

## SUICIDE ATTACKS AND TURKEY

### İntihar Saldırıları ve Türkiye

Kemal KARADEMİR \*

#### Abstract

*The suicide attacks that terrorist organizations use during the breaking up period, it is seen that these kinds of actions are generally taken in Turkey as individual attacks. In some countries, however, these attacks are happened to be more planned and systematic.*

*The suicide attacks, that have been carried out either by members of PKK and DHKP-C terrorist organizations in Turkey or in some other countries including Middle East by radical Islamic terrorist organizations and ethnical organizations, thought us clearly that terror has neither religion nor nationality. The suicide attacks carried out in New York on 11 September 2001 showed that all states should cooperate against the terrorism and from now on the slogan; "for a safe future, we should cooperate wherever and however it is necessary" is very important.*

*In this study, the suicide attacks that have been carried out either by members of PKK and DHKP-C terrorist organizations in Turkey, have been examined.*

**Key Words:** Suicide, suicide attack, suicide bombers, terror, PKK

#### Özet

*Terör örgütlerinin zayıflamaya başladıkları dönemlerde başvurdukları intihar saldırıları, Türkiye'de genellikle, bireysel saldırılar olarak görülmektedir. Bazı ülkelerde bu tür saldırılar daha planlı olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.*

*Türkiye'de PKK ve DHKP-C terör örgütü üyelerince veya Orta doğuyu da kapsayan diğer bazı ülkelerde radikal İslami terör örgütleri ve etnik kökenli terör örgütleri tarafından gerçekleştirilen, intihar saldırıları, bizlere, terörün ne dininin ne de milletinin olmadığını açıkça göstermiştir. 11 Eylül 2001'de Newyork'ta gerçekleştirilen intihar saldırıları da, bütün devletlerin terörizme karşı işbirliği yapmaları gerektiğini ve şu andan itibaren "güvenli bir gelecek için nerede ve ne şekilde olursa olsun teröre karşı birlikte mücadele" sloganının ne kadar önemli olduğunu göstermiştir.*

*Bu çalışmada, PKK ve DHKP-C terör örgütleri tarafından Türkiye'de gerçekleştirilen intihar saldırıları incelenmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İntihar, intihar saldırıları, intihar bombacıları, terör ve PKK.

\* Dr., 4. Class Chief of Constable, Istanbul Organized Crime Department.

## Introduction

When we look into the background of suicide attacks that are sensational actions which terrorist organizations use during the breaking up period, it is seen that these kind of actions are generally taken in Turkey as individual attacks. In some countries, however, these attacks are happened to be more planned and systematic (Tavas, 1999:82-132).

The assassination of Alexander the II, Russian Czar, on 1 March 1881 in a suicide attack, is a typical example of individual suicide attacks in history. "Narodnoya Volya, makes 8 unsuccessful attempt to kill the Czar. As all these attacks prove to be unsuccessful, he decides to take additional measures. He gives four bombs to four volunteers. Assailants are placed at four different routes that the Czar's cortege might pass. Two other assailants are placed on the same road. First attacker comes near to the Czar's cortege and throws the bomb, but the bomb misses the target. As the attacker is seized, the Czar comes out of the car saying, "Thanks God I am fine". At the same time another attacker comes out of the crowd and throws himself on to the Czar with the bomb and succeed in the suicide attack by killing himself and the Czar" (Hoffman, 1998:19).

First planned and systematic suicide attacks achieved by terrorist organizations have begun in the Middle East at the beginning of 1980's, then started to get organized in other countries, firstly in Sri Lanka, and then in India (On 21 May 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was killed in a suicide attack carried out by a Sikh or Hindu terrorist. In this attack 30 people died) and Pakistan. These actions have been realized in Turkey since 1996 in the form of individual attacks.

In 1980's, suicide attacks that intensified in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, achieved by using explosive loaded vehicles. In these kind of attacks an explosive loaded vehicles is driven into the target and exploded when the vehicle reaches to the target point. In the later period terrorists achieved these attacks by exploding the bomb that are placed on them.

We may look in to some of these suicide attacks that are, at the beginning, targeted the foreign embassies and military subjects, then targeted also civilians, as examples:

The first attack that is considered to be a suicide attack in the Middle East was organized in Beirut on 16 April 1983. An explosive loaded minibus crashed in to the USA Embassy and was exploded by the driver and 60 people were killed and 120 people were injured in the attack.

The followings are some of the suicide attacks that are achieved after the first event and put in the records:

On 23 October 1983, there were two suicide attacks with car bombs, one into the Command Headquarters of French Forces and another into the Command Headquarters of American Marines. The explosions took place in 20 seconds

interval. 260 American soldiers and 58 Frenchmen died. Some observers considered these explosions as the biggest non-nuclear explosions that have been seen since the Second World War. Al Jihad Al-Islami claimed responsibility in both attacks.

On 4 November 1983, in the suicide attack to the Command Headquarters of Israeli Army, 61 people, 28 of who were soldiers, were killed.

In September 1985 a car bomb exploded at an Israeli-Christian Control Point in South Lebanon and 30 people were killed. Radical Islamic groups claimed the responsibility.

On 6 April 1994, in an attack organized by Hamas, in Afula city, 8 Israeli were killed, 44 people were injured.

On 19 October 1994, Hamas exploded a bus in Tel Aviv. 21 people were killed and 9 people were injured in the attack.

On 22 January 1995, in the suicide attack that was carried out by Islamic Cihad at a bus stop in Beyt Lid, 22 people were killed and 64 people were injured (Taylor, 1998:107-109).

We can extend the list of suicide attacks that have been carried out by radical religious organizations in the Middle East (It is reported that between the years 1983-1997, in the suicide attacks that were carried out by radical religious organizations in the Middle East, 676 people were killed and 893 people were injured). These examples, however, are good enough to show the threat that is posed by suicide attacks.

On 11 September 2001, the attacks that are directed in to the World Trade Centers in New York and to the Pentagon caused the death or injury of thousands of people and these attacks have exceeded all those examples cited above.

These attacks that shook all the world have been a turning point for the countries which fight against terrorism and the countries that support these terrorist attacks on one hand, and also a turning point for the terrorist organizations on the other hand. With these attacks, everyone has seen that terror is a crime against mankind and its damages covers all people in the world including innocent ones. In addition, by these attacks, it has been understood that it does not mean anything whether the target is powerful in terms of military, politics or economy.

