against these threats. Tools such as the Takrir-i Sükûn Law and Independence Courts were used to establish public order. During the Cold War period, ideologically diverse terrorist organizations emerged; ethnically based Kurdish separatism, radical leftist movements, and Armenian terrorism necessitated the state to develop a multi-faceted security approach. In this process, the PKK became the most organized and long-lasting terrorist threat Türkiye has ever faced. The armed actions it launched in 1984 caused radical changes in Türkiye's internal security policies; the organization carried out simultaneous terrorist activities in rural and urban centers. Türkiye has developed multifaceted counter-terrorism strategies against this threat through military operations, intelligence-based point interventions, development projects (GAP), and international cooperation. Since the 2000s, digitalization and global media opportunities have transformed the propaganda tools of terrorist organizations, and cross-border threats have come to the fore with the rise of the PKK's PYD/YPG in Syria. Türkiye responded to these developments with operations such as Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring. FETÖ is not directly discussed in the article, so this section should either be removed or FETÖ should also be included. This study comprehensively analyzes the evolution of Türkiye's security policies by addressing all these processes through qualitative content analysis and historical comparisons. The importance of the study stems from the fact that it reveals that the fight against terrorism should be addressed not only through military means, but also through its social, political, and diplomatic dimensions. As a result, the fight against separatist terrorism in the Republic's first century is analyzed as a multidimensional state reflex, not just a suppressive one.

Keywords: Separatist Terror, Separatist Movements, PKK, Republican Era Security Policies.

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan itibaren geçen ilk yüz yıllık süreçte karşılaştığı ayrılıkçı ve bölücü terör hareketlerini tarihsel, toplumsal, siyasal ve güvenlik bağlamında incelemektedir. Cumhuriyet'in erken döneminde Osmanlı'dan miras kalan çok kimlikli yapı, merkezîyetçi ve laik ulus-devlet anlayışına karşı çeşitli tepkilere neden olmuş; bu süreçte yaşanan Şeyh Said, Ağrı ve Dersim isyanları, yalnızca iç güvenliği değil, aynı zamanda Cumhuriyet'in meşruiyetini hedef alan kalkışmalar olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Devlet, bu tehditlere karşı askeri yöntemlerin yanında hukuki ve idari mekanizmaları da devreye sokmuştur. Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu, İstiklal Mahkemeleri gibi araçlarla kamu düzeni tesis edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Soğuk Savaş döneminde ise ideolojik çeşitlilik taşıyan terör örgütleri ortaya çıkmış; etnik temelli Kürt ayrılıkçılığı, radikal sol hareketler ve Ermeni terörü devletin çok cepheli bir güvenlik anlayışı geliştirmesini zorunlu kılmıştır. Bu süreçte PKK, Türkiye'nin karşılaştığı en organize ve uzun soluklu terör tehdidi hâline gelmiştir. 1984'te başlattığı silahlı eylemlerle Türkiye'nin iç güvenlik politikalarında köklü değişikliklere neden olmuş; örgüt kırsalda ve şehir merkezlerinde eş zamanlı terör faaliyetleri yürütmüştür. Türkiye, bu tehdide karşı askeri operasyonlar, istihbarat temelli nokta müdahaleler, kalkınma projeleri (GAP) ve uluslararası iş birlikleriyle çok yönlü mücadele stratejileri geliştirmiştir. 2000'li yıllardan itibaren ise dijitalleşme ve küresel medya imkanları terör örgütlerinin propaganda araçlarını dönüştürmüş; PKK'nın uzantısı PYD/YPG'nin Suriye'deki yükselişiyle sınır ötesi tehditler ön plana çıkmıştır. Türkiye, bu gelişmelere Fırat Kalkanı, Zeytin Dalı ve Barış Pınarı gibi harekâtlarla yanıt vermiştir. Ayrıca FETÖ/PDY'nin 2016'daki darbe girişimiyle birlikte Türkiye, farklı bir terör örgütü türüyle daha yüzleşmiştir. Bu çalışma, tüm bu süreçleri nitel içerik analizi ve tarihsel karşılaştırmalarla ele alarak, Türkiye'nin güvenlik politikalarının evrimini kapsamlı biçimde analiz etmektedir. Çalışmanın önemi, terörle mücadelenin yalnızca askeri yöntemlerle değil, aynı zamanda sosyal, siyasi ve diplomatik boyutlarıyla ele alınması gerektiğini ortaya koymasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak Cumhuriyet'in ilk yüzyılında ayrılıkçı terörle mücadele, yalnızca bastırmaya yönelik değil; aynı zamanda, çok boyutlu bir devlet refleksi olarak ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ayrılıkçı Terör, Bölücü Hareketler, PKK, Cumhuriyet Dönemi Güvenlik Politikaları.

Introduction

Since its foundation, the Republic of Türkiye has faced almost all known terrorism threats, some of which were inherited from the Ottoman Empire, some of which were directed against the founding ideology of the Republic, and some of which were ethnic, radical religious and ideological, fed by the specific conditions of the geography in

which it is located. It would also be appropriate to state that the periods in which Türkiye has not experienced violent terrorist incidents have been exceptional.

Among the threats encountered in the historical process, separatist terrorist movements have been the primary and most intense. Separatist insurgencies, which have manifested themselves in different forms since the late Ottoman Empire, have been at the center of the state's national integrity and security policies since the proclamation of the Republic. The Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925) and the Ağrı and Dersim incidents are among the state's biggest separatist threats in the early period. However, these secessionist movements have become a much more systematic and long-lasting security problem, mainly since the 1980s, with the establishment of the PKK terrorist organization and the start of its armed actions.

The separatist discourse, which gained a new momentum during the Cold War period with the interaction of ethnic nationalism and far-left movements, took a more radical turn after the 1980 military coup and evolved into an armed conflict process. The PKK's terrorist attacks in 1984 led to radical changes in Türkiye's domestic security policy and necessitated the state to develop both military and political strategies against this threat. Although the policies implemented in the fight against terrorism in the 1990s were largely security-oriented, a multifaceted approach to countering terrorism, including socio-economic and political dynamics, was gradually adopted.

In the 2000s, with the impact of globalization and digitalization, separatist terrorist movements have transformed both in terms of international context and propaganda strategies. Especially with the onset of the Syrian Civil War, organizations such as the PYD/YPG, which are the PKK's extensions in the region, gained strength, which led Türkiye to enter a new era in its security policies, including cross-border military operations. In addition, Türkiye was exposed to a different type of terrorist organization with FETÖ/PDY after the attempted coup d'état in 2016, even though it was not separatist in nature.

