

Freedom of Expression and the Press Agenda

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2024



EUROPEAN JOURNALISM PLATFORM

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FROM THE EDITOR

As the Expression Interrupted platform, operating under the Punto24 Platform for Independent Journalism (P24) since 2017, we present the 12th of our quarterly *Freedom of Expression and the Press Agenda* reports. This is the fourth report of 2024, covering the months of October, November and December.

First launched in 2021, our Freedom of Expression and the Press Agenda reports aim to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the state of press freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey. Journalism trials continue to serve as the most prevalent tool of repression in Turkey targeting press freedom and freedom of expression. Our report contains detailed information as well as statistics about journalism trials that took place in the fourth quarter of the year.

However, repression targeting press freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey is not limited to trials alone. In addition to the restrictive legislation, the actions and attitudes of state institutions and government representatives determine the overall legal and political context regarding press freedom and freedom of expression as well as the public's right to information. While judgments by the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) set the related case law, regulatory bodies such as the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the Press Advertisement Agency (BİK) may put financial pressure on media outlets through penalties they impose, forcing the media to align its editorial stance with certain political criteria. On the other hand, police brutality and physical attacks by civilians targeting journalists have turned into a chronic issue that is also affecting the press freedom atmosphere in Turkey. All these topics are covered in detail in our report.

The information provided in this report is based on Expression Interrupted platform's extensive trial monitoring work as well as our media and open-source information tracking efforts, which can be found in detail on our website. On a related note, we would like to remind that the data provided in this report is limited to information gathered by the Expression Interrupted team and therefore cannot be expected to provide an exhaustive overview of all the relevant developments.

We present this report in the hope that it contributes to other valuable work carried out in this field, and more importantly to a much-needed progress in the enjoyment of the freedom of expression and the press in Turkey, in keeping with the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and international human rights standards.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PRESS FREEDOM IN TURKEY IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2024

The years-long decline in press freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey continued in the fourth quarter of 2024 with harsh interventions.

The killing of journalists Cihan Bilgin and Nazım Dağtan in northern Syria in a drone strike by an alleged Turkish drone on 19 December, and the detention of dozens of journalists for protesting the killing of their colleagues and the arrest of seven among them were among the harshest interventions against press freedom during this reporting period.

In October, November and December, at least 58 journalists and media workers were detained at least once as part of investigations/cases against them filed on account of their reporting or social media posts, or during news coverage or protests. This is the highest number of detentions recorded in a quarter in our *Freedom of Expression and the Press Agenda* reports to date. In the same period, 44 journalists faced at least one criminal investigation, and at least 25 new cases were filed against journalists. These findings are indicative of an intensifying crackdown on press freedom in Turkey.

The number of journalists in prison, another indicator of judicial pressure, also increased with new arrests in the last quarter of 2024. According to data compiled by Expression Interrupted, there were 26 journalists on the list of [journalists in prison](#) as of 1 October 2024, the beginning of the reporting period. Following the arrest of 11 journalists and three journalists being released during the quarter covered by the report, as of 31 December 2024 there were at least 34 journalists in prison in Turkey.

While new investigations and cases continued to be filed against journalists on the grounds of their professional activities, cases launched in previous periods continued to be heard during the reporting period.

According to Expression Interrupted data, in October, November and December, 181 journalists stood trial in 102 separate court cases. Of the 102 cases, 11 were new cases filed during this period or before. In this period, the courts of first instance concluded 27 cases. In 11 of the finalized cases, 18 journalists were sentenced to a total of 24 years, 11 months and 16 days in prison and a judicial fine of 19,860 TL.

In the last quarter of 2024, courts heard 102 cases against 181 journalists and one newspaper. In 11 cases that concluded, 18 journalists were sentenced to a total of 24 years, 11 months and 16 days in prison and a judicial fine of 19,860 TL. At least 25 new cases were filed against journalists, 58 journalists were detained and 11 were imprisoned

Violent police interventions, attacks and threats against journalists also did not slow down in the last quarter of 2024. Journalists and media organizations were subjected to at least 20 incidents of attacks, interventions, police brutality, threats or being targeted by politicians in this quarter. Court cases filed against perpetrators of violations suffered by journalists and media organizations also continued during the reporting period. Judgments delivered in some of these cases, the details of which can be found in the following sections, continued to add to the perception of impunity for crimes against journalists.

