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Turkey's defence budget has increased by nearly 50 percent since January 2017. The numbers come at a time Turkey holds military drills near Iraqi border and deploys more troops to its borders with Syria.

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Turkey has been conducting military drills along its border with Iraq . It also has an active military presence along its border with Syria. Rising security concerns in its neighbourhood are pushing Turkey to increase its defence spending. (Reuters)

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Turkey's 2017 defence budget was raised from \$7.9 billion (28.7 billion TL) to \$11.5 billion (41.3 billion TL), an increase of almost 50 percent from the beginning of the year, according the Official Gazette.

The figures come as Turkey continues to conduct military exercises near its Iraqi
(<https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/turkey-warns-of-security-and-economic-steps-if-kra-goes-ahead->

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(<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/russia-receives-turkey-s-advance-payment-for-s-400-missile-system-10950>) to Russia last week for the S-400 missile defence system (<http://www.trtworld.com/turkey/why-is-turkey-buying-the-russian-s-400-missile-defence-system--9143>), a purchase, Turkey said, that was to help deal with the wars raging along its borders, despite the risk of damaging relations with its NATO allies.

Turkey has been aiming to develop its indigenous defence industry (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-defence/erdogan-aims-to-turn-turkey-into-major-defense-industry-power-idUSKBN0OC0FT20150527>) for several years now, and increasing investments in its defence budget is in line with this policy.

New tax measures to add billions to budget

New tax measures announced last month are to help create revenue for defence spending.

Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek explained (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/silah-icin-zam-40601284>) on Thursday that recent tax hikes will help transfer funds to the Defence Industry Support Fund and the Ministry of National Defence to "fight against terrorism, eliminate threats facing [Turkey], and increase deterrence capacity."

He added that in 2018, an additional \$4.7-4.9 billion (17-18 billion TL) would be allocated to the Ministry of National Defence and military industries.

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To meet [this need] we chose increasing taxes over taking loans."

Turkey's new tax measures announced in September within its three-year economic programme will add \$7.5-\$7.8 billion (27-28 billion lira) to budget revenues next year, Finance Minister Naci Agbal said.

The government will increase the financial sector's corporate tax rate by two percentage points to 22 percent and raise the motor vehicle tax on passenger cars by 40 percent.

Agbal said that the new tax measures are aimed at widening the fiscal space by creating permanent income channels, adding that the most important issue was taking a sound stance against geopolitical and economic risks.

Global defence spending

The most recent study (<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-world-military-expenditure-2016.pdf>) on global military expenditure shows that a total of \$1,686 billion was spent in 2016, which indicates an increase of 0.4 percent compared to 2015. This spending makes up about 2.2 percent of global GDP.

Despite having the second-largest army in NATO, Turkey was not among the top fifteen military spenders in 2016, which include the US, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and India.

The top fifteen spenders account for more than 80

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