This study is designed as a qualitative research that examines the historical development, leading actors, and changing dynamics of separatist terrorism in the first century of the Republic of Türkiye. In the study, historical data were classified and periodically compared using a qualitative content analysis method. The study used the historical description method to analyze the development of separatist terrorist movements in different periods, state security policies, and counterterrorism strategies in the international context. In particular, the study examined the period from the establishment of the Republic to the present day by dividing it into periods. It comprehensively evaluated the transformation of terrorism in these periods. In addition, this study aims to assess the evolution, actors, and changing dynamics of separatist terrorism in the first century of the Republic of Türkiye. The study covers the security strategies, political policies, and social impacts implemented in different periods from

the foundation of the Republic to the present day. The aim and importance of the study are to evaluate Türkiye's fight against separatist terrorism from a historical perspective and to analyze future security policies.

1. Dynamics of Separatist Organizations in the First Period of the Republic

In today's world, the distinct and thickly demarcated state-centered threat perceptions of the classical era have been replaced by a multidimensional and complex threat structure due to the global intensification of economic activities, technology, information flow, and human mobility. The international system is now confronted with transnational and dynamic security challenges rather than traditional state-based enmity and threat perceptions. This situation points to a process in which globalization has added new dimensions to the security architecture.

On the other hand, the diminishing possibility of direct hot war between states within international law and norms has led states to turn to indirect means to protect and sustain their interests. In this context, it is considered that some states prefer to use terrorist organizations as a tool since direct conflicts create legitimacy problems. In this context, terrorism has gone beyond being merely a security problem and has become an instrumentalized element in the foreign policy and international strategies of states. It is considered that states support terrorism through indirect methods to realize their policies and objectives.

The Turkish nation and state structure have been exposed to various threats and hostilities at different periods throughout history. Since the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, attempts to weaken and destroy the state through planned and systematic threats originating from internal and external motivations have continued to exist. In the last fifty years of the Republic, the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia region was placed at the center of the threats targeting Türkiye, which created a serious security problem (Demirtaş, 2021). The transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Türkiye was considered a strategic opportunity by both national and international actors, and this situation paved the way for attempts to realize various objectives over Anatolia. Separatist insurgencies and the threat of terrorism, which gained momentum with the effects of the First World War, were among the most critical problems faced by the founding cadres who laid the foundations of the new Turkish state. Since its foundation, the Republic of Türkiye has had to deal with terrorism threats, some of which were inherited from the Ottoman Empire, some of which stemmed from reactions to the founding ideology of the Republic, and some of which were shaped by the dynamics brought about by the geographical location of the country (Türkiye and Terrorism, 2006).

After the proclamation of the Republic, the newly established Republic of Türkiye aimed to govern the structure inherited from the Ottoman Empire with a nation-state



Figure 1. Map of Türkiye with the Rebellions in the Eastern Anatolia and South Eastern Anatolia Regions during the Atatürk Period (Yazıcı, 2021)

approach. In this process, the centralist approach to governance and the state policies of the young republic were shaped by different ethnic and religious groups with different motivations, which were not accepted and faced processes leading to rebellion. These rebellions, which took place in the Republic's early years, became one of the most critical factors shaping the state's security policies and social order. In this context, the leading separatist movements between 1925 and 1950 constitute one of the cornerstones of Türkiye's political and military history. In this part of the study, the security

policies and strategies implemented by the state against these rebellions are evaluated by analyzing essential events such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), the Ağrı Rebellion (1926-1930), and the Dersim (Tunceli) Rebellion (1937-1938).

In the years following the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, rebellions for different reasons emerged in many regions, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. These rebellions were among the critical developments threatening the newly established state's internal security and social integrity. The rebellions between 1923 and 1938 were generally shaped by ethnic, religious, and socio-political reasons and spread to different geographical areas. The spatial distribution of the above-mentioned rebellions concentrated in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia is presented in Figure 1. This geographical focus is more pronounced in the border regions, where the feudal tribal structure is strong and the central authority is not fully established. The map shows the major centers of rebellion and reveals that they were concentrated in Diyarbakır, Bitlis, Van, Hakkâri, Ağrı, Tunceli, Siirt, and Şırnak.

The insurgencies between 1923 and 1938 are described in detail in Table 1 regarding historical process, regional distribution, and scope. The most noteworthy revolts that took place during this period were the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), the Ağrı Rebellion (1926-1930), and the Dersim Rebellion (1937-1938), which directly targeted the existence of the state and occurred on a large scale. In addition, regional revolts such as the Şemdinli, Mutki, Oramar, Savur, Zeylan, and Tendürek revolts also emerged for the same reasons. The revolts listed in the table developed against the centralist structure

of the Republican regime, land reforms, military, and administrative regulations. They were organized under the leadership of tribal chieftains and religious leaders. These revolts are also considered as foreign-backed attempts to weaken Türkiye's position in the international arena.

Table 1. Table of the Revolts in the Republican Era (Yazıcı, 2021)

NAME OF THE REVOLT	RIOT ZONE
Nestorian Revolt September 12-28, 1924	In the south, the Misakı Milli border-Oramar-Çölemerik south-Khabur Water region east of Beit al-Shabab
Sheikh Sait Rebellion February 13-May 31, 1925	Diyarbakır-Kulp-Varto-Bingöl-Çapakçur-Palu-Maden surroundings
Şemdinli Rebellion June 25, 1925/June 1926	Şemdinli-Çal-Çukurca-Beytüşşebab-Oramar
Rachkotan and Raman Rebellions August 7 -12, 1925	Tigris north -Siirt west- Sason -Silvan region
Yakup Agha of Eruh and Sons Rebellion and Pervari Rebellion 1926	Pervari
Koçuşağı Rebellion October 7-November 30, 1926	Ovacık-Hozat-Çemişkezek-Amutka-Aliboğazı-Beylan-Yilandagi region
Hakkari Rebellion October 1926-March 1927	Çölemerik-Beytüşşebab-Nordus region of Van
Sason Rebellions 1925-1937	Asi, Küsküt, Herük regions in the Sason region of Siirt province.
Mutki Rebellion May 26-August 25, 1927	Mutki district of Bitlis
Ararat Rebellions (1926-1930)	I. Ararat Rebellion: Poti-Serdarbulak-Gökde-Çiftlik Region
	Ararat Rebellion II: Serdarbulak-Biçerler-Karnıyarığa-İnek Plateau-Kozlu Region
	III. Ararat Rebellion: Çaldıran, Erciş, Gevaş, Pervari, Eruh, Viranşehir, Siverek, Suruç, Şemdinan, Çal, Beytüşşebab, Doğu Beyazıt, Iranian border
Oramar Rebellion July 16-October 10, 1930	Oramar, Sat, Şemdinan and Herki regions
Tendürek Rebellion September 14-27, 1929	Pain in the tendon area
Savur Rebellion May 26-June 9, 1930	Savur, Midyat Cizre
Rebel Rasul Rebellion May 22-August 3, 1929	Eruh district Lodi sub-district center
Bicar Rebellion October 12-November 17, 1927	Bicar region

