

Turkey to probe massive 'personal data leak'

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A huge data leak in Turkey risks exposing millions of citizens to identity theft and fraud, according to Turkish media reports

Turkey's authorities launched a probe Wednesday into an alleged leak of the personal data of some 50 million citizens which threatens to compromise the information security of much of its population.

The massive database—purportedly containing the names, identity numbers and addresses of those listed—was posted online by hackers earlier this week along with sharp jabs at the country's leadership.

Ankara federal prosecutors have opened an investigation into the data spill which risks exposing most of Turkey's 78 million Turkish citizens to identity theft and fraud, Turkish media reports said.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said that the number of people whose names were leaked was comparable to the number of voters on the electoral register.

Implying there could be a political link, he said that Turkey's election commission shares the information on the electoral register with all political parties.

"Where this was leaked from, finding out how it was leaked, is what the investigation needs to focus on," Bozdag told reporters in Ankara.

Local media said the site appeared to be hosted by an Icelandic group that specialises in divulging leaks, using servers in Romania.

An online statement was posted by the hackers under the headline "Turkish Citizenship Database", pointing out weaknesses in the country's protection of data in a section called "lessons to learn for Turkey".

It offered a hint of what the database contains, providing the [personal data](#) of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and former president Abdullah Gul.

"Putting a hardcoded password on the UI (User Interface) hardly does anything for security. Do something about Erdogan! He is destroying your country beyond recognition."

"Who would have imagined that backwards ideologies, cronyism and rising religious extremism in Turkey would lead to a crumbling and vulnerable technical infrastructure?" said the statement.

The data has not been verified.

The US has also been exposed to massive data leaks, with hackers gaining access to some 20 million personnel records for US government employees and contractors last year.

The justice minister Bozdag said that Turkey had experienced a similar data leak in 2010 which prompted work on a new data protection law that will soon come into force.

Turkey was also targeted by hacktivist group Anonymous in December with a massive cyber-attack and threats of continued attacks against a country it said was "supporting the Islamic State by buying their oil and tending to their injured fighters."

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