Interventions against media organizations were also recorded during the reporting period. Various criminal judgements of peace issued confiscation orders for Yeni Yaşam newspaper's 1 October, 11 October, 13 October, 14 October and 4 November issues on the grounds of news content and news photographs. Access to the website of Mezopotamya News Agency (MA) was blocked on the grounds of "protection of national security and public order" by the Bitlis Criminal Judgement of Peace on 27 December.

The shutting down of Açık Radyo following the revocation of the station's license by the Radio and Television Supreme Council and the administrative fines imposed on mostly pro-opposition broadcasters on the grounds that certain expressions used in news and discussion programs had violated the broadcasting principles listed in Article 8 of Law No. 6112 were also among the significant interventions recorded in this period.

During this period, not only journalists and media outlets but also social media became the target of restrictions. On 22 October, access to at least 119 social media accounts, including those of journalists and news websites, was blocked in Turkey. The Interior Minister announced that 177 social media account admins "who are considered to have made FETÖ propaganda, praised or shared condolence posts on social media" following the death of Fethullah Gülen were identified and prosecuted as a result of "virtual patrolling" carried out by law enforcement units.

Following the attack on the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) facilities in Ankara on 23 October, access to social media platforms X, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok was restricted in Turkey. RTÜK also announced that a broadcast ban regarding the attack was issued by the relevant court.

In yet another development that would pave the way for further pressure on press freedom and freedom of expression, the government introduced the "agents of influence" bill in the parliament. The revised text of the proposed legislation, which was excluded from the 9th Judicial Package following objections from press freedom groups and the opposition, continued to be the focus of criticism due to concerns that it would lead to serious violations of freedom of expression due to its vague and broadly interpretable wording, containing a criminal definition that reads "*committing a crime in line with the strategic interests or instructions of a foreign state or organization.*" The bill raised concerns that it would serve as a new tool of repression for a judiciary instrumentalized by politics and that it would pave the way for "espionage" charges to be filed

against not only dissidents or journalists but also against persons from various professional fields who has connections with any academic, diplomatic, civil society or media organization abroad.

Pressure on Civil Society

Cases filed against human rights defenders and civil society organizations also continued during the period covered by the report. Three of these cases were concluded:

- The fourth hearing of the case against 20 relatives of disappeared people who were detained by the police during the 950th weekly gathering of Saturday Mothers/People on the charge of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations” was held on 4 October at Istanbul’s 39th Criminal Court of First Instance. Presenting their final opinion on the case, the prosecutor demanded the acquittal of all defendants as the elements of the charged offense did not occur. Ruling in line with the prosecutor’s final opinion, the court acquitted all defendants.
- The third hearing of the retrial of Mücella Yapıcı, Yiğit Ali Ekmekçi and Ali Hakan Altınay, whose 18-year prison sentences for “aiding the attempt to overthrow the government of the Republic of Turkey” in the Gezi trial were overturned by the Court of Cassation, was held on 9 October at Istanbul’s 13th High Criminal Court. The court decided to send the file to the prosecutor’s office for the preparation of the final opinion and adjourned the trial to 10 December 2024, but the final opinion was not submitted at the hearing held on this date due to the temporary assignment of the prosecutor to another case. The case was adjourned to 11 February 2025.
- The first hearing of the case against Prof. Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, former president of the Central Council of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB), on the charge of “denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the Parliament, the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the judicial institutions of the state” for her statements on torture in a July 2021 YouTube

broadcast was held at the Istanbul 31st Criminal Court of First Instance on 14 October. The court issued a summons for Fincancı and adjourned the trial to 27 January 2025.

- A lawsuit filed against Prof. Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı by the Ministry of National Defense for 100,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages due to her statements on the need to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) against PKK targets was concluded during the reporting period. On 17 October, the Ankara 2nd Civil Court of First Instance ruled that Fincancı should pay 50,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages to the ministry.
- The sixth hearing of the closure case against the Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER) was held on 11 October at Istanbul's Bakırköy 15th Civil Court of First Instance. In the previous hearing, the court decided to issue a writ to the Istanbul 26th High Criminal Court, where the members and executives of the association were tried and acquitted of "membership in a terrorist organization," and asked for the publications and other materials belonging to the association included in the MASAK reports to be sent. The judge stated that flash drives, CDs and many publications were sent from the court. Deciding to request that the relevant court send the examination report on the said materials, the court adjourned the case to 25 December. At the hearing held on this date, the court delivered its judgment and ruled that GÖÇİZDER be dissolved. The reasoned judgment in writing will be issued later.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

During the period covered by the report, prominent issues on the legal and political agenda included the proposed law on the so-called “agents of influence,” appointments of trustees to replace mayors in municipalities run by opposition parties, and MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli’s call on Abdullah Öcalan to dissolve the PKK. The Constitutional Court’s decision to annul Article 9 of the Internet Law also came into force during this reporting period.