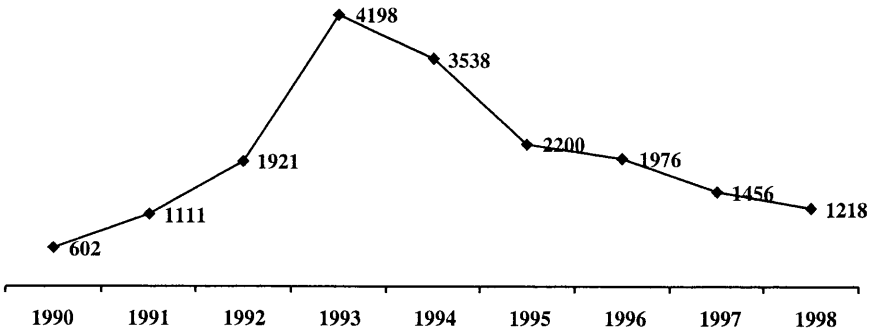
For these reasons, all states and agencies, besides the intelligence and operational activities, should focus also on psychological measures in destroying the causes of terrorism. On the other hand, it should also be taken into consideration that, with the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorists have aroused the desires to carry out sensational actions.

Now we will consider the background of suicide attacks in Turkey which has been fighting against terrorism for years and achieved good results in this

struggle. We investigate firstly the suicide attacks that have been carried out by the PKK terrorist organization, which was founded on Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and then advance to other suicide attacks carried out by other intriguer and destructive terrorist organizations.

### Turkey's Acquaintance with Suicide Attacks

PKK, an armed terrorist organization that carries out terrorist activities in order to destroy Turkey's indivisible integrity, has begun its first attacks on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1984 and this organization has carried out many attacks including attacks with arms and bombs, laying land mines, throwing Molotov cocktails, waylaying, usurpation, kidnapping, illegal meetings and demonstrations. As many decisive policies and planned operations against terrorism have achieved since then, especially as a result of the operations started in 1993 in order to regain the dominance in the rural areas and the successful works of security forces, there has been a dramatic decline in terrorist actions.



When we look into the diagram of events, we can see that the terrorist actions that make a peak with 4,198 events in 1993, declined with a 15.2% decrease to 3,538 in 1994, with a 38.1% decrease to 2,200 in 1995, with a 10.1% decrease to 1,976 in 1996, with a 26.3% decrease to 1,456 in 1997. When we came to the year 1998, only 1,218 events of terrorism, including distributing illegal statements and organizing illegal meetings and demonstrations, took place (Terrorist Events Statics, prepared by TEMUH Department).

At so-called the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress that took place in North Iraq between 8-27 January 1995, it is stated that the militants of the organization entered an passive

era almost in every region, their communications with their supporters in near settlements have broken down, and many of the militants who were sent to metropolitan cities to overcome the laziness and to provide logistic support escaped from the organization and have been caught in the mean time (The documents that were found in the rural areas of Bitlis Province in September).

Again in the same congress's decision, under the subtitle "Basic Targets", it is stated and pointed out that the conditions of advancing from strategic defense level to strategic attack level has been formed, so the organization's actions should target the economic, politic, military, social, cultural institutions and agencies and the personnel who work in these places and the organization should try all forms of actions, including Hamas type suicide attacks.

Because of the fighting strategies and effective measures which are developed by security forces, PKK terrorist organization could not have carried out classic actions such as armed attacks, waylaying and kidnapping either in urban centers or in rural areas anymore. Then the terrorist organization decides at the allegedly 5<sup>th</sup> congress, which is done in March 1996, that the suicide attacks that were in the agenda of 4<sup>th</sup> conference should be carried out at suitable time and places. After this decision the terrorists are given orders to make necessary preparations for these actions.

The suicide attack, which is carried out by Zeynep Kinacı who is a militant of PKK terrorist organization, has been the first suicide attack. She walked into the group of soldiers in Tunceli, on June 30<sup>th</sup> of 1996, pretending she was pregnant.

One may say that Suicide attacks are very important for security departments and the public, because of the damage that is caused by and the fear it spreads among the public by the way of providing sensational effect.

In this context, when we look at the suicide committed between 30 June 1996 the date on which the first suicide attack carried out by a woman terrorist and 8 April 1999 the date on which the last suicide attack carried out, we can see that during this period 15 suicide attacks were carried out, as a result of these attacks 6 policemen and 9 soldiers lost their lives; 28 policemen and 47 soldiers were injured, besides 4 civil people died and 63 civil people were injured.

The dangerous extent of the attacks can be seen clearly when the fact that during the same period seven suicide bombers were caught as they were preparing for an attack, is taken into account.

In order to find out and understand the situation, it is necessary to inquire the causes of suicide attacks, how the suicide bombers are chosen, the personality of militants and how they are motivated, what type of targets are chosen. Only after this, it will be wiser to state opinion about the measures to prevent this kind of actions.

## **The Causes of Suicide Attacks**

### ***1. The Inactivity Process***

When we look into the question of why suicide attacks occur in terms of PKK terrorist organization, the causes of this should be searched in the inactivity process in which the organization have experienced since 1993, during which they have lost their effectiveness both in rural areas and in the capability of realizing serious actions.

It will all be easier to comprehend the subject if we consider how important these actions in the life of terrorists. As the number of successful actions gets lesser every day and the event of escaping from the organization and dispersings began, the leaders of the terrorist organization decided to use a new action style in order to refresh the philosophy of the organization. In this way suicide attacks entered into the agenda as a new kind of action.

During the period between 1996 and 1997 in which the inactivity process was seen to be the basic cause of suicide attacks, the terrorists of PKK carried out 5 suicide attacks and in these attacks 6 policemen and 8 soldiers martyred, 8 policemen and 29 soldiers were injured, 1 civil person was killed and 16 civil people were injured.

Besides, it is known that during the same period a terrorist called Abdurrahman Marangoz was caught while making preparations.

### ***2. The Causes Related to Abdullah Öcalan, The Leader of PKK***

Up to date, terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan had to leave Syria on 9 October 1998. The causes of suicide attacks had related to the need to find new ways of action because of the inactivity process as a result of heavy blows received by the organization.

The situation of Abdullah Öcalan, after his deportation from Syria, as a result of the decisive attitude and diplomatic pressure of Turkey, however, is considered to be a separate reason. We can outline these events and the causes related them under following headings.

#### ***a) The period between his leave from Syria and his arrest in İtaly***

The confusion and shock was caused by both the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan's forced departure from Syria where he had lived for years On October 9<sup>th</sup> 1998, and the refusal of Greece who had provided all kinds of support to him to stay in the country and sending him to another country.

During this period, therefore, terrorists could not carry out any kind of offensive action, including suicide attacks, but especially in prisons some terrorists carry out the action of setting themselves on fire and it is considered that relating to this, some psychological preparations of suicide attacks has begun.

In this context, during this period, members of PKK terrorist organization carried out 7 separate actions of setting themselves on fire at different prisons and 3 of the terrorists died.

***b) The period starting with his arrest in Italy and finishing with his return to Turkey***

During the process that started with the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan's arrest in Italy on November 12<sup>th</sup> 1998 and Turkey's request to extradite him back, some militants of PKK organization had begun carrying out the action of setting themselves on fire increasingly to protest his arrest and Turkey's request (TEMUH Department's statistics, It is understood that including former period, in different prisons, in 21 different events 22 militants of PKK terrorist organization set themselves on fire, 5 of them died 18 of them recovered with treatment).

When Abdullah Öcalan saw that members of his illegal organization had been becoming depressed and with these suicides the dispersion of the organization had been gaining speed, he made a statement through MED TV; "... I do not approve the burnings. I am angry with the ones who set themselves on fire, I strongly insist on their leaving this action. If there is something to burn, it is not your sacred lives but the persons who deserve to be burned and the institutions that are in front of our eyes. Get ready for them, stop burning yourselves, get yourself sharpened, organized, prepared. I am talking about a very serious preparation." (MED TV, 13.12.1998). He ordered his militants not to set fire themselves, but begin to suicide attacks. Just after this order, the militant of PKK terrorist organization, Hamdiye Kaplan, carried out a suicide attack against a military personnel bus in Van, on 24.12.1998.

During this time, 3 suicide attacks, one in Hakkari, one in Diyarbakır and another in Van were performed. As a result of these attacks, 1 soldier martyred, 18 soldiers and 20 civil people were injured and 1 civil person lost his life.

Meanwhile it is known that 3 different terrorists were caught as they are preparing for suicide attacks at different times and places (Elif Maviş, Adem Nikbay and M.Necip Kurtcebe).

Terrorists performed these attacks since they were affected by the speech of Abdullah ÖCALAN on MED-TV and also to protest his arresting in Italy and to protest Turkey's request.

***c) The Period after His Being Arrested In Kenya and Being Brought to Turkey***

PKK Leader A. ÖCALAN was arrested on 16 February 1999 in Kenya and brought to Turkey. Suicide attacks have gained momentum after his capture in

order to prove loyalty to him and to protest his capture.

Osman Öcalan, Cemil Bayık and Murat Karayılan, from the upper level management of PKK, through MED-TV, named their suicide attacks as 'Bouncer Operations'.

In this context, a day after the terrorist leader was caught, a terrorist named Cemil Bayık ordered the militants in the country to carry out bombed suicide attacks by saying; "... The youth of Kurdistan should prove that they are willing to sacrifice their lives for APO" (MED TV, 17.02.1999).

Terrorist Osman Öcalan also make a call for action by participating in some programs of MED TV between 1-2 March 1999 by phone; "... It is time to get even with the enemy... It is not too far that guerillas also respond as our people do and they shake Turkey as they become martyrs... In this context both our people and guerilla forces put in use the action of sacrifice" (MED TV, 1-2.3.1999).

After these action calls through MED TV, in the next month, the first one is in Batman on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1999, 6 bombed suicide attacks were carried out by terrorists. As a result of these attacks; 13 policemen and 20 civil people were injured and 2 civil persons lost their lives.

At the same period, 3 terrorists who were members of PKK terrorist organization were caught as they are preparing for suicide attacks (Bahar Erçık, Nebi Kurhan and Umut Gulay).

It is understood that especially by this kind of actions that are carried out during the trial process of Abdullah Öcalan, the terrorists wanted to spread the terror and create panic among people. The statement having the heading "To our people and international public" dated 18 February 1999 that was broadcasted through MED TV by terrorists, the aim of terrorists is clearly seen; "In Turkey and in Kurdistan, every kind of violence are just and legitimate, All institutions, agencies and organizations, either military or civil, that show hostility towards Kurdish people are going to be targets of Kurdish people" (MED TV, 18.2.1999).

As the causes of suicide attacks that carried out by members of PKK organization are considered, in the context of developments related to the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan who had been seized in Kenya and brought to Turkey, the approaching period, especially the time after the terrorist leader brought to the court on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1999, is examined separately in terms of suicide attacks.

In this context, it is considered that the terrorists, depending on the result of the trial, either to protest the decision of the court, or because of their intention to sacrifice or the feeling of taking revenge, might be increasingly directed to suicide attacks and the necessary measures to prevent this happen is taken seriously.



#### ***d) The period after the “death sentence” given by the court***

It is considered that, because of the trial of the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan and the death sentence that was given by the court in the end of trial on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1999, the terrorists either to protest the decision of the court, or because of their intention to sacrifice or the feeling of taking revenge, might increase their suicide attacks and that it is reported to the relevant units in form of circular (25.6.1999 and numbered 149210, 8.7.1999 and numbered 157939).

The members of PKK, who were waiting silently during the trial process, started to threaten by increasing their attacks, including suicide attacks, both in Turkey and abroad, after the court’s death sentence decision to the terrorist leader on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1999.

In this context, on the date 5.7.1999, a suicide attack against police was carried out in Adana. As a result of this attack, 14 people, 7 of them were policemen, got injured. It is considered that this kind of attacks might continue and especially in case of execution of the death sentence, these attacks will increase and might be entered into a different period.

With the context in which the death sentence has not been executed and the Turkish State has exhibited a decisive policy in fighting against terror, after this date, there has not been any suicide attack carried out by the members of PKK terrorist organization.

