

Turkey threatens to target dissidents abroad 'anytime, anywhere'

by Meghan Bodette - 24/09/2018 19:11



Turkish presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin said on Friday that the Turkish government would continue to pursue overseas operations against dissidents living abroad, according to a [statement](#) released by the office of the Turkish Presidency.

"I cannot share any details but anything can happen, anytime, anywhere. Mr. President has given very clear instructions on this issue. Our relevant units are working very professionally. Operations similar to the one conducted in Kosovo can be carried out in other countries," Kalin said.

The operation in Kosovo that Kalin referred to involved the abduction of six Turkish nationals accused of having ties to Islamist cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose supporters are considered a terrorist organization in Turkey.

The six men were apprehended by Turkish intelligence officers in mid-March and taken to Turkey, where their fate remains unknown. Their families were not informed of their arrest.

Turkey has successfully captured its citizens from at least 16 countries, and [uses](#) INTERPOL's red notice alert system—intended for states to notify other states of serious criminals for extradition—to attack dissidents and journalists. Historically, it has conducted these operations in Europe—but Kalin's statement, made days before Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan traveled to New York for the United Nations, suggests that the United States is now a target as well.

“Our relevant units and institutions will continue their operations...whether it be the U.S. or some other country,” Kalin said.

In 2017, the Daily Caller, a right-wing American news outlet, [reported](#) that several Turkish-American journalists had been surveilled and that their images and photos had been published in Turkish media. Months after that, Erdogan conferred with his bodyguards just moments before they attacked a peaceful demonstration in front of the Turkish Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC, injuring several people. The victims of that attack were targeted by Turkish media—as were peaceful demonstrators who protested Erdogan's speech to the Turkish-American National Steering Committee later that year, whom Erdogan referred to as “terrorists.”