Batush Rebellion May 20-June 9, 1927	Batush region
Zeylan Rebellion June 20-September 18, 1930	Bendimayi water - Tendürük - Muratbasi - Bozdag - Mount Görgör - Erciş region
Pülümür Rebellion October 8-November 14, 1930	Agri, Pülümür
Menemen Rebellion December 23, 1930	Menemen
Dersim (Tunceli) Rebellion 1937-1938	Amutka-Nazmiye west of Zel mountain-Dar throat -Dojik east of Munzur- Karacakale region

When evaluated within this framework, it is seen that these rebellions were not only a security problem, but also a reflection of the reactions created by the Republic's nation-state building process and modernization policies in the regions in question and at the international level. In particular, the resistance of ethnic and religious groups in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia to Republican modernization constitutes the background of these rebellions. In conclusion, when the aforementioned map and table are evaluated together, it is possible to understand the geographical, social, and political foundations of Türkiye's internal security problems in the early years of the Republic. These rebellions reveal the process of strengthening the central authority and the conflict of regional issues with the Republican regime.

Moreover, the apparent aim of these rebellions was to establish an independent Kurdish state by opposing secularism and modernization. However, it is evaluated that the protection of the landlords and sheikhs against the regime constituted the mental background of the revolts (Karpat, 2020).

Among these rebellions that took place in the early years of the Republic, the Sheikh Sait Rebellion, the Ağrı Rebellion, and the Dersim Rebellion are among the most important examples that have been the subject of academic studies. The Sheikh Sait Rebellion is the first large-scale insurgency of a separatist nature that the Republic of Türkiye faced in the years following its establishment.

The revolt started on February 13, 1925, in the village of Piran in the Eğil district of Diyarbakır. The first starting point of the uprising was the armed response of Sheikh Abdurrahim, Sheikh Sait's brother, who was protecting deserters, to the demand to hand them over to the security forces. This incident soon turned into a large-scale clash and marked the beginning of the uprising. Sheikh Sait, the pioneer of the rebellion, criticized the abolition of the caliphate and the process of secularization and called for action in the name of the Islamic religion through his communiqués addressed to the people in the region, thus ensuring the mass mobilization of the revolt. This rebellion, which seemed localized at first, soon became a regional and serious threat directly targeting the

state authority. The developments posed not only a security problem for the Republican government but also a challenge to the legitimacy of the newly established state (Acar, 2019).

At the beginning of the rebellion led by Sheikh Said, the rebels gained control over certain regions in a short time after clashes with the regular military units of the state. The insurgents captured strategically important settlements such as “*Genç, Elazığ Center, Palu, Maden, Siverek, and Ergani*” in this framework. In addition, another group affiliated with the rebellion attempted to lay siege to Diyarbakır by moving through Varto. However, this attempt failed, and this development became a critical turning point that changed the course of the rebellion.

As the Sheikh Sait Rebellion gradually grew and spread to large geographical areas, a series of extraordinary measures were taken with the decision of the Council of Ministers on February 21, 1925, upon the request of the Prime Minister of the time, Fethi Bey. Within this framework, it was decided to declare martial law for one month in the provinces of Muş, Ergani, Dersim, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Urfa, Siverek, Siirt, Bitlis, Van, Hakkâri, and the provinces of Kığı and Hınıs in the province of Erzurum. This decision was made to prevent the spread of the rebellion and restore public order. It paved the way for the suppression of the uprising by granting extraordinary powers to the state’s security forces. (TBMM, ZC. D.II, C.14).

Ali Fethi (Okyar) Bey, the Prime Minister of the period, considered the Sheikh Sait Rebellion a local and reactionary uprising in the eastern provinces. Therefore, he argued that martial law would sufficiently suppress the rebellion. On the other hand, İsmet İnönü and the group in favor of a harsher approach saw this rebellion not only as a regional uprising but also as part of a large-scale counterrevolutionary movement. İnönü and those around him stated that more radical and harsh measures should be taken against this attempt targeting the Republican regime. Among the measures envisaged to be taken were the establishment of Independence Courts, the closure of newspapers and magazines that published contrary to the principles of revolution and reform, and the punishment of the owners and authors of these publications (Cemal, 1955). In this context, the government enacted the Takrir-i Sükûn Law after the rebellion to strengthen state authority.

The courts established after the Sheikh Sait rebellion announced the verdict on June 28 after about a month of hearings. In the verdict, it was stated that the uprising was aimed at establishing an independent Kurdistan by using religion and Sharia as a tool (Akyürekli, 2013). In its various convictions of the defendants who participated in the Sheikh Sait Rebellion, the Eastern Independence Court accused the defendants of trying to establish an independent Kurdistan state. Although Sheikh Sait denied this aim during the trial, many researchers today agree that the Azadi organization, which was established to fight for the independence of Kurdistan, played an essential role behind the rebellion (Şener, 2022).

After the Sheikh Said rebellion, the Independence Court was established in Diyarbakır on April 12 to carry out the judicial process, and the trials officially began on May 14. At the end of the trial, a death sentence was issued on May 23 for Seyit Abdulkadir, Seyit Mehmet, Kör Sadi, Hacı Ahdi, Kemal, and Fevzi, which was executed on May 27. Sheikh Said's first interrogation was held on May 21, and on May 23, he was transferred to the Court of Independence by the prosecutor's office. As a result of the trials, the death penalty was decided on June 28, and this decision was executed on June 29, 1925, against a total of 47 people, including Sheikh Said, Sheikh Abdullah, Sheikh Şerif, and some other names (Baysal, 2022).

In line with his goal of establishing Kurdistan, Sheikh Said is known to have established contacts not only with tribal leaders and religious leaders in the region but also with prominent figures in Istanbul known for their pro-caliphate stance, especially Seyed Abdülkadir. These attempts aimed to gain a broad support base for the rebellion and increase its legitimacy. On the other hand, some sources indicate that Britain declared that it would openly support a Kurdish state if the rebels gained control around Diyarbakır and reached Mosul (Kurdish rebellions in General Staff Documents, 2012).

