

Turks defy book ban on Internet

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Computer users are pictured in an Internet cafe in Istanbul in 2009. A draft book banned as part of a controversial coup probe in Turkey has been published online, prompting a prosecutor to launch a fresh investigation, media reports said Friday.

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Defying the ban, tens of thousands of people downloaded the text after anonymous users posted it Thursday on document-sharing sites, whose links were quickly reproduced on social media such as [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), reports said.

"The ban is blown up on the Internet," headlined the Taraf daily as Radikal hailed "Cyber disobedience".

The book reportedly tells how followers of influential Islamic cleric Fethullah Gulen, who are close to the government, took control of key posts in the police over the past several decades and are now manipulating a sprawling coup probe that has shaken Turkey since 2007 and landed dozens in prison.

Prosecutors argue a "terrorist organisation" called Ergenekon plotted bombings and assassinations to destabilise the Islamist-rooted government and prompt a military coup.

The book author, journalist Ahmet Sik, was arrested in March on charges that he was linked to Ergenekon and his yet-unpublished work sought to discredit the probe, already under fire for having degenerated into a campaign to bully the opposition and silence critical media.

In an unprecedented move, a court ordered the seizure of the draft and warned that those who refused to hand over copies would also be prosecuted.

Other journalists have been arrested as part of the investigation, prompting an outcry over press freedom in Turkey and drawing condemnation from the United States and the European Union.

In another book published last August, a police chief also alleged that Gulenist policemen fabricated and doctored evidence in the Ergenekon probe to implicate secularists. He also found himself in jail.

Gulen, based in the United States for more than a decade, promotes moderate Islam. But critics say his wealthy community seeks to infiltrate the state in a bid to Islamise the country.

The Ergenekon probe, which has resulted in the discovery of weapons caches, was initially hailed as a success in a country where the army has

unseated four governments since 1960.

But its credibility waned as police began arresting intellectuals known as government opponents and suspects accused police of fabricating evidence.

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