

# Speculations mount over PM's wiretapping

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**Fingers continue to be pointed as speculation grows in Ankara over who is responsible for wiretapping the prime minister**



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Speculations have been mounting over perpetrators of the eavesdropping of Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) after he made public Dec. 21 that wiretapping devices were found in his home-office.

Erdoğan then suggested it was actors within the deep state behind the wiretapping, but fell short of further elaborating on who the deep-state members were exactly. Days later on Dec. 25 Erdoğan offered to close the “bugs issue,” but noted one more bug had been found at his residence.

Deep state refers to a term extensively used in Turkey to describe clandestine collaboration between high-level state security forces and criminal organizations.

Some critics pointed to the Fethullah Gülen movement for eavesdropping on the premier, recalling conflict between the government and the Gülen movement that surfaced when National Intelligence Organization (MiT) chief Hakan Fidan was called to testify as part of the [Kurdistan Communities Union](#) (KCK) probe.

The Gülen movement is an influential moderate-Islamist movement led by Fethullah Gülen, who now resides in the United States. The movement has been accused by critics of manipulating Turkey’s judicial and security apparatus. The Gülen movement has generally lent support to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) since its foundation in 2001.

However, an apparent conflict between the ruling party and the movement surfaced earlier this year when a specially-authorized prosecutor in Istanbul called MiT head Fidan to testify about secret talks with the [PKK](#) on Feb. 7.

A special law was hastily adopted to prevent Fidan from testifying. In June, Erdoğan accused the specially-authorized courts of “going too far.” “He was instructed by me. If you want to take someone [to prosecute], then take me,” Erdoğan had said.

In July, specially-authorized courts were abolished despite objection from newspapers close to the Gülen movement.

Journalist Ahmet Şık underlined in daily BirGün Dec. 25 that Erdoğan's doubts of being wiretapped were not new as he held doubts since February when Fidan was called to testify by prosecutors at a time when he was in the hospital.

Two separate bugging devices were found at Erdoğan's office in his house. These devices are currently being examined by the MİT, according to reports.

Suspicion that Erdoğan was being wiretapped were voiced by the opposition when Erdoğan's security chief and all of his bodyguards were changed in September. After Erdoğan's office at Parliament was renovated from top to bottom in October, main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) deputy chair Gürsel Tekin issued a Parliamentary question to Erdoğan on Dec. 3. "The renovation of the prime minister's office coincides with the replacement of his bodyguards. This move raises suspicion whether the prime minister was eavesdropped on," Tekin said.

Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) secretary-general İsmet Büyükataman, for his part, asked yesterday if the MİT knew who secretly listened to Erdoğan. "Does the MİT know who eavesdropped on Erdoğan? Have they taken the necessary precautions? Is the Republic of Turkey so helpless that it is unable to find who put those bugs in the prime minister's office?" Büyükataman said in a statement.

Some commentators close to the Gülen movement, meanwhile, indicated that illegal groups within the military were responsible for the wiretapping.

"According to intelligence I received from confidential sources and according to my own observations, someone from illegal groups within the military has been listening in on the prime minister's conversations. This means Turkey's fight against illegal organizations within the state is still far from over," Adem Yavuz Aslan, a columnist of daily Bugün wrote Dec. 25.