One of the most critical issues discussed in the context of the Sheikh Said Rebellion is the above-mentioned question of whether Britain influenced this process. The Nestorian Uprising that took place in the region before the rebellion, the British weapons in the hands of the rebels, and the efforts of some groups to communicate with Britain strengthen the claims of support. In addition, Britain's demands to limit Turkish military shipments on the railroad also form the basis for these allegations.

Mumcu states that during the suppression of the rebellion, documents written by the "*Kurdistan Ministry of War*", the "*Kurdistan Government*", or the "*Kurdistan Chief*" were seized. In addition, it is seen that Sheikh Sait, together with his brother and his friends, declared that they would establish an "*independent Muslim government of the Kurds*". In the same study, Mumcu states that Prof. Dr. Mete Tunçay defines this rebellion as "*a national revolt under the guise of religion*" (Mumcu, 2023).

The 1925 Sheikh Said Rebellion is considered one of the first large-scale separatist terrorist movements in the history of the Republic. It stands out as an organized threat to state authority. This uprising not only shook the political structure of the period, but also paved the way for other separatist terrorist acts such as the Ağrı and Dersim rebellions in the 1930s. The Sheikh Said Rebellion led the state to restructure its regional security policies and influenced the scope of measures against separatist elements.

Shortly after the suppression of the Sheikh Said Rebellion, a new security crisis emerged, this time on Türkiye's eastern border. The Ağrı Uprisings began in 1926 when a group led by Yusuf Taşo crossed the Iranian border and attacked police stations, and continued with a series of clashes over the next four years (Köse, 2020). These events,

which took place in and around Mount Ağrı, started a process that challenged Türkiye in terms of internal security and border security.

To understand the background of these conflicts more clearly, it is essential to look at the first developments that directly led to the rebellion. In the spring of 1926, Yusuf Taşo and an armed group with him stole some livestock from the village of Kalecik in the Muson sub-district of Beyazıt before retreating to the vicinity of Mount Ağrı, which raised a local security problem. In response to this incident, the 27th Regiment troops dispatched to the region launched a military operation against the group on May 16, 1926; this intervention was the first step in a series of events that would later turn into a large-scale rebellion movement. These developments were not just a bandit incident, but represented the beginning of a larger crisis that triggered socio-political tensions in the region (Hallı, 1972).

The insurgency process was not limited to a military issue, but turned into a multi-layered security problem that also affected regional and international dynamics. During this period, tribes such as Jalali, Haydaran, and Jibrán, as well as some Armenian groups and Nestorian elements, acted in alliance with the rebels; some sources even include intelligence assessments that these structures received foreign support (Sarıkoymuncu Değerli, 2008). Britain's efforts to influence the balance in the region in response to the Turkish claim over Mosul were explained by such indirect interventions.

The strategic challenges of neighboring Iran have increased the mobility of rebel groups and allowed elements fleeing the conflict to regroup by taking refuge in Iranian territory. In response to this threat, Türkiye has not only sought to improve diplomatic cooperation with Iran but also expanded its security belt by establishing outposts and military bases along the border. These moves were not only temporary security measures but also an indication of a permanent restructuring of border policy.

Following all these developments, the military operation carried out in 1930, known in history as the "*Zilan Deresi Operation*", constituted a critical turning point in suppressing the rebellion. The fact that there were some civilian casualties during the operation brought Türkiye to the agenda of international public opinion with criticisms based on ethnicity (Bozarslan, 2002; Jwaideh, 2006). However, this situation also paved the way for Türkiye to make its security policy steps more systematic and comprehensive. As a result, the Ağrı Uprisings were not only a security issue but also led to the reshaping of border policies, the understanding of internal governance, and regional administrative arrangements.

In addition to these developments, it is noteworthy that the rebellions were not limited to the border line but were effective in a much broader geography. The Ararat rebellions took place over a vast area, affecting the entire territory of Ararat and Iğdir and parts of the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Muş, and Kars for four years. During this period, it was

observed that rebel elements attacked military units and tried to incite the population against the government, primarily through acts of robbery and looting. One of the most intensive areas of activity was the area around Mount Ararat, known for its broken and rugged terrain. In parallel with this activity, there is information in the sources of the period that the British Intelligence Service contacted some tribes in the region. However, the careful monitoring of the regional administrators and the contacts carried out under the leadership of Kazım Karabekir Pasha effectively prevented such attempts. With the support of some Kurdish tribes cooperating with the state since the Ottoman period, a potential Kurdish-Armenian alliance was prevented (Karabekir, 1995).

After eliminating early threats such as the Sheikh Said and Ağrı rebellions, the Republican administration took more decisive steps to consolidate public authority, spread the modern state structure throughout the country, and ensure social cohesion, especially in the eastern regions. In this framework, in some areas where multidimensional problems such as underdevelopment, the dominance of tribal structures, and transportation difficulties coexisted, the state's reform moves carried the potential for conflict with established traditional structures. In this context, it became inevitable that the state's policies to develop centralized authority and the rule of law would encounter resistance in the historically insular Dersim region, leading to the Dersim Rebellion, one of the most essential uprisings to be analyzed in the history of the Republic.

Unlike other rebellions, the Dersim Rebellion, which witnessed the harshest security operations of the Republican regime, reflects the reaction of a traditional structure that became the direct target of modernization policies. In this process, it was seen that the Dersim region was geographically inaccessible and socially tribal in nature, with strong tribal ties. The 1935 Tunceli Law granted extraordinary powers to the governorship in the area and increased the scope of state intervention. However, these regulations were perceived as a threat by local tribes (Doğan, 2012).

Some tribes led by Seyit Rıza sent letters to the government opposing the construction of police stations, bridges, and sub-district centers; they even wanted to continue paying taxes on their terms. When these demands were rejected and the state began to organize administrative organization in the region, the rebellion officially started on the night of March 21, 1937, with the destruction of a bridge between Pah and Kahmut districts (Hallı, 1972).

Although the uprising initially took place in a limited geographical area, the state's harsh intervention led to widespread clashes, military airstrikes, mass migrations, and large-scale arrests. The region's population was systematically evacuated, and a significant portion of the remaining population was resettled in Western Anatolia (Van Bruinessen, 1992; McDowall, 2004). Seyit Rıza and prominent figures were captured and executed; all administrative structures in the region were changed. The Dersim Rebellion should be read not only as a security threat but also as a socio-political crisis

caused by the state's centralist approach to ethnic identities in the nation-building process.