On 1 October, the opening of the legislative year and the beginning of the reporting period, government ally Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli shook hands with DEM Party deputies in the plenary session in an unusual move that was widely discussed by pundits. On 22 October, during his speech at the MHP’s weekly parliamentary group meeting, Bahçeli suggested that a legal regulation on the “right to hope” could be possible for PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan if he were to dissolve the organization, bringing discussions on a possible “peace process” back to the top of the political agenda. Bahçeli’s remarks, which came amid an escalation of criminal investigations and court cases against Kurdish politicians, the appointment of trustees to municipalities run by opposition parties, and the long-running judicial harassment of Kurdish journalists, raised questions about whether this was a genuine call for democratization and its potential impact on press freedom, particularly in terms of whether it would contribute to easing the years-long judicial repression against Kurdish journalists.

“Agents of Influence” Bill Submitted to Parliament and Withdrawn

In the meantime, the government continued its efforts to enact the “agents of influence” bill, which has raised concerns of deepening authoritarianism. The draft law, which was first brought to the agenda in May, was removed from the 9th Judicial Package

following objections from press freedom groups and the opposition. The government submitted the bill to the Turkish Parliament on 18 October under the “Bill on Amendments to the Notary Public Law and Certain Laws.” Article 16 of the proposal, approved by the Justice Commission on 23 October, reads as follows: *“Those who commit crimes against the security or domestic or foreign political interests of the state, in line with the strategic interests or instructions of a foreign state or organization, shall be sentenced to imprisonment from three to seven years. The perpetrator shall be sentenced separately for this offense and for the related offense.”*

The bill, criticized for its vague definition of the crime, was withdrawn on 13 November. However, AKP lawmakers stated that they would consult with the opposition parties objecting to the regulation and that the bill would be re-submitted to parliament in its current form unless a solution was proposed.

You can read a detailed critique of the “agents of influence” bill in this [article](#), published as part of our “Analysis” series, and watch the recording of an [online panel](#) discussion with constitutional law expert and opposition lawmaker Prof. Dr. Serap Yazıcı Özbudun, lawyer Figen Albuga Çalığışu and Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Turkey Representative Özgür Öğret, on our YouTube channel.

Annulment of Article 9 of the Internet Law Enters into Force

The Constitutional Court's [decision](#) annulling Article 9 of the Law No. 5651 on Regulating Internet Publications and Combating Crimes Committed by Means of Such Publications, which constituted the basis for access blocking and/or content removal decisions issued on the grounds of “violation of personal rights,” entered into force on 10 October 2024. Accordingly, as of this date, judges will not be able to issue access blocking or content removal decisions on the grounds of “violation of personal rights” under the annulled Article 9.

In its decision published in the Official Gazette in January 2024, the Constitutional Court had annulled Article 9 of the Law 5651 and ruled to remove the expressions "removal of content and/or" that was added to the first sentence of paragraph four of Article 8 of the law for being unconstitutional. The Court had held that the said articles allowed for online publications to have their content removed and/or have access to the publications denied, which limited the freedom of expression; and that given these publications may be forms of internet journalism, limited the freedom of the press.

JUDGMENTS BY THE EUROPEAN COURT AND TURKISH HIGHER COURTS

ECtHR Judgments

During the period covered by the report, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered judgments in the following applications from Turkey:

“Insulting the president” convictions violate freedom of expression:

In its judgment dated 8 October 2024, the ECtHR [ruled](#) that prison sentences given to four applicants, including Kurdish singer Hozan Cane (Saide İnaç), on charges of “insulting the president” under Article 299 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) and the deferral of the announcement of their sentences (HAGB) violated freedom of expression, safeguarded in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Merging four applications lodged between 2019 and 2021 due to similarity in subject matter, the Court ruled that one applicant be paid 5,000 euros and three others including İnaç be paid 2,600 euros each in non-pecuniary damages.