### ***3. Psychological Causes***

Psychologist Necati Alkan who examine the psychological dimension of suicide attacks, in his article “The psycho-dynamic realities in suicide attacks of terrorist organizations”, lists the psychological causes of suicide attacks that have been carried out by members of PKK terrorist organization as follow:

- The organization entered into shrinking complex. Because of this complex, the organization was in a psychological state in which it tries every way out.
- The organization has entered into the psychology of disintegration. Because of this psychological state it might try all madness and feels a very bad depression.
- The organization has begun to feel the fear of loosing its grass roots deeper. This fear directs the organization to find new ways out.
- The organization has demoralized itself and is in a nervous break. The death, therefore, has become a way of power play.
- The organization has reached to a point to threaten its members and partisans. This threat includes following order and message; “Be ready to commit suicide when it is necessary!” The organization, inter alia, tries to break up the non-compromising policy of the State against terrorism by violence. It aims, therefore, to make violence uncontrollable (Alkan,1997).

It may be thought that the terrorists might have accepted taking this action to reach the honor of so-called “martyrdom” in the eyes of their supporters.

Besides all these reasons, vengeance, proving themselves, vendetta, or being forced against their will can be included in the list of the causes of suicide attacks.

### **The Suicide Bombers**

When we look into backgrounds, family structures, personalities and organizational actions of the PKK militants, we see that these militants are chosen generally among the ones who have joined the organization because of his anger against the society which they feel embarrassed as a result of their failure to achieve success in schools or in their jobs (It is known that Hamdiye Kapan who caused 1 person’s death and 21 peoples’s, 17 of them were soldiers injury by carrying out a suicide attack against a military personnel bus in Van on 24.12.1998, had to leave the Accounting Department of Dicle University because of her failure and joined the terrorist organisation) the ones who have been considered not to be useful anymore because of their age (Abdurrahman Marangoz who was born in 1956 and caught as he had preparing a suicide attack, in Diyarbakır on 27.10.1996, directed to this kind of action, because he had been having difficulty in carrying out active actions because of his age.) or the ones who have a relative who died in an encounter or was caught by security forces and put in prison (Two brothers of Ali Marangoz, Ahmet and Mustafa had been killed in an encounter with security forces in 1982. Zeynep Kınacı who carried out a suicide attack in Tunceli on 30.6.1996 by running into soldiers during a flag raising ceremony had been arrested in Adana on 27.11.1995 because of the claim of helping and harboring PKK militants and as she had lost his psychological balance and joined PKK because of his husband had been also arrested on the same account).

Besides, some militants who carry out suicide attacks are forced, against their will to carry out these actions. The terrorist Bayram Yaruk who joined the suicide attack that was carried out by terrorist Leyla Kaplan in Adana on 25.10.1996 and was then the provincial director of PKK terrorist organization in Adana, said in his testimony after his arrest; “The task had been given to a militant named Türkan Adıyaman by Mehmet YAMAÇ, she had not accepted the order and then she was killed according to the order of Mehmet YAMAÇ who gave this job then to Leyla Kaplan who saw the killing of Türkan Adıyaman and she accepted and carried it out. (The note on Bayram Yaruk who has been caught in İçel on 30.10.1996)

In this context, there are some kind of punishments which are applied by regional management of organization in order to force the terrorist chosen for suicide attack to accept the task: the suicide bomber is kept under high

psychological pressure by so-called “assigning no duty”. According to this method; the terrorist chosen as a suicide bomber by leadership, firstly charged with the punishment of not assigning any kind of task under the pretext of committing a crime in the organization.

During this period, which may last 2 or 3 months or sometimes 6 months, no duty is assigned to this member. The terrorist who has to stay doing nothing and is excluded by his friend, the longer the punishment lasts the more he feels under pressure. According to the intensity of this pressure, at the end of a given period terrorist comes to think that no matter “What kind of task is given, I am ready to carry out”. On this point the leadership calls the punished terrorist and tell him that they forgive him and have decided to assign him a meaningful task of carrying a suicide attack. The terrorist, who wants to prove himself again, cannot think the results of offered task or anything else but to realize the task he has been given and carries out the attack.

On the other hand it is interesting to see that especially woman terrorists who have difficulties to adapt themselves to the rural life of organization and have psychological and health problems are specifically chosen for suicide attacks (An official circular, dated 23.2.1999 and numbered 46847, sent to all provinces by TEMÜH Department.)

Alkan, who examines the reasons why more women terrorists are employed than men, explains these reasons as;

- Developing of psychology of “uselessness” against woman terrorists inside the organization,
- Compensating this psychology by considering suicide attackers as heroes in the eyes of the organization
- The knowledge that security forces treat woman terrorists more tolerantly in body searches, because of the rules of traditions
- The easy camouflage of bombs over the body of women terrorist pretending as pregnant.
- As women are more emotional than men, women are more available to be conditioned (Alkan, 1997).

On the other hand, after the attack, terrorist Hamdiye Kaplan caused 1 person’s death and 21 people’s injury, 17 of who were soldiers by carrying out a suicide attack against a military personnel bus in Van on 24.12.1998. It is considered that the terrorists who carry out this kind of attacks generally have an autistic personality. In this context Psychiatrist Dr. Çetin Ersül says: “The encouraging drugs might be used in these attacks. These living bombs show the characteristics of being volunteering, devoted to the cause, risking his/her life for the sake of the idea. After months of thinking the terrorist focuses on the cause.

The idea of being successful and serving the ideals, is a motive that directs terrorist to this action. The terrorist sees this action as a holy duty which takes him/her to the position of martyr (Aydoğan, 1998).

Again Dr. Ayhan Kalyoncu who examines suicide bombers says; "Suicide attackers are more autistic personality in subconscious level. They are more suitable to be inculcated.

It may be concluded that the persons who have a tendency to commit suicide achieve these attacks. Depression is created deliberately in these persons by teaching the feelings of desperation and hopelessness (Aydoğan, 1998).

Dr. Kültegin Ögel as making a conclusion on the same subject says; " These people are dependent persons. It can be determined that they do not have personality. As they lost their ideals, they are dragged into other ideals (Aydoğan, 1998).

