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In Long-Secular Turkey, Sharia Is Gradually Taking Over

by [Soner Cagaptay](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Erdogan will not declare Islamic law overnight, but his steady empowerment of the country's religious directorate is a disturbing omen.

Over the past few weeks, Turkish officials have broken with decades of precedent in what is still, at least nominally, a secular republic: they have begun describing the country's military deployment in Syria as "jihad." During the first two days of the operation, which began on Jan. 20, the government's Directorate of Religious Affairs ordered all of Turkey's nearly 90,000 mosques to broadcast the "Al-Fath" verse from the Koran—"the prayer of conquest"—through the loudspeakers on their minarets. Mainstreaming jihad, which sanctions violence against those who "offend Islam," is a crucial step in draping the sheath of sharia over a society. Sadly, Turkey seems to be slowly moving along that path...

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