The founding of the Republic of Türkiye was not merely a change of regime, but a fundamental step in transforming a multinational and multi-religious empire into a modern, secular, and unitary nation-state. This transformation process encountered resistance from historically entrenched feudal, ethnic, and religious structures, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions. However, this resistance emerged as a threat to establishing state sovereignty, social progress, and the rule of law.

In the Republic's early years, the Sheikh Said, Ağrı, and Dersim rebellions were uprisings against the state's modernization goals and centralized administration and targeted the constitutional order. These rebellions were violent manifestations of the resistance to change in some segments of society. While the Sheikh Said Rebellion was a reactionary uprising under the guise of religion, the Ağrı Rebellion was supported by foreign connections and contained elements that threatened border security. The Dersim Rebellion went down in history as the last resistance of a tribal-based structure against the rule of law.

The state responded to such threats with compulsory yet legitimate methods to preserve public order and maintain constitutional legitimacy. Legal regulations such as the Takrir-i Sükûn Law, the Independence Courts, and the Tunceli Law were implemented to ensure public security, suppress unlawful uprisings, and guarantee citizens' protection of life and property. These interventions reflect the state's existence and its responsibility to protect social peace and the country's integrity.

Although these processes created difficulties in the short term, in the long term, they contributed to restructuring state-society relations, strengthening central authority, and establishing social cohesion based on equal citizenship. The Republic learned from these experiences and strengthened its reformist character at the legal, institutional, and social levels.

2. Structural Transformation of Separatist Movements after the Cold War

Türkiye's struggle against separatist movements directly results from its geopolitical position. At the junction of three continents, Türkiye has been at the center of military and political rivalries for centuries, as it is simultaneously adjacent to the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea basin (Fuller, 2008). During the Cold War, this situation became even more critical, and this process shaped Türkiye's foreign policy and directly affected its domestic security dynamics.

In addition to this geopolitical reality, although a significant portion of the threats faced during the Cold War originated from external sources, social, ideological, and economic dynamics that paved the way for these threats were also effective domestically. Ethnic

separatism and leftist ideological structures have necessitated Türkiye to develop multi-layered security strategies. In this process, the factor of external support has played a decisive role; when the historical course is analyzed, it is understood that a long-lasting and effective terrorist structure is almost always made possible by external interventions (Laçiner, 2005). This situation has forced Türkiye to prioritize the fight against terrorism in its foreign policy.

The Orientalist institutes and Kurdish research centers established in the West, especially since the late 19th century, fostered an approach that instrumentalized the identities of the peoples in the region; powers such as France, Britain, Germany, the United States and Russia, with their direct or indirect support, formed the theoretical basis for separatist ideas (McDowall, 2004). Thus, it has become clear that secessionist movements are the product of Türkiye's internal dynamics and are fed by global interventions.

This international guidance and support led to interruptions in the security field and Türkiye's economic development goals. Increasing terrorist incidents since the 1960s have not only threatened the security of life but also led to a halt in investments in rural areas and diverted resources to security expenditures (Çora, 2021). Thus, terrorism has become not only a security issue but also a structural obstacle to economic development.

One of the first examples of separatist terrorism in this process is the terrorist movements based on Armenian nationalism. The roots of the problem go back to the late Ottoman Empire; the Armenian rebellions and assassination attempts that started in Ottoman lands with the encouragement of Western powers are among the pioneering examples of modern terrorism. Armenian committee members went beyond the classical methods of warfare and instrumentalized mass violence through propaganda, assassination, arson, and sabotage (Laçiner, 2005).

In particular, events such as the Ottoman Bank raid (1896) and the assassination attempt against Abdülhamid II (1905) are essential milestones in the history of Armenian terrorism. Moreover, during this period, it was observed that Armenian organizations developed strategies to influence Western public opinion not only through physical violence but also through ideological propaganda.

By the 1970s, Armenian terrorism gained an international dimension. Organizations such as *ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia)*, *JCAG (Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide)*, and *ARA (Armenian Revolutionary Army)* carried out assassinations and bomb attacks against Türkiye. ASALA's founding declaration, in which it openly declared its goal of an independent Armenia, and the attacks that followed revealed the separatist nature of this organization. Between 1975 and 1983, four ambassadors and 42 Turkish diplomats lost their lives in attacks on Turkish diplomatic missions abroad (Turkish Bar Association, 2006). As the attacks targeted

not only Turkish citizens but also foreigners, Western states took measures against this threat, and the mid-1980s essentially broke ASALA's international influence. However, the vacuum was soon filled by new ethnic-based organizations such as the PKK.

This period has again demonstrated that the state apparatus must combat the threat through military measures, international diplomacy, and public opinion management. The example of Armenian terrorism demonstrated the transnational nature of the security threat and the necessity of developing multifaceted strategies against it.

Another threat Türkiye faced in the same years was the rise of far-left ideological movements. Leftist movements found a social base in Türkiye primarily through universities, trade unions, and youth organizations, strengthened by the ideological and material support of the USSR in the Cold War context (Demirel, 2002).

From the 1960s onwards, various organizations such as THKO, THKP-C, TİİKP, TKP/ML, and Dev-Sol emerged with the common goal of overthrowing the existing state order through revolution and establishing a socialist order. The actions of these organizations manifested in various forms of violence such as bank robberies, assassinations, hostage-taking, and sabotage.

In 1972, the death of Mahir Çayan and his friends in a clash with security forces in Tokat-Kızıldere marked a turning point in the course of radical leftist movements in Türkiye. Around the same time, İbrahim Kaypakaya, the founder of TKP/ML, was seen to develop a revolutionary strategy based on a Maoist line and peasant revolution. Dev-Sol also came to the forefront with its urban-centered actions and later transformed into DHKP-C.

The activities of these leftist organizations were not limited to local support; they were sustained with logistical and ideological support from countries such as Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, and Syria (Romano, 2006). In addition, some leftist circles in Western Europe also showed sympathy and support for these movements. Thus, leftist terrorism in Türkiye became not only a national but also a global ideological struggle.

The September 12, 1980, military coup purged these organizations to a large extent, but did not eliminate them. Organizations such as the DHKP-C, MLKP, and TKP/ML continued their armed actions in the 1990s and came to the fore with assassinations and bomb attacks against public officials. This process paved the way for comprehensive reforms in the state's security apparatus.

Since the 1990s, thanks to the strengthening of counterterrorism laws, modernization of intelligence agencies, and increased international cooperation, the threat of left-wing terrorism has been brought under control to a significant extent. Today, however, it is observed that some organizations have abandoned armed struggle and turned to methods such as diaspora work, human rights advocacy, and propaganda in the academic field. This situation reveals that the state's fight against terrorism should not be limited to military measures but should include social, cultural, and diplomatic dimensions.