Ali Ergin Demirhan’s application rejected:

On 24 November 2024, the ECtHR [rejected](#) an application filed in 2020 by Ali Ergin Demirhan, editor of the news website Sendika.org, against the decision to block access to the website by a decision of the now-defunct Directorate of Telecommunications and Communication (TİB) and the Gölbaşı Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated 25 July 2015. The Strasbourg Court held that the Constitutional Court, in a 2020 judgment, recognized the violation of Article 10 of the European Convention and provided adequate compensation for the damage suffered by the applicant. The decision was published on the ECtHR’s website on 5 December 2024. In its 2020 judgment, the

Constitutional Court had concluded that the freedom of expression and press freedom under Articles 26 and 28 of the Constitution had been violated, and as a result of the decision, Gölbaşı Criminal Judgeship of Peace lifted the access ban on 27 October 2020.

Compensation for arrest without reasonable suspicion:

In a [judgment](#) dated 17 December 2024, in which 237 applications including those filed by journalist Ahmet Memiş and the imprisoned former public prosecutor and newspaper columnist Gültekin Avcı were merged, the ECtHR ruled that Article 5(3) of the Convention had been violated due to the lack of sufficient grounds for the arrest and pre-trial detention of the applicants and that the applicants be awarded 3,000 euros in compensation.

Constitutional Court Judgments

During the reporting period, the Constitutional Court issued the following judgments on individual applications alleging violations of freedom of the press and freedom of expression:

- The Constitutional Court, [ruling](#) on the June 2022 application ***Burak Akbay and Others***, held unanimously on 2 October 2024 that the awarding of non-pecuniary damages for a news article published in Sözcü newspaper in July 2013 had violated freedom of expression. The Court ordered that the judgment be sent to Istanbul's Küçükçekmece 3rd Civil Court of First Instance for retrial and that the applicants be paid 30,000 TL each in non-pecuniary damages. In a 20,000 TL lawsuit filed by Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, the civil court of first instance had ordered the newspaper to pay 8,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages, and a criminal court of first instance had sentenced Veli Toprak, the journalist who penned the news article, to a judicial fine of 1,740 on the charge of "insult."
- Ruling on 31 October 2024 on an individual application filed in 2020 by the imprisoned former Taraf newspaper reporter **Mehmet**

Baransu against his ongoing detention as part of his trial overseen by the Mersin 2nd High Criminal Court, the Constitutional Court [held](#) unanimously that Baransu's claims of violations of the right to liberty and security, freedom of expression and press freedom due to the unlawfulness of the detention were "manifestly ill-founded," and that his claims of violation of the right to liberty and security due to the detention exceeding a reasonable period of time and the lack of effective means of appeal against his detention were "inadmissible due to non-exhaustion of remedies." Baransu stood trial for his news reports on genetically modified rice allegedly seized by customs in Mersin port. In his final hearing held in July 2020, Baransu was sentenced to 2 years in prison for "breach of confidentiality," 4 years for "disclosing prohibited information," and 13 years and 6 months for "membership in an armed terrorist organization" and ordered to remain in prison.

- On 28 November 2024, the Constitutional Court rejected an individual application filed on 10 November 2021 by journalist **Orhan Uğuroğlu**, who claimed that an award of compensation in a lawsuit filed against him and the Yeniçağ newspaper by the Turkish Technology Team (T3) Foundation over his column published in Yeniçağ on 31 January 2019 had violated his freedom of expression. The top court [ruled](#) that the application was "inadmissible due to statute of limitations." On 26 February 2021, Uğuroğlu and the newspaper were ordered to pay 15,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages by Istanbul's Bakırköy 5th Civil Court of First Instance. A court of appeal later lifted the decision of the first instance court and ordered the journalist to pay the plaintiffs 30,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages. The appellate court's decision was final.
- Merging two separate applications filed in 2020 by two radio stations located in Eskişehir and Yozgat provinces, the Constitutional Court [ruled](#) on 17 July 2024 that the issuing of search and seizure orders based on the complaint of RTÜK, which cited violations of Article 33 of Law No. 6112, had violated freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The Court held that "the broadcasters' lack of broadcasting license permits in accordance

with the legislation stems from RTÜK's failure to hold a tender for frequency allocation and to issue license permits in accordance with the legislation" and ordered that the judgment be sent to Eskişehir 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace and Yozgat Criminal Judgeship of Peace for retrial and that each applicant be paid 50,000 TL non-pecuniary damages separately.

- In a [judgment](#) dated 11 June 2024, which was published on its website during the reporting period, the Constitutional Court unanimously ruled that the compensation journalist **Rüstem Batum** was ordered to pay due to a post he shared on social media about an article published in Sözcü newspaper in 2015 violated freedom of expression. The Court ruled that Batum be paid 30,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages and ordered a retrial. The company that owns Sözcü newspaper had filed a lawsuit against Batum in February 2017, seeking 15,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages. The lawsuit was initially rejected by a civil court in March 2018. The 4th Civil Chamber of the Istanbul Regional Court of Justice reversed the decision of the first instance court in 2020 and decided that Batum should pay 5,000 TL non-pecuniary damages.

