

## Turkey and Russia to Cooperate on Domestic Security

**OE Watch Commentary:** Victor Zolotov, the head of the Rosgvardia (the Russian National Guard) paid a five-day visit to Turkey in mid-May. Established in 2016, the Rosgvardia directly reports to Russian President Vladimir Putin and is mainly responsible for internal security. A long-time close friend of Putin, Zolotov is an influential figure in implementing Russia's internal security policies. During his visit to Turkey, he was accompanied by the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces Commander, Arif Çetin. The visit resulted in an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which signals that Turkish and Russian cooperation is expanding into the field of domestic security. The accompanying passage from Middle Eastern news website *Al-Monitor* discusses the significance of the visit and MoU.



National Guard of Russia.

Source: Kremlin.ru via Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:National\\_Guard\\_of\\_Russia\\_\(2017-03-27\)\\_02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:National_Guard_of_Russia_(2017-03-27)_02.jpg), CC BY 3.0.

The article discusses a number of reasons for the visit, including “information sharing between the Russian National Guard and Turkish gendarmerie forces;” and the fact that “Russians wanted to learn the general structure of the Turkish Gendarmerie Command and its operations.” Furthermore, it discusses that both sides want to establish cooperation between interior security units at an institutional level. As the article discusses, the MoU between the Turkish Gendarmerie Command and the Rosgvardia covers “cooperation in public order, public security, protection of state facilities, combating extremism and sharing intelligence about cross-border organized crime.” The memorandum also includes “organizing joint exercises, trainings for the military and civilian personnel of the Rosgvardia and the Turkish Gendarmerie Forces.”

The author states that cooperating along these lines may lead to the Rosgvardia offering to guard the TurkStream Natural Gas Pipeline and Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant “which is being constructed by Russia’s State Atomic Energy Corp[oration].” Under the auspices of providing security to Turkish-Russian joint ventures, the Rosgvardia could potentially gain access to the Turkish private security sector. Also, the Rosgvardia “could engage in training and exercises with its Turkish partner to ensure public order” without any restrictions. As the author notes, cooperation at this level will pave the way for “sharing intelligence on terror organizations and organized crime” as well. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gündüz)**

*“The cooperation framework also foresees organizing joint exercises, trainings for the military and civilian personnel of the Rosgvardia and Turkish gendarmerie forces.”*

**Source:** Metin Gürçan, “Why ‘Putin’s personal army’ chief visited Turkey,” *Al-Monitor.com*, 22 May 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/05/turkey-russia-chief-of-putins-personal-army-visited-ankara.html>

*Viktor Zolotov, the head of the Russian National Guard, Rosgvardiya, a security unit that oversees anti-riot police and SWAT teams, paid a surprise visit to the capital, Ankara, from May 13-18 with a “heavily loaded” agenda... Although his Russian delegation’s carefully crafted schedule didn’t include any direct contact with the Turkish army, NATO’s second largest, the visit heralds further military cooperation between Russia and Turkey....*

*Zolotov, whose special force of 200,000 provides policing and military capabilities, is an influential name when it comes to Russia’s security policies...*

*The Turkish news media said the goal of the visit was information sharing between the Russian National Guard and Turkish gendarmerie forces. Accordingly, Russians wanted to learn the general structure of the Turkish Gendarmerie Command and its operations and to work toward beneficial sharing of information between the two states...*

*Turkey’s pro-Russian newspaper Aydinlik reported that Zolotov’s visit wasn’t limited to information sharing and that concrete steps were taken during the visit for institutional cooperation between Russian and Turkish interior security units.*

*Zolotov was accompanied by Turkey’s Gendarmerie Commander Arif Cetin throughout his visit. The two also signed a memorandum of understanding that covers cooperation in public order, public security, protection of state facilities, combating extremism and sharing intelligence about cross-border organized crime. The cooperation framework also foresees organizing joint exercises, trainings for the military and civilian personnel of the Rosgvardia and Turkish gendarmerie forces.*

*...it could offer security services for the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, which is being constructed by Russia’s State Atomic Energy Corp., and the Turkstream natural gas pipeline; the Rosgvardiya also could engage in training and exercises with its Turkish partner to ensure public order... It could be the trainer, coordinator and even partner of private security firms in Turkey. Of course cooperation to this extent would include sharing intelligence on terror organizations and organized crime.*