In conclusion, Türkiye's fight against separatist and ideologically based terrorism has been shaped as much by the effectiveness and strategic flexibility of the state apparatus as by geopolitical realities. This struggle has resulted in the necessity of developing a comprehensive and long-term state policy against multidimensional security threats.

3. PKK, The Last Dynamic of Separatist Terror

Since its establishment, the Republic of Türkiye has shown legitimate resistance to these threats with the will to protect national unity and territorial integrity. Separatist terrorist movements have not only created security vulnerabilities, but have also been a part of external strategies targeting a national consciousness.

Ethnic-based separatist movements stand out as one of the most protracted examples of secessionist movements in Türkiye, seeking institutionalization with external support. The historical roots of these movements date back not only to the Republican era but also to the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The rebellion led by Mir Muhammed, the chief of the Soran tribe, in the 1830s is considered one of the earliest examples of separatist initiatives in the modern sense (Union of Turkish Bar Associations, 2006). This was followed by the Bedirhani rebellions (1847), Koçgiri (1920), Sheikh Sait (1925), Ağrı (1926), and Zeylan (1930), almost all of which were shaped not only by internal dynamics but also by the intervention of external elements.

The centralist reforms in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire weakened established administrative traditions, especially in regions based on tribal structure, which led to some local rebellions. After the proclamation of the Republic, various policies were developed against separatist movements in line to strengthen Türkiye's unitary structure and social integrity. Especially in the aftermath of uprisings such as the Sheikh Sait Rebellion, ethnic-based separatist tendencies were considered by the state as a serious threat to national security, and comprehensive security measures were taken to protect public order. In this process, in line with its goal of uniting all citizens under the umbrella of equal rights, the Republic of Türkiye implemented integrative policies against divisive identity discourses that paved the way for radicalization (McDowall, 2004).

State policies focused on unity and integrity, developed in line with the Republic's founding principles, were restructured and supported by security measures against the separatist tendencies triggered by political openings in the following periods. After the 1960 coup d'état, the space for political structures in Türkiye and individual freedoms such as freedom of expression and the right to organize were expanded through the 1961 Constitution. This democratic opening paved the way for the development of liberal political movements and the activities of some separatist forces (Bozarslan, 2002). In the 1965 elections, the Workers' Party of Türkiye (TİP) became a platform that brought the Kurdish issue into legitimate political channels by giving a place to many politicians of Kurdish origin on the political stage (Van Bruinessen, 1992).

However, this process was interrupted by an increased perception of threats to the unity and integrity of the country; after the 1971 memorandum, separatist discourse was banned again, and a strong public authority was established against activities that could harm national unity. In this framework, many separatist activities were intervened in to prevent threats to national security, and the determination to protect the country's shared values was maintained.

These developments have demonstrated that the Republic of Türkiye's resolute policy of protecting the unitary structure and ensuring national security has continued uninterruptedly even during political liberalization.

Although the determined reflexes of the state ensured the suppression of certain separatist activities, some radical groups' marginalization and reorganization efforts gained momentum in the early 1970s. After the 1971 memorandum, security measures marginalized Kurdish nationalism, but did not completely eradicate it. Radical structures sought to reorganize in this environment by rapidly gaining ideological clarity. Some ideologically-minded individuals who left the Workers' Party of Türkiye founded the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Ocakları (DDKO) in 1969, creating a structure that blended ethnic-based separatism and revolutionary socialist thought (İmset, 1993). However, DDKO was shut down after the 1971 memorandum, and its members were arrested; nevertheless, the cadres who were released with the 1974 amnesty reorganized under the umbrella of the Revolutionary Democratic Culture Associations (DDKD).

Another noteworthy formation during this period was the Kawa organization, founded in 1976 by radical elements who had left the DDKD. Kawa, particularly influential in university circles, split into Red Kawa and Denge Kawa due to ideological divisions. In the same period, organizations such as Rızgari and Ala Rızgari tried to synthesize Kurdish separatism with socialist ideology and attempted to reshape the separatist movements ideologically (Törel, 2002). These processes strengthened the Republic of Türkiye's determination to prevent discriminatory and separatist initiatives without compromising national security and public order priorities.

The organizations that emerged in Türkiye in the second half of the 1970s generally consisted of seven main structures: Kurdistan Democratic Party of Türkiye (TKDP), Kurdistan Socialist Party of Türkiye (PSK), Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association-Kurdistan Workers Party (DDKD-KİP), Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Rızgari, Kawa, and Têkoşin. This fragmented structure evolved from the 1980s onwards into a development process in which the PKK established hegemony over the other structures (Ozan, 2022).

Unlike other separatist structures, the PKK established a more centralized, disciplined, and ideologically based organizational structure. With its strategy centered on armed struggle, it adopted violence as the primary means of achieving its political goals.

The organization was officially founded in 1978 in the village of Fis in Diyarbakır's Lice district under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan and named Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK). The group, known as the “*Apoculars*” before its establishment, gathered in 1975 in Ankara's Dikmen district to hold theoretical discussions and prepare a 68-page manifesto entitled “*The Path of the Kurdistan Revolution*”. The PKK ideologically adopted a Marxist-Leninist line and tried to legitimize an ethnic-based separatist organization by synthesizing it with revolutionary socialist principles (İmset, 1993).

The PKK held its first congress on November 26-27, 1978, in which it declared its establishment. It adopted the “people's war” strategy and set the goals of expanding its cadre, conducting ideological education and propaganda activities, and increasing popular support. In addition, during this period, the PKK attempted to establish its own hegemonic space by organizing attacks against the cadres of rival structures to gain ideological superiority among Kurdish leftist organizations. In this respect, the PKK resorted to terrorist practices with the perception of both internal and external threats.

In the organization's early publications, religious institutions and beliefs were defined as “*imperialist elements that kill the spirit of national resistance,*” spiritual leaders such as Said Nursi and Sheikh Said were portrayed as extensions of imperialist schools (Öcalan, 1978). The PKK's ideological line in this period was based on a revolutionary socialist approach that completely distanced itself from religion.

However, by 1990, Öcalan and the PKK leadership realized the mobilizing power of religion on the masses and changed the discourse to use this situation to the organization's advantage. In line with the decisions taken at the 2nd National Conference held in Lebanon between May 4-13, 1990, the anti-imperialist and anti-socialist aspects of religion were emphasized. In the same year, Öcalan wrote an article titled Revolutionary Approach to the Religious Problem, in which he argued that religion should be used as a source of motivation in the national struggle and criticized the Kemalist regime's ambivalent attitude towards religion. A new ideological discourse was developed through concepts such as “*Islamic internationalism*” and “*anti-imperialist foundations of religion*”; thus, the PKK displayed a pragmatic transformation aimed at increasing its mass support (Öcalan, 2008).

