

Let me first explain the current legal oil flowing and trade system within the southeastern part of Turkey:

- ✓ There is no oil trade or transport between Turkey and Syria or there exists no legal mechanism regulating any sort of trade or transport of oil or refined oil products between the two countries.
- ✓ Oil flows into Turkey only through Iraq-Turkey Pipeline (ITP or Kirkuk-Yumurtalik) or through trucks which transport crude oil from Iraqi oil fields to the terminals in Mediterranean, and both pipeline and trucks operate in accordance with the legal arrangements currently in effect.
- ✓ Any oil flowing into Turkey through other mechanisms than trucks or pipeline is considered as smuggled oil and Turkey makes great efforts to prevent illegal ways of oil transport and sales.

***Regarding Turkey's active fight against cross-border smuggling, let me give some facts;***

1. Turkish Government has zero-tolerance for illegal cross-border activities and employs forceful and ongoing measures to prevent oil smuggling, particularly in the border areas. Smuggling along Turkey's lengthy border with Iraq and Syria has been a problem for decades and has been an issue garnering significant government attention and resources.
2. Recently, absence of political authority in Syria and parts of Iraq is the main reason of increased smuggling. The rise of ISIL, has further deteriorated the situation on the Iraqi and Syrian sides of the border. The burden has fallen exclusively on Turkey to confront the smuggling activities.
3. In response to increasing lawlessness at the other side of the borders, Turkish law enforcement and security forces stepped up their efforts since 2012. The measures which targeted smuggling networks preceded the capture of two major oil fields in Syria and Iraq by ISIL in June and July 2014 and months before the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2170 in August 2014.
4. Between January-August 2014, 19.9 million liters (5.3. million U.S. gallons) of smuggled oil were intercepted along the border of Syria and Iraq. This amount is almost 4 times more than the amount captured in 2013 in the same period. Furthermore, the amount of the smuggled oil seized within Turkey in the same period was 62 million liters (16.3 million U.S. gallons). **Indeed, the cross-border smuggling activities date back to long years before the deterioration of the security atmosphere in the region and are mainly based on the price difference of oil/refined petroleum products between the two sides of the border. And the recent increase in smuggling activities can only be explained by the increasingly challenging nature of controlling the lengthy border between Turkey, Iraq and Syria and have nothing to do with financing such terrorist organizations as ISIL.**
5. In May 2014, the Office of the Governor of Hatay started 24/7 road surveillance in the border city of Hatay through check points and inspection of vehicle trunks & storage. Consequently, in the second quarter of 2014 the rate of smuggled oil caught by security forces increased by 50% and reached 3,941,729 liters (1,041,295 U.S. gallons).

6. **Turkish Armed Forces also stepped up efforts by stopping trucks at the border and destroying pipelines, which are often little more than hoses.** Between September 5-11, 2014 Turkish army intercepted a total of 12,561 liters (3,318 U.S. gallons) of oil along with 2,300 meters (7,546 feet) of pipe that were to be used for smuggling oil.
7. **Turkish military also monitors the Orontes River, which runs along the border that is used by oil smugglers as a main route to transport illegal oil and other goods. During a recent operation this month, Turkish military forces patrolling in the jurisdiction area of Ziyaret and Kiyigoren Border Station Commands in the City of Hatay intercepted 430 liter barrels and 8 boats containing 120 liters of oil on and around the Orontes River.**

### ***Enhanced legislation & intensive nationwide inspections since April 2013***

8. The Turkish Government is actively fighting against oil smuggling and the use of smuggled oil in gas stations all around the country through inspections and enhanced legislation since April 2013. The legislation passed on April 11, 2013, which increased the punishment for smuggling oil as well as the use of smuggled oil in gas stations in the country. As a result of new legislation, from April 2014 to July 2014, 233 gas stations terminated their operations. This was in addition to the 92,570 inspections carried out by the end of 2013. Since the beginning of 2014, as a result of nationwide operations, the security forces seized 37,166 tons of fuel at the gas stations.
9. The Ministry of Customs and Trade started to implement an intensive and comprehensive inspection program to prevent smuggling activities and capture those responsible for oil smuggling. The first program was implemented in the city of Hatay in July 2014. In 45 days, 1,675 vehicles were inspected and 1,660 tons of smuggled oil was intercepted. The program has been expanded to other surrounding cities.

### ***In consequence,***

10. If there happens some sort of oil smuggling between the Syrian and Turkish borders, the reason is the challenging task of controlling a border more than 800 km. (Syrian and Iraqi borders are more than 1200 km in total).
11. And it should also be underlined that the buyer of the ISIL oil is not Turkey but mostly the Syrian regime that strike deals with ISIL militants in order to meet its energy needs. On the other hand, most of the oil yielding a considerable financing to ISIL is produced from the oilfields within Syria and processed in the refineries controlled by the terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria, and the recent attacks by U.S. air forces against the refineries in Syrian territory testify to the current situation. The refined oil is also mostly sold within Syria and Iraq.
12. **Moreover, Turkey is continuously sharing up-to-date information with its allies on the illegal oil sales within the region, and in the bilateral meeting dated October 2, 2014 in Ankara with**

**the U.S. officials, no intelligence or data has been submitted to Turkish authorities testifying to any kind of involvement of Turkish State and/or officials in cross-border oil smuggling or oil/refined oil products sales or purchase.**

13. And it's really indecent to hear from you that the oil is smuggled in the presence of gendarmarie, and that "*the [g]endarmerie occasionally open the border here to let thousands of oil drums pass into Turkey from Syria in a single night*". If you really have some sort of proofs testifying to a kind of turning a blind eye to cross-border smuggling, you should share them with the relevant Turkish authorities. **If you share those visual data with us, the Ministry will definitely take necessary actions to investigate the smuggling activities you mentioned. And it would not be acceptable to publish them without sharing with the relevant Turkish authorities and also to make generalizations by taking into account some individual activities.**