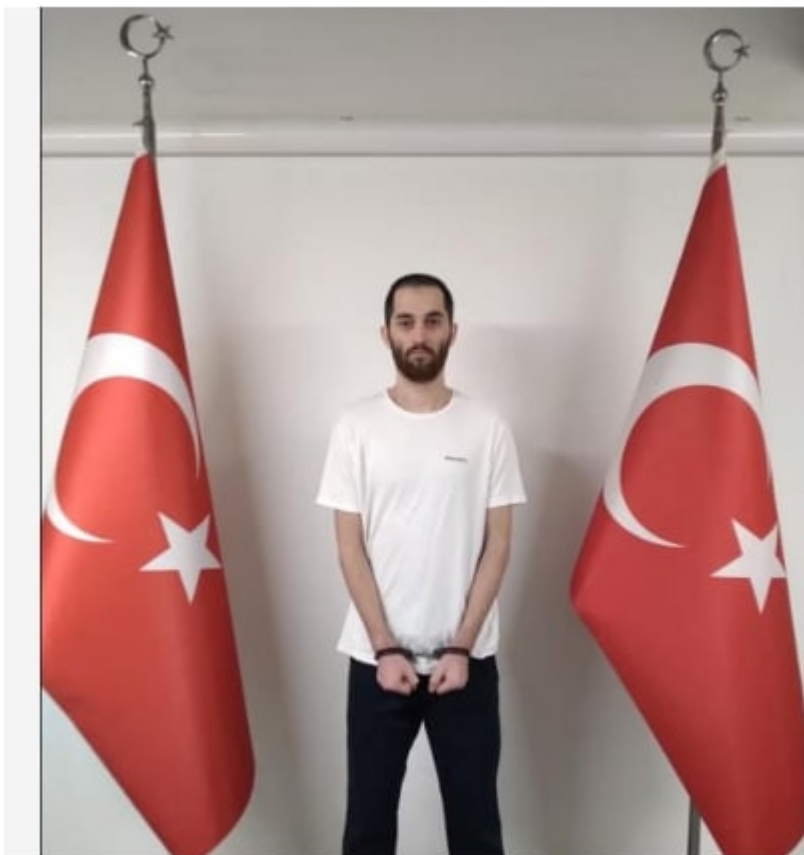


# Turkey arrests suspected Istanbul church attack planner linked to Islamic State

ANKARA, Sept 14 ([Reuters](#)) – Turkish authorities have arrested an Islamic State militant believed to be involved in planning an attack on the Santa Maria Italian Church in Istanbul earlier this year, the country's intelligence agency said on Saturday.



The National Intelligence Organization (MIT) said the suspect, whom it identified as Viskhan Soltamatov, was believed to be the key figure behind the Jan. 28, 2024 attack. He was detained by MIT and police during a joint operation in Istanbul, the agency said. *Soltamatov sounds like a Russianised name, maybe from one of the central Asian republics?*

MIT said Soltamatov was also believed to have supplied the weapon used in the assault.

One Turkish citizen was [killed](#) by two Islamic State gunmen at the Italian Santa Maria Catholic Church in Istanbul in January.