The ideological flexibility exhibited by the PKK over time shows that the organization not only pursues a separatist goal but also seeks to influence large masses through propaganda, manipulation, and social influence strategies. The state of the Republic of Türkiye, which has been closely monitoring this situation, has not contented itself with security-oriented methods in the fight against terrorism; it has adopted a holistic approach by developing preventive and transformative policies at the ideological level. The state's attitude in this process is based on a determined and continuous struggle against separatist initiatives that may undermine public order and national

unity. Although the changing international and regional conjuncture in the early 1980s created new areas of opportunity for terrorist organizations, the strategic approach of the Republic of Türkiye, which does not compromise on the protection of constitutional order and national security priorities, has demonstrated a vital will to balance and eliminate these threats.

The 1980 military coup led to a comprehensive security policy against all opposition structures in Türkiye, creating a paradoxical environment of opportunity for the PKK. In the face of the harsh security measures taken by the state against domestic threats, the PKK was able to retreat abroad and restructure; it established camps in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, secured political and logistical support from the Syrian regime, and took advantage of the favorable conditions in northern Iraq to organize on a regional scale (Marcus, 2007).

Following this restructuring, the PKK launched an open terrorist period with the attacks in Eruh and Şemdinli on August 15, 1984. The terrorist organization targeted rural areas in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, making village guards, teachers, health personnel, and civilians the focus of attacks (Özeren et al., 2012). These attacks, which were carried out without any discrimination against women, children, and older people, served to establish a fear-based control mechanism over the population.

The PKK's ideological infrastructure was built on the thesis *that "Kurdistan is a colony"*. According to this thesis, Türkiye was defined as a state that assimilated and exploited the Kurdish people; this discourse led the organization to see armed struggle as a legitimate and necessary method (Öcalan, 1978). The PKK's main goal was to unite Kurds living in four different countries and establish the state of *"Independent, United and Democratic Kurdistan"*. Over time, the organization sought legitimacy in the international arena and resorted to name changes. In 2000, it started to operate under the name KADEK, and in 2003 under the name KONGRA-GEL; however, there was no change in the ideological goals of the organization (Çora, 2021).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the Cold War ended, and this global transformation brought about changes in domestic security policies. For geopolitically important countries like Türkiye, the Cold War concept of "frontline country" ended, and new security threats emerged. While some organizations with leftist ideologies weakened, identity-based movements, especially the PKK, gained broader legitimacy (Romano, 2006).

In this period, terrorist organizations deviated from their ideological lines and brought identity politics to the forefront. For Türkiye, this change manifested itself in the PKK's activities not only in rural areas but also in urban centers. In the 1990s, the PKK began to pursue a multi-front terrorist strategy, straining the state's security capacity.

The PKK, which practiced guerrilla warfare tactics in rural areas between 1984 and 1990, turned to urban centers in the 1990s and sought legitimacy in international public opinion by using the “*minority rights*” discourse. In this process, diaspora organizations, human rights advocates, and some media outlets in Europe have been involved in activities aimed at masking the PKK’s terrorist identity (Marcus, 2007).

During this process, it was noteworthy that European countries displayed double-standard approaches towards Türkiye. On the one hand, they recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization; on the other hand, they opened space for various extensions of the organization within the framework of freedom of expression and association. This ambivalent attitude made it difficult for Türkiye to explain its fight against terrorism in the international arena, and the propaganda carried out by the organization through the media, associations, and foundations indirectly threatened Türkiye’s internal security (Çora, 2021).

In the face of all these developments, the Republic of Türkiye has developed multi-dimensional strategies in the fight against terrorism since the 1990s. First, military capacity was increased, Gendarmerie Special Operations and Professional Border Security units were established, the use of technology was emphasized, and intelligence coordination was strengthened.

Secondly, an understanding was adopted that the fight against terrorism could not be conducted solely in the security dimension, and the state’s visibility was sought to be increased in economic and social areas through development initiatives such as the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) (Özeren et al., 2012).

In the third dimension, Türkiye internationalized its fight against terrorism and developed cooperation with regional countries. Border security agreements have been signed with Syria, Iran, and Iraq, and the PKK’s international space for movement has been narrowed. In 1999, Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya and brought to Türkiye, which was one of the most concrete successes of this strategy.

In recent years, the PKK has adopted new tactics to threaten Türkiye’s border security and domestic peace through urban-based insurgencies (trench/barricade actions) and its extensions in northern Syria. However, especially in the post-2015 period, the Republic of Türkiye severely limited the organization’s logistical and mobility capabilities through cross-border operations such as the Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring Operations, and dealt heavy blows to the organization through intelligence-based point operations in internal security. This process continues the multifaceted struggle that the state has been waging with determination on the ground and at the table.

In conclusion, Türkiye’s fight against separatism today has become multi-layered, and the need for a holistic strategy in military, political, social, and diplomatic fields has become inevitable. It has become imperative for the state to continue the struggle

through suppression methods and policies that increase democratic participation, strengthen social integration, and promote cultural and economic development.

Conclusion

Since its foundation, the Republic of Türkiye has waged a multifaceted struggle against separatist and terrorist movements that threatened national unity, territorial integrity, and constitutional order. The Sheikh Said, Ağrı, and Dersim rebellions of the first quarter century of the Republic were among the most serious security challenges the new state faced in the process of nation-state building, and not only military means but also legal and administrative instruments were employed to suppress these uprisings. The centralist and modernizing vision of the early Republican period clashed with traditional structures, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. Still, this ground of conflict did not prevent the state from taking reformist steps.

In the post-Cold War era, terrorism was no longer solely an ethnic-based problem; it became an internationally supported, ideologically diverse, and multi-layered threat targeting economic development. In this context, both Armenian terrorism and leftist ideological terrorist organizations have had lasting effects on Türkiye's foreign relations and domestic stability. They have sought to undermine Türkiye in the eyes of the international community not only through armed attacks but also through propaganda, cultural manipulation, and diplomatic pressure.

Among these structures, the PKK terrorist organization has been one of the most organized and destructive threats Türkiye has faced since the 1980s. Operating in a vast geography, particularly in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, the PKK has sought to gain legitimacy through ethnic-based rhetoric and has received support from various power centers both inside and outside the country. However, the Republic of Türkiye has increased its military capacity, developed regional cooperation, and developed multidimensional strategies to eliminate the breeding ground for terrorism through socio-economic development projects. The integrated counter-terrorism methods implemented since the 1990s have indicated a state reflex that is not only security-oriented but also includes elements of social integration, cultural recognition, and economic development.