Besides these considerations, it can be concluded that suicide bombers are the militants who lost colors of life, have psychological problems and become autistic as a result of loosing their relatives in an armed fight with security forces.

It is generally known that the families of suicide bombers usually live on the border of poverty level. Besides, the terrorists who are chosen for this kind of actions have some relatives who are in prison because of terrorist activities or killed in action. At this point, they are said to have the same personal characteristics of HAMAS suicide bombers (Kushner, traslated by Karademir, 1999: 91).

### **The Process Up to The Explosion of The Bomb**

The suicide bomber who has been chosen among the terrorists and who we have tried to draw the profiles of, are ready to suicide attack. After the leadership of the organization takes the decision of suicide attack, the person who will carry out the action is chosen usually in front of the other militant in order to encourage and motivate them. During this meeting some other volunteers might come out too. A terrorist is chosen. Then the suicide bomber according to the characteristics of the action undergoes a special training of 10-15 days.

During this training, trainer explains how to bind the bombs around the body of the terrorist, what points to take into account, how to camouflage, how to come closer to the target and how to ignite the bomb. Even, the bombs are bound to the body of the terrorist a few times as a practice and then taken off. When it is decided that the terrorist is ready for the action, he/she is given the name of helpers and connections that will take him/her to the target. In this way the process of suicide bombing starts.

The bombs and their mechanism are not brought to the suicide point by the suicide bombers. Bombs are brought to the place by other members of the

organization or compradors in order to reduce the risk of capture. During this process, the helpers who have taken the order to assist the bomber, waits for the suicide bomber's coming and connecting him. After the meeting that is one or two days before the action day, they reconnoiter the action place if it is necessary. Then the action time is waited (Diyarbakır Province Police Department).

When time is up, according to the distance of the target either in the house of the helper or in a covered place near the target, the suicide bomber binds the bombs on himself/herself and wears the necessary camouflage. After that, the bomber set up to the target under the control of helper or another member of organization.

The actual aim of the suicide bomber is to reach the target and give the most possible damage to the target. When the terrorist reaches the target, before his intention of coming there is discovered, he/she explodes the bomb by pulling the linchpin and realizes the action.

It might be possible that if the terrorist thinks he/she is going to be realized as he/she is getting nearer to the target, he/she realizes the action just there. In the suicide attack, for example, happened in Sivas on 29.10.1996, the actual action target was the crowd that will meet in Cumhuriyet Square and will consist of high officials and people. At the check point in the entrance of the city, however, the security forces arrested some suspicious persons and take them to the Center of Struggle Against Terror to be searched, the woman terrorist named Güler Otaş, exploded the bomb by pulling the linchpin and realized her action. In this event 2 terrorists died, 3 policemen martyred, 1 citizen lost his life and 10 people got injured."

### **The Target Population**

When the suicide attacks that have been carried out up to this day are examined, it is clear that firstly police and army who had an effective role in the fight against terrorism have been targeted. Following suicide attacks are the clearest examples of this kind of actions; to soldiers who were practicing a flag raising ceremony in Tunceli, to the Quick Force Sub department in Adana, to policemen who arrested and were taking to the center them and to the military personnel bus that was carrying military personnel and students.

Secondly, the suicide attacks target the celebration as Cumhuriyet celebrations, where crowded people including high state officials gather. The attacks of Abdurrahman Marangoz who was caught before he could do his attack in Diyarbakır, on 27 October 1996 and Güler Otaş who realized her action when she is in the police car in Sivas, on 29 October 1996 are examples of this kind.

It was understood that the actual targets in these attacks were high officials and general public who would join these celebrations.

Starting from the time that the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan was arrested

in Italy and Turkey's request to extradite him back, to protest this arrest and this return some militants of PKK organization committed suicides by setting themselves on fire (TEMUH Department).

As he considers that because of his being captured, the members of the terrorist organization have got into depression, and with these kind of suicides, the destruction and disintegration of organization would increase, the terrorist leader, through the broadcasts of MED TV, he ordered his militants instead of setting themselves on fire, to carry out suicide attacks. Just after these broadcasts, the militant of PKK terrorist organization, Hamdiye Kaplan, carried out a suicide attack against a military personnel bus in Van, on 24.12.1998.

The terrorist leader A.Öcalan, who couldn't find the support that he had expected from Western Countries and got in a tight spot because of Turkey's decisive policy of asking him back, gave a message that the suicide attacks might target civil people, through MED TV, the broadcasting agency of his terrorist organization; "... the ones who explode the bombs binding to his life among the occupying forces in order not to cause any harm to civil people (today), will explode them tomorrow among the people who are senseless and supporting this fascist government. This will happen and hundreds of bombs are going to explode. Turkish people have to know this fact. I am now holding them back with great difficulty. However I can not stop them tomorrow, it is not my duty to stop them..." (MED TV, 25.12.1998).

On the other hand, when we examine the bombed suicide attacks happening since 16 February 1999, the date A. Öcalan was captured and brought to Turkey, we see that these attacks have targeted firstly the police, then, different from other attacks, they targeted provincial governors in Bingöl and in Hakkari. In order to understand the reasons why the members of terrorist organization head toward these different targets, we should look into the statement broadcasted through MED TV, on behalf of PKK terrorist organization, under the heading "To our public and to international public" dated 18 February 1999. In the statement that we discussed earlier, these expressions proves that the officials on important positions may become a target of these attacks;

"In Turkey and in Kurdistan, every kind of violence are just and legitimate, All institutions, agencies and organizations, either military or civil, that show hostility towards Kurdish people are targets of Kurdish people."

After examining all these facts, in order to understand the threat dimension of suicide attacks well and determine the strategies suitable for fighting these kind of actions, it will be useful to consider the outlines of some suicide attacks that are carried out by terrorists.

## **Some of the Suicide Attacks That Have Been Carried Out**

### ***Tunceli***

On 30.06.1996, Zeynep Kınacı who was a militant of PKK terrorist organization, carried out a suicide attack by walking into the group of soldiers in Tunceli, pretending that she was pregnant.

At the end of this attack, 8 soldiers martyred and 29 soldiers got injured.

