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Hakan Ayik and ANOM: how trust in encrypted phones became an international trap

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In the story of Hakan Ayık, technology became part of the plot of a criminal investigation. The network, which relied on ANOM’s encrypted communications, found itself dealing with a platform controlled by law enforcement. But the US case concerning the communications network and the arrest in Turkey are different chapters in this story.



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Editorial illustration of the ‘Khimprom Cartel’ based on a published photograph of Hakan Ayik. The background and composition were created using AI; this is not a documentary photograph of the event.

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Key points of the case

A point of reference	Details
Name in sources	Hakan Ayık
The geographical scope of the case and its international connections	Turkey; USA; Australia
Status based on verified publications	Arrested in Turkey in November 2023; the final outcome of the cases remains unclear

ANOM: when communication infrastructure becomes a source of evidence

In 2021, the US Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of California announced charges against 17 individuals linked to the distribution of ANOM devices amongst criminal networks. The US indictment detailed the alleged roles of administrators, distributors and influential intermediaries. Ayik was named in the RICO conspiracy charge. [1]

For an investigator, the value of such a case lies in the ability to cross-reference correspondence, communications and actual actions. The content of messages must be verified against the participants, the timeline and external events; the digital platform itself does not turn every statement in a conversation into a proven fact.



Hakan Ayik. Archive photograph from a credited publication by Middle East Eye.

The suspect’s file

Hakan Ayik

Hakan Ayik is the subject of international investigations into drug trafficking, criminal communications and money laundering. His name has been linked to the ANOM network and the Comanchero gang. In November 2023, the Turkish authorities announced his arrest.

The scale of the ANOM operation in published figures

The California Public Prosecutor’s Office reported that more than 12,000 ANOM devices had fallen into the hands of over 300 criminal networks in more than 100 countries. Law enforcement agencies have catalogued more than 27 million messages. These figures reflect the entire international operation, not Ayik’s individual activities. [1]

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The press release also cited overall results – 800 arrests and seizures of several tonnes of drugs. Reading these figures together highlights the distinction between the investigation into the platform and the individual case of a specific alleged drug dealer. [1]

Why is Ayik’s name linked to international drug trafficking?

Ayik came to prominence in connection with the search for Australian suspects and alleged drug networks. In November 2023, the Turkish authorities reported his arrest during an operation against an international organised crime group. Reuters linked the report to an investigation into drug trafficking and criminal finance. [2]

It is important here to distinguish between three separate matters: alleged drug shipments, the criminal communications network, and financial transactions. These strands may intersect, but each requires its own set of facts and evidence. The US RICO charges do not supersede the Turkish court’s ruling in a separate case.

The Turkish sequel after 2023

In an ABC report from April 2026, Ayik’s story is examined in the context of how Turkey has changed its approach to international fugitives and the organisations associated with them. This provides a later backdrop to the case, rather than confirming its final legal outcome. [3]

Following the arrest, the old label of ‘most wanted’ now requires a date. Given the current situation, it makes more sense to focus on decisions regarding pre-trial detention, extradition and the hearing of charges, rather than repeating the previous ‘most wanted’ headline.

What makes the ANOM case special

Editorial conclusion: trust in a communication channel can prove to be a vulnerability for an organised structure. That is why international investigations are interested not only in the content of individual messages, but also in who provided access, distributed the device and connected the participants.

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The portrait in the article is an archive photograph from a credited publication. The cover is an editorial illustration: it does not depict the actual arrest operation and does not add any new episodes to the established timeline.

A timeline of key events

Date	Event
June 2021	The US Department of Justice’s public announcement regarding the ANOM case.
November 2023	Report on Ayik’s arrest in Turkey.
27.04.2026	An ABC report on international fugitives and Turkish investigations.

Frequently asked questions

What links Ayik to ANOM?

He is named among the defendants in the US case concerning the distribution of the platform and the RICO charges. [1]

When was his arrest in Turkey reported?

In November 2023. The sources consulted do not confirm the final outcome of the proceedings. [2]

Other international cases in the archive

- Abdullah Alp Ustyun
- Barış Boyun

This article was prepared on 4 November 2026 based on the publications listed. Allegations and suspicions are attributed to their sources; the final determination of guilt is a matter for the court.

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Sources and documents

1. US Department of Justice – the ANOM platform case and the RICO charges, 2021
2. Reuters / KFGO – report on the arrest in Turkey, 2 November 2023
3. ABC – report on the Turkish investigations, 27 April 2026
4. Middle East Eye – a publication featuring a captioned archive photograph of Hakan Ayik

Sources

1. US Department of Justice – the ANOM platform case and the RICO charges, 2021
   https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/fbi-s-encrypted-phone-platform-infiltrated-hundreds-criminal-syndicates-result-massive
2. Reuters / KFGO – report on the arrest in Turkey, 2 November 2023
   https://kfgo.com/2023/11/02/turkey-detains-alleged-drug-kingpin-in-organised-crime-bust/
3. ABC – report on the Turkish investigations, 27 April 2026
   https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-27/masood-zakaria-turkiye-extradition-secret-file/106473020
4. Middle East Eye – a publication featuring a captioned archive photograph of Hakan Ayik
   https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-australia-hakan-ayik-crime-boss-key-arrest-criminals

Use of materials

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Original publication

https://kartel-khimprom.com/en/article/hakan-ayik-and-anom-how-trust-in-encrypted-phones-became-an-international-trap/