
GERMAN MPS TO VISIT KONYA NATO BASE IN TURKEY

- 08.09.2017

Deutsche Welle (8 September 2017)

The visit to the NATO base in Konya had been blocked by Ankara amid strained ties between Turkey and Germany. Germany withdrew soldiers from the Incirlik air base in Turkey in June after repeatedly being denied access.

On Friday, seven German lawmakers are visiting Bundeswehr soldiers stationed at the Konya air base in Turkey.

The visit comes amid a worsening of diplomatic relations between the NATO allies. Germany has cautioned its citizens about travelling to Turkey after a series of arrests involving German nationals, but the Foreign Ministry has stopped short of an outright travel warning.

Turkey accuses Germany of assisting terrorists by not responding to files sent to Berlin or handing over suspects wanted by Turkish authorities.

The deteriorating rule of law in Turkey since the failed coup one year ago has prompted Germany to call for an end to Ankara's bid to enter the European Union.

NATO intervention

Ankara cited the strained ties for blocking an earlier visit by German MPs to the NATO airbase in July.

The approval to the visit came after NATO Chief Jens Stoltenberg intervened on behalf of the German lawmakers. Some 30 Bundeswehr soldiers are stationed at the Konya base as part of a NATO mission.

In June, Germany withdrew 260 troops from the Incirlik air base - which is not a NATO base - in south-east Turkey and relocated them to Jordan after repeated refusals by Ankara to let lawmakers visit German soldiers stationed there.

Germany's armed forces are under parliamentary control and each troop deployment is decided by a vote in the German parliament, Bundestag. Berlin insists lawmakers must have access to them.

ap/ng (dpa, Reuters, AFP)

Kaynak/Source: