

Uber says 'committed' to Turkey after new rules, fines

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Uber says it is committed to its presence in Turkey despite tough new regulations there

Ride-sharing company Uber on Wednesday said it was committed to its business in Turkey despite being hit with tough new regulations there.

Uber has been locked in a bitter dispute with the traditional Istanbul taxi cabs who accuse the app of taking away business without a proper legal basis for its work.

Under a new government directive, fines will be sharply increased for holders of D2 licences for larger vehicles who illegally work as taxis.

"The first leg of Uber and pirates like them has been broken," Eyup Aksu, head of the Istanbul taxi chamber, wrote on Twitter.

"We will act with determination until this pirate transport is completely finished. We thank everyone who has worked on this legislation," he added.

Under the new rules, the company the driver works for risks being blacklisted for two years if the offence reoccurs.

Taxi drivers' associations in Istanbul had already filed two separate lawsuits with the courts demanding that Uber be banned. But the new regulations are separate to the court process.

But Uber, in a brief statement on its Turkish Twitter account, said it was committed to working in Turkey.

"We want to work in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders to improve transportation options in Turkey and we are committed long-term to Turkey, to the end, as a loyal partner," it said.

Tensions have spilled over into violence, with Uber drivers saying they have been physically harassed and even shot at by taxi drivers. The Istanbul [taxi](#) drivers' association denies any campaign to intimidate Uber drivers.

State news agency Anadolu said on Wednesday that Uber [drivers](#) in Istanbul had already been hit with 18.92 million lira (\$4.20 million) in fines by Turkish police in the first five months of this year.

The tension in Turkey is one of a number of headaches for Uber and its new chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi, who took over last August after founder Travis Kalanick was ousted following a series of scandals.

It has lost its license in London, although it is still operating there pending appeal, while its self-driving car programme in the United States suffered a major blow with a deadly accident.

The 17,400 official yellow taxis in Istanbul are a pillar of the city's often patchy transport system, but critics say that poor quality service and overcharging have given Uber an opportunity.

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