Court of Cassation Judgments

During the period covered by the report, the Court of Cassation upheld the convictions of three journalists in three separate cases and overturned the convictions of seven journalists in one case and ordered a retrial:

- According to news coverage of 25 October, the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation upheld the 13-year and 6-month prison sentence given in July 2020 to former Taraf reporter **Mehmet Baransu** on charges of "membership in an armed terrorist organization" in his trial overseen by Mersin 2nd High Criminal Court. Baransu, who was on trial for reporting on genetically modified rice allegedly seized at customs in Mersin port, was sentenced to a total of 19 years and 6 months in prison, including 2 years for "violation of confidentiality," 4 years for "disclosing prohibited information" and 13 years and 6 months for "membership in an armed terrorist

organization." In 2022, the 2nd Criminal Chamber of the Adana Regional Court of Justice upheld the sentences Baransu was given on charges of "violating confidentiality" and "disclosing prohibited information," finalizing 6 years of his conviction.

- According to news coverage of 21 November, the Court of Cassation, on 11 June 2024, unanimously upheld a prison sentence of 1 year, 1 month and 15 days given to journalist **Özgür Paksoy** in 2019 on the charge of "terrorism propaganda" for his social media posts containing news articles. Paksoy's appeal against the sentence was previously rejected by the 3rd Criminal Chamber of Gaziantep Regional Court of Justice.
- According to news reports on 22 November, the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation has upheld a prison sentence of 1 year, 10 months and 15 days given in 2019 to journalist **Beritan Canözer** on the charge of "terrorism propaganda." Canözer was sentenced by the Diyarbakır 11th High Criminal Court for news stories she had shared on her social media account between 2013 and 2016. The case had been pending before the Court of Cassation since 2021, when the 2nd Criminal Chamber of Diyarbakır Regional Court of Justice, rejected Canözer's request for appeal on the merits.
- On 26 November 2024, the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation overturned the sentences given in 2019 to seven defendants in the **Sözcü trial** and ordered a retrial. Nine defendants, including owner Burak Akbay and the newspaper's editorial and administrative staff, stood trial on charges of "knowingly and willingly aiding an armed terrorist organization without being a part of its hierarchical structure" in the case, which concluded on 27 December 2019. Istanbul's 37th High Criminal Court had sentenced columnists Emin Çölaşan and Necati Doğru to 3 years 6 months and 15 days each, Editor-in-Chief Metin Yılmaz and website Chief Editor Mustafa Çetin to 3 years and 4 months each, website Editorial Coordinator Yücel Arı, reporter Gökmen Ulu and accountant Yonca Yücekaleli to 2 years and 1 month each. The sentences were upheld by the 27th Criminal Chamber of the Istanbul Regional Court of Justice.

JUDICIAL VIOLATIONS

Journalism Trials in Numbers: Cases, Sentences, Acquittals

In the last quarter of 2024, a total of 102 cases against journalists were heard by first instance courts. A total of 181 journalists and one newspaper were tried in these cases. Of the 102 cases, 11 were new cases filed during or before the reporting period.

Out of 102 cases, 27 were concluded. In 11 of 27 cases that concluded, 18 journalists were sentenced. In seven of these 11 cases, 13 journalists were sentenced to a total of 24 years, 11 months and 16 days in prison and one journalist was sentenced to a judicial fine equivalent to 5 months in prison, while in four cases, four journalists were sentenced to pay a total judicial fine of 19,860 TL. Fourteen journalists were acquitted in 13 of the cases that concluded (one of these journalists was acquitted in two separate cases in the same reporting period). One compensation case against a journalist was dismissed by the court, while in two cases, the court decided to drop the charges against three journalists.

Additionally, four other cases were decided by regional courts of appeal during this period. An objection to a compensation awarded to a journalist for unlawful detention in a case in which he was eventually acquitted was rejected. A compensation issued against a newspaper was annulled; a compensation verdict against a journalist and the life sentence and 12 years and 1 month imprisonment sentence against another journalist were upheld.

