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UPI

Turkey's intel severs ties with Mossad

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Turkey's intelligence establishment has severed working ties with Israel's Mossad, further proof of strained relations between the countries, officials said.

A report in the Sabah newspaper quoted officials as saying the two agencies that once enjoyed close cooperation have stopped exchanging intelligence and conducting joint operations.

High-ranking Israeli officials privy to the matter neither confirmed nor denied the Turkish report and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's office refused to comment, Haaretz reported Tuesday.

In June, Israeli security officials expressed concern on the appointment of Hakan Fidan to lead Turkey's National Intelligence Organization. Fidan, a close associate of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is viewed as a proponent of closer relations between Turkey and Iran, the Israeli daily said.

Turkey has also conditioned its consent to stationing a NATO missile-defense system in its territory on a guarantee no information collected by the system be transferred to Israel, the Israeli daily said.

Relations between Israel and Turkey began deteriorating last year following Israeli's three week military offensive in the Gaza Strip. Ties worsened after Israel raided a Turkish boat carrying aid to Gaza in May, in which nine Turkish activists were killed.