The operational activities that are carried out after this attack by the police showed that the terrorist Zeynep Kınacı had come to the house of a woman and stayed there until the attack. The woman who are taken to police custody explained in her testimony that:

“She met Zeynep Kınacı first when they were students at İstanbul Haydarpaşa Sağlık Meslek Lisesi (Istanbul Haydarpaşa Vocational Health High School), during the years they spent at the school, Zeynep was a person who has some psychological problems, had difficulties in making friends, an autistic sympathizer of PKK. When she came to visit the hospital where this woman works she was pretending to be pregnant. She offered her to stay in her house and although she said that she had come to visit the city, she stayed at home and refused to take a bath for four days and to take of her clothes, and she thought that Zeynep still had the same psychological problems. Zeynep left the house to return to Elazığ, on the date she carried out the attack.”

When the personality profile of this woman terrorist is searched, it is found out that; she was born in 1972, she has seven brothers and sisters, finished Istanbul Haydarpaşa Vocational Health High School, she had psychological problems during the schooling years, had difficulties in having communication with other people, had a autistic personality, she used to be known as a sympathizer of PKK, she was arrested in Adana on 27 November 1995 with the accusation of providing help and harbor to PKK terrorist organization, again she performed some organizational activities with his husband, after his husband was arrested and put a prison because of these activities, her psychological situation got worse, she joined the PKK terrorist organization in Tunceli area in the same year.

In conclusion, it is considered that this woman terrorist who carried out this suicide attack did this to prove herself inside the organization and have revenge from the state. As this action was the first example of its kind and the attacker was a woman, the security forces were caught unprepared and unexpected (Tunceli Police Department).

### ***Hakkari/Yüksekova***

On 4.8.1996, there was an explosion in an automobile that was in front of a person's house in Yüksekova in Province of Hakkari. In the explosion, a citizen

lost his life and three others got injured.

At the end of the search, at the place of incident, dead bodies of two terrorists that one of them was torn apart into pieces, were found. There were two grenades, documents and materials that are used for making grenades on one of the terrorists.

It is striking that the material found was similar to the ones that were seized in Tunceli, Adana and Diyarbakır provinces and to all the material used in suicide attacks.

During the operational activities that are carried out after this attack by the police, it is found out that the name of one of the terrorists was Ömer Çağala and he was a member of PKK. Moreover, 11 other people who had relations to this incident were arrested.

In conclusion, as mentioned above, the police who evaluated the clues that the material was similar to the ones used in Tunceli, Adana and Diyarbakır and to the ones were to be used in the planned suicide attacks if the terrorists had been caught, considered that the dead terrorists were about to carry out a suicide attack, but they died before realizing the attack because of the early explosion whose causes were unknown.

### *Adana*

On 25.10.1996, a woman terrorist who was wearing pregnant clothes came to the main gate of Quick Force Sub Department headquarters, exploded the explosives that she was carrying on her body.

As a result of this suicide attack, three policemen martyred. Eight policemen and one assistant technician were injured. Moreover three civil people who were passing by were also injured. The identity of the woman terrorist was found out.

A terrorist who were arrested as his relation to this incident in his testimony said; "The task had been given to a militant named Türkan Adıyaman by Mehmet YAMAÇ on 25.10.1996, she had not accepted the order and then she was killed and buried in the countryside of Adana, according to the order of Mehmet YAMAÇ who gave this job then to Leyla Kaplan who saw the killing of Türkan Adıyaman and she accepted and carried it out." (Adana Police Department).

In conclusion, as it can be understood from the testimony of the captured terrorist, PKK terrorist organization do not take into consideration whether the terrorist chosen to carry out a suicide attack accepts the assignment or not. The chosen suicide bomber must die in either way. This death will take place either the terrorist accepts the duty and ignites the bombs on his/her body or refuses the order and is killed by his comrades. Because of this dilemma the terrorist chooses the dying by bombed suicide attack instead of being killed by his/her comrades.

It is understood that the terrorist who carried out the mentioned attack, carried



out this action under the pressure and the fear of near death.

### *Sivas*

On 29.10.1996, during the regular police search in the entrance of the downtown, police suspected two men and a fat woman in a mini bus and took them to the police center. Then the police decided that the experts from the Center of Struggle Against Terror should carry the investigation and called them in. As the suspects were taken into a police car with three policemen, the woman terrorist exploded the bombs on her body.

As a result of this suicide attack, three policemen martyred. Besides the two terrorists who carried out the attack died. Moreover ten civilian who were passing by were also injured.

After the operational activities that are carried out after this attack by the police, the identity of the terrorists were found out and 9 people who had relations to this incident were arrested.

The testimonies of these men showed that the actual targets were the high officials and public who were performing Republic Celebration.

From these testimonies it is understood that the helpers of the terrorists who carried out the attack had an important role in the process of finishing the attack.

The investigation on the terrorist Güler Otaş who carried out this attack showed that this woman terrorist had relatives, who joined armed fight on behalf of PKK, were trained in the camps of PKK, stayed in prison and carried out some hunger strikes. Moreover she was brought up according to the ideology of PKK terrorist organization, had a weak character, nervous, had bad relations with her family, was poor, her father was bedridden, she had 9 brothers and sisters and their only income was elderly pension.

In conclusion, it is clearly seen that PKK organization chooses the suicide bombers according to their personal characters, family histories and their psychological situation. These considerations are very important to identify suicide bombers well.

### *Van*

On 24.12.1998, a woman terrorist, whose identity is recovered later, carried out a suicide attack to a military personnel bus that was transporting military personnel and was just passing in front of the Military House.

In this attack one high school student died and 24 people in the bus, 14 of which were soldiers got injured.

After the operational activities that are carried out by the police after this attack, it is found out that the terrorist left Dicle University Accounting Department and joined PKK rural team and one of her brothers was still fighting

in the PKK lines.

Since the military service bus had a security car behind, the woman terrorist saw the car and exploded the bombs before she could not come closer to the service bus.

In this incident, in parrying the attack with the least damage, the importance of having a security car behind is seen clearly.

### ***Batman***

On 4.3.1999, when a suspicious woman who was looking as she was pregnant, was seen in front of a police center in Batman city center, the policemen in the center warned the people around not to get near and removed them from the area. As the terrorist understood that she wouldn't be able to go into the police center, exploded the three of twelve bombs on her body and torn into pieces instantly. In the incident a policeman were injured slightly.