In recent years, Türkiye's decisive and inclusive security policies, technological infrastructure, cross-border operation capability, and effectiveness in international diplomacy have made significant progress in the fight against terrorism. In this context, the goal of a "Terror-Free Türkiye", which was put into practice especially after the preparation of this study, is carried out in coordination with both military and civilian policies. In line with this goal, establishing public order permanently, ensuring the security of life and property of citizens, and eliminating the damage caused by terrorism on the social fabric are among the main priorities.

As a natural extension of these processes, a serious process of dissolution has been observed in the PKK terrorist organization and its affiliated structures since the 2020s. The organization has recently lost its effectiveness in the field and has become unable to maintain its ideological unity. In particular, the increase in Türkiye's intelligence capacity and the pressure on its cadres through effective operations have led to demoralization and managerial crises within the organization. In light of these developments, the declarations of "self-dissolution" made by the PKK's top leadership, the realization of which is not yet inevitable, can be considered as an indication that the organization is de facto weakened and has lost its legitimacy to a great extent.

In conclusion, the Republic of Türkiye has effectively fought against the threat of separatist terrorism since its foundation by combining its historical experience with its strategic vision. Significant gains have been achieved in this regard. The vision of a "Terror-Free Türkiye" as the Republic enters its centenary year should be a security goal and the hallmark of a strong, stable, integrated state structure. In this context, the determination to protect the fundamental values of the Republic and the constitutional order will continue to be at the center of the state's priority security and development policies.

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Extended Abstract

This study aims to examine the separatist and separatist terrorist movements that the Republic of Türkiye has faced in the first hundred years since its foundation in historical, ideological, social, and international contexts. The Republican regime aimed to build a modern, secular, and unitary nation-state from the multi-ethnic and multi-religious social structure inherited from the Ottoman Empire. In this context, the uprisings since the first period of the Republic have taken their place on the stage of history as events

that directly affected the state's security architecture and political stability.

The Sheikh Said, Ağrı, and Dersim rebellions of the early Republican period were seen as threats to consolidating central authority, the rule of law, and nation-state building. These rebellions also revealed the fragile relationship between regional structures and the state. The state attempted to establish public order through military measures and legal and administrative regulations in this process. The Takrir-i Sükûn Law, Independence Courts, and extraordinary administrative powers were among the instruments put into practice in this period.

In the 1930s, the state's modernization policies gained momentum, and reforms were emphasized to establish public authority, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. However, these policies clashed with local feudal structures and tribal relations; events such as the Dersim Rebellion, which was shaped by this conflict, became examples of the military and administrative capacity of the state being tested. In this context, the early uprisings were the first large-scale separatist uprisings against the centralist character of the Republican regime.

In the Cold War period, the phenomenon of terrorism was not only limited to ethnic-based uprisings; ideologically diverse structures also began to challenge Türkiye's security balances. Especially leftist ideological movements and terrorist activities based on Armenian nationalism came to the fore in this period. The assassinations of Turkish diplomats abroad by Armenian organizations such as ASALA and JCAG are among the first examples of Türkiye's confrontation with terrorism in the international arena. These organizations put Türkiye in a difficult situation, not only through physical attacks but also through propaganda activities directed at Western public opinion.

In the same period, organizations based on leftist ideology such as THKP-C, TKP/ML, and Dev-Sol carried out various armed actions in universities, trade unions, and urban centers. These organizations aimed to overthrow the state through bank robberies, assassinations, kidnappings, and sabotage in line with the goal of socialist revolution. This process led the state to restructure its security apparatus and take extraordinary measures to maintain public order.

However, the most long-lasting, systematic, and destructive terrorist threat in Türkiye's hundred-year history has undoubtedly been the PKK terrorist organization. Founded in 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan, the organization combined Marxist-Leninist ideology with ethnic-based separatism and adopted armed struggle as its primary strategy. Starting in 1984 with the Eruh and Şemdinli attacks, the open terrorist process expanded from rural areas to urban centers and even to cross-border regions. The PKK's ideological discourse is centered around the goal of establishing an independent state of "United Kurdistan" encompassing the Kurdish areas of Türkiye, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

The 1990s were the period of the most intense PKK terrorism, and the state stepped up military operations against this threat, strengthening its capacity in the field with Gendarmerie Special Operations, professional border troops, and security guard systems. At the same time, socio-economic development projects such as the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) sought to address structural problems in the region. During this period, the PKK intensified its actions not only in rural areas but also in urban centers, carrying out bomb attacks and acts of sabotage in significant cities.

While the PKK's propaganda activities continued in the international arena, the organization changed its name (KADEK, KONGRA-GEL) and tried to be effective in the political arena with its efforts to gain legitimacy. In European countries, the organization's rhetoric spread through so-called cultural associations, human rights platforms, and media channels; Türkiye's efforts to inform the international public opinion against these activities increased. However, the double-standard approaches of Western countries allowed the organization to find propaganda space in Europe.

In the 2000s, the form and method of terrorism also changed; digitalization and social media tools have been practical in organizations' propaganda and organizing strategies. In this process, the PKK turned the Syrian Civil War into an opportunity and gained influence in northern Syria with its extensions, such as the PYD/YPG. Against this threat, Türkiye has organized cross-border military operations (Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Peace Spring) since 2016 to prevent the terror corridor.

Moreover, the FETO/PDY-inspired coup attempt in 2016 was an example of a different type of terrorism that Türkiye faced. This organization, which infiltrated the state's institutional structure, organized an uprising that posed a security threat and directly targeted the constitutional order. This event demonstrated that Türkiye needs to fight terrorism not only in rural areas but also in state institutions.

In this study, the terrorist movements that developed in different periods of Türkiye's century-long history are analyzed through qualitative content analysis and historical description, and comparisons are made between periods. The research reveals that terrorism is not only a security threat that needs to be suppressed, but also a phenomenon that needs to be evaluated with its social, political, and economic dimensions.

In conclusion, the Republic of Türkiye's fight against separatist and terrorist groups has not been limited to military reflexes; it has been based on multifaceted strategies that ensure social integration, target economic development, and rely on international cooperation. In line with the founding principles of the Republic, the state has supported its security policies with reforms to protect the constitutional order, territorial integrity, and national unity, and has put forward a comprehensive vision in line with the goal of a "*Terror Free Türkiye*" as it enters the 2020s. This vision is the basis for sustainable policies that provide security and ensure peace, prosperity, and social tranquility.