After the operational activities that were carried out by the police after this attack, the identity of the terrorist was found out (Batman Police Department). Besides, just two days after the attack, the identity of the woman terrorist is announced proudly, and claimed that this action was a reaction to the capturing of the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan and Turkey's call to the terrorists in the country for surrender (MED-TV, 5.3.1999).

It is considered that the carefulness of the policemen, who noticed the woman terrorist and warned the people around, prevented a tragedy.

### ***İstanbul***

On 27.3.1999, when a woman with back bag and looking suspicious came closer to a police bus belongs to Quick Force Sub Department and patrolling in the Taksim square, the policeman on guard asked her to stop, then the woman terrorist pulled the linchpin and exploded the bombs on her body.

As a result of this explosion 3 policemen working at the Quick Force Sub Department and 8 people who were just walking around got injured slightly. The woman terrorist who got injured heavily died in the hospital.

It is seen that the carefulness of the policemen, who got suspicious of the woman terrorist and asked her to stop, prevented an another tragedy. The importance of sensitiveness of the police in taking the measures against suicide attacks is crucial.

### ***Bingöl***

On 5.4.1999, when The Governor of Province came to the Governor House and got off his car, a man terrorist carried out a suicide attack against him.

As the police guards noticed the terrorist and tried to prevent him, the

governor escaped without getting any injury. The terrorist died and a high school student who was passing there lost his life.

Moreover, 12 people, 5 of who were policemen and driver of governor's car got injured.

The operational activities that were carried out after this attack by the police showed that the terrorist, whose identity was later discovered, joined the PKK terrorist organization in 1997 and have some roles in the leadership of the organization from time to time.

In this event, it is considered that the carefulness and quickness of the guarding polices prevented likely losing of lives.

Hitherto, we have examined some of the suicide attacks that have been carried out by terrorists of PKK terrorist organization in detail, in order to show extent of the threat and the importance of measures. In general, when we look into the bombed suicide attacks, it is seen that, there have been 14 suicide attacks carried out by PKK militants in Tunceli, Adana, Sivas, Hakkari, Diyarbakır, Batman, Bingöl, Van and İstanbul, 12 of them have been realized at the target or near the target. Again 3 separate attacks that happened in Muğla/Bodrum, Hakkari/Yüksekova and Tunceli, it is understood that they happened incidentally and as the terrorists are in preparation of suicide attacks and the bombs exploded by accident. Besides, 7 terrorists, 3 of them in İstanbul and 4 of them in other cities, were captured as they were preparing suicide attacks.

On the other hand, besides PKK terrorist organization, terrorists of the destructive DHKP-C terrorist organization carried out two suicide attacks in two different places in the year 2001. In these attacks, 3 policemen martyred and 16 policemen and 12 civil people were injured.

### **The Measures and Actions**

Now we can examine the measures and actions to prevent the suicide attacks under the following headings:

#### ***1. Operational Works***

It is very difficult to detect and prevent a suicide bomber who decides to carry out a suicide attack and walks into the target area with the bombs on his/her body, before the attack. Because at this point, the pin of the bombs have been pulled. The measures taken and the intervention that are performed after this stage can only reduce the possible damage. The most striking example of this is that; The woman terrorist whose target was the crowd that will meet in Cumhuriyet Square and will consist of high officials and people on 29.10. 1996. At the check point in the entrance of the city, the security forces arrested some suspicious persons and take to the Center of Struggle Against Terror to be searched, the woman

terrorist named Güler Otaş, exploded the bomb by pulling the linchpin and realized her action. In this event 2 terrorists died, 3 policemen martyred, 1 citizen lost his life and 10 people got injured.

The most effective measures that can be taken to prevent this kind of actions is the effective intelligence network and the operational activities that are related to the works of this network. By these activities the terrorists whose aim is to make harm on the target place can be made in effective by an early operation. Because, in all suicide attacks that have been carried out by now, there are the preparation such as transporting the explosives near the target, meeting the helpers who will support the militant in this action, exploring the place where the action will take place and collecting intelligence. If the security forces can intervene at one of these stages, it will be the most effective intervention. The capturing of the terrorist who were about to meet the person who will provide support to him and again capturing of the terrorist who came to Muş city center to carry a suicide attack, as a result of an intelligence, are the best examples of these kind of measures.

In these events, the units of struggle against terrorism, worked insistently to find out the probable suspects and sent the information they gathered about these suspects to the central unit where these information was evaluated and sent to the field units in order to carry out operations. By following this method seven suicide bombers have been captured before the attack by police or gendarme.

As it is seen in the examples above, the importance of activities on the detection and identification of probable attackers is very crucial.

## ***2. Informing The Personnel***

Taking notice of the probability that official building, including Police Department buildings and business centers as persons can be targeted, personnel of all police and military units including private security units should be informed and warned about suicide attacks.

Among the measures against suicide attacks carried out by members of terrorist organizations, the importance of informing personnel is seen clearly in the attacks that took place in İstanbul and Batman.

On 27.3.1999 when a woman with back bag looking suspicious came closer to a police bus of Quick Force Sub Department which was patrolling in the Taksim square, the policeman on guard asked her to stop, then the woman terrorist before she could reach her target pulled the linchpin and exploded the bombs on her body. It is considered that the policemen out of his carefulness and sensitiveness detected the terrorist early and asked her to stop and he, therefore, prevented a big tragedy.

In a talk with this policeman he said that; "he had been informed about

suicide attack, suspicious persons, plastic bags, bags and package by his superiors, when he had taken the duty he had been warned to be alarmed and careful, on that day he was inspecting the persons who were near the police center and following their movements and during this time a woman who was carrying a blue sports bag on her shoulder was coming to him, he realized that she pulled the bag near herself, suddenly he became suspicious and took his gun in hand and began to watch the women carefully, when she was only two meters away, their eyes met and the policeman saw tiredness and sleeplessness in her eyes and some sweat on her face, and directed his gun to her, the woman became tense as she saw the gun and pulled the pin and exploded the bomb.” (Istanbul Police Department).

Again On 4.3.1999, when a suspicious woman who was looking like pregnant, was seen in front of a police center in Batman city center, the policemen in the center warned the people around not to get near and removed them from the area. As the terrorist understood that she wouldn't be able to go into the police center, exploded the three of the twelve bombs on her body and torn into pieces instantly.

As it is seen in this example, that the carefulness of the policemen, who noticed the woman terrorist and warned the people around, prevented a tragedy and only a policeman got injured slightly.

After the attacks it is considered in the meeting with officials; İstanbul Police Department had warned all staff about suicide attacks and the subject kept on the agenda, personnel are kept alarmed by regular warnings. The persons and official buildings that might be targeted, including Governor of İstanbul and Governor House, police and military buildings, had been determined and expert personnel are assigned to protect these persons and places.

### ***3. Increasing Physical Measures***

When the suicide attacks that have been carried out in Turkey are examined, it is seen that firstly security units, then governors who represent the state recently have been targeted. It is considered that members of terrorist organizations might target police units and military units in the process.

In this context, the physical measures can be taken to prevent suicide attacks at the entrance and exits of police and military units are listed as following:

Firstly, around the police and military buildings “security zone” should be established, the movements and behaviors of the persons who enter this zone should be watched carefully, if a suspicious behavior is detected, the person should be stopped in the zone and ordered to clasp his/her hands over his/her head, then he should be approached carefully and the hands of suspect should be made ineffective than his/her body should be searched properly.

The personnel and visitors who do not have identity cards should not be allowed into the buildings and their periphery.

Visitors and personnel should use different entrances and units should make necessary arrangements.

The identity documents such as official identity, driving license, should be taken from the visitors and entrance cards should be given to them. If necessary, the visits should take place in the visitor rooms were available.

The susceptible areas around the buildings should be monitored by the hidden cameras and the observations should be recorded.

The car parks in the buildings, official or private, should be kept under control, the parking places of visitor cars and personnel cars should be separated and the haphazardly parking should not be allowed around the buildings.

In addition to these measures, all central and local security units should take all necessary additional measures and apply them by considering the intelligence gathered and taking notice of the events, the places of stationary and mobile units, and the state and the characteristics of their province (The measures against suicide attacks have been determined and published to all provinces in different official circulars and all related units have been warned).

While taking all these measures, however, an image as if there is an extraordinary situation should not be produced. If the citizens see that intensive cautions are taken, they might become afraid and worried unnecessarily and they might prefer not to go into the official buildings. The measures taken, therefore, should be prudent and balanced.

### **Conclusion**

Suicide attacks that have been carried out by members of PKK terrorist organization in our country appeared as a new action type that was used by PKK terrorist organization in order to overcome the crises of inactivity since 1993.

When the terrorists who have carried out these attacks are examined, it is found out that these people usually have autistic personality, have some psychological problems, their family relations are weak and are not effective in the rural activities of the illegal organization.

When the suicide attacks are examined, it is seen that in these attacks, firstly, policemen and soldiers who represent the operational force of the state are the main targets. The terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan in his statements he had given before he was captured, had tried also to make the public as target, but couldn't manage because of his capture. Similarly after the capturing of the terrorist leader, high-level terrorists of the mentioned terrorist organization also threatened high level public officials besides civil citizens (MED-TV, on 17 February 1999 and 1-2 March 1999).

Again, when the bombed suicide attacks that have been committed by today are examined, it is understood that although it is very difficult to prevent a suicide attack after the action decision is made, through the successful operations of security units some suicide bombers have been captured before the attack and some upsetting tragedies have been prevented. In this context, the effective measures and actions might be useful in preventing the expected suicide attacks or overcoming them.

After the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan had been captured and brought to Turkey, and after the court decision sentencing him to death penalty, it is considered that the terrorists who are still in the terrorist organization may become depressive and again begin to use suicide attacks. In this context, all measures to prevent new attacks have been reviewed and put into practice and the suicide attacks that might be realized by terrorists have been prevented.

In conclusion; the suicide attacks, that have been carried out either by members of PKK and DHKP-C organizations in Turkey or in some other countries including Middle East or by radical Islamic terrorist organizations and ethnical organizations, thought us clearly that terror has neither religion nor nationality. The suicide attacks that have been carried out in New York on 11 September 2001 showed that all states should cooperate against the terrorism and from now on the slogan; “for a safe future, we should cooperate wherever and however it is necessary” is very important.

## References

- Alkan, Necati. (1997), "The psycho-dynamic realities in suicide attacks of terrorist organizations", *Police Academy Journal*, November- December.
- An official circular, dated 23.2.1999 and numbered 46847, sent to all provinces by TEMÜH Department.
- Aydoğan, Ayşegül. "Activists have an autistic personality", *Milliyet*, 25 December 1998.
- Hoffman, Bruce. (1998), *Inside Terrorism*, London.
- Karademir, Kemal. (2000), *Suicide Attacks*, Ankara: Counter Terrorism Department.
- Kushner, W. Harvey(1999), "Suicide Bombers", Dr. Kemal Karademir (Trans.), *Police Journal*, Sayı.18.
- Tavas, Taner. (1999), "Suicide Attacks in the context of Terrorism", *unpublished governor thesis, A.U. Faculty of Political Sciences, Public Administration and Political Science, Ankara.*
- Taylor, Maxvel. (1998) *The Terrorist*, London: Brassey's Defence Publishers.
- The broadcast of MED TV, 13.12.1998
- The broadcast of MED TV, 25.12.1998
- The broadcast of MED TV, 17.02.1999
- The broadcast of MED TV, 18.2.1999
- The broadcast of MED TV, 1-2.3.1999
- The broadcast of MED-TV, 5.3.1999
- The circular dated 25.6.1999 and numbered 149210 and the circular dated 8.7.1999 and numbered 157939.
- The documents that were found in the rural areas of Bitlis Province in September 1995.
- The note about A.Marangoz by Diyarbakır Province Police Department.
- The note made by Adana Police Department about Bayram Yaruk who involved in the suicide attack that was in Adana and arrested.
- The note on Bayram Yaruk who has been caught in İçel on 30.10.1996.
- The note prepared by Tunceli Police Department about this event.
- The note prepared by Batman Police Department about this incident
- The note sent by Istanbul Police Department
- The Terrorist Events Static. (1999), Prepared by TEMUH Department.