During the reporting period, nine cases filed due to violations suffered by journalists and media organizations continued to be heard. Five of these cases were concluded. In the concluded cases, one journalist's claim for non-pecuniary damages and one broadcasting organization's request for a stay of execution of a program suspension penalty were rejected,

while one journalist was ordered to pay compensation for unjust detention. In two of the concluded cases, two of the three defendants who were tried as perpetrators of the attacks against journalists were acquitted, while one defendant was sentenced to a judicial fine of 4,800 TL for “intentional injury” and the announcement of the sentence was deferred.

In this period, a total of 25 new cases were filed against 21 journalists and five media organizations. One journalist and two media organizations faced more than one new case in this quarter.

Charges most commonly faced by journalists on trial during this reporting period were “terrorism propaganda” and “membership in a terrorist organization.” According to data compiled by the Expression Interrupted team, journalists and media workers on trial in this period faced 35 different charges.

The most common charge was “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” (TMK 7/2), which was used in 24 separate cases. The second most common charge was “membership in a terrorist organization” (TCK 314/2), which was used in 20 separate cases. The third most common charge was “insult” (TCK 125), which was used in 18 separate cases, while “insulting the president” (TCK 299) was used in 13 separate cases.

The charges of “denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the State” (TCK 301) and “inciting the public to hatred and hostility” (TCK 216) were used in six cases each, while the charges of “violating the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations” and “libel” (TCK 267) were used in five cases each.

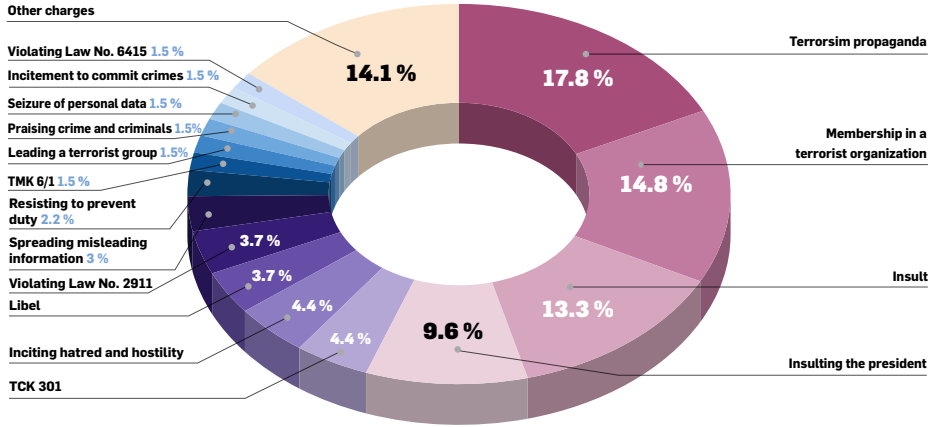
Journalists were tried on “publicly disseminating misleading information” (TCK 217/A) charges in four separate cases and

“resisting to prevent the fulfillment of duty” (TCK 265) charges in three cases during this three-month period.

The charges of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism” (TMK 6/1), “opposition to the Law on the Prevention of Financing Terrorism,” “establishing or leading an armed terrorist organization” (TCK 314/1), “incitement to commit crime” (TCK 214), “praising crime and criminals” (TCK 215), “unlawful dissemination or seizure of personal data” (TCK 136/1) were each used in two cases.

“Knowingly and willingly aiding a terrorist organization without belonging to the hierarchical structure within the organization” (TCK 220/7), “Attempt to abolish the Parliament or prevent it from performing its duties” (TCK 311/1), “Attempt to abolish the Government of the Republic of Turkey or prevent it from performing its duties” (TCK 312/1), “Attempt to overthrow the constitutional order” (TCK 309/1), “Obtaining information that should remain confidential for the security or internal or external political interests of the State” (TCK 327), “Obtaining information that should remain confidential for the security or internal or external political interests of the State for political or military espionage purposes” (TCK 328), “Disclosure of information relating to the security and political interests of the State” (TCK 329), “Disclosure of information that should remain confidential for political or military espionage purposes” (TCK 330), “Violation of the confidentiality of an investigation” (TCK 285), “Threat with the aim of creating fear and panic among the public” (TCK 213), “Incitement to disobey the law” (TCK 217), “Failure to report a crime” (TCK 278), “Violation of privacy” (TCK 134), “Threat” (TCK 106), “Dissuading the people from military service” (TCK 318), “Entering military restricted areas” (TCK 332), “Violation of the freedom of work and labor” (TCK 117), “Publicly encouraging the use of drugs” (TCK 190/2) and “Failure to duly publish corrections and replies” (Press Law art. 18) were used in one case each.

Charges most commonly used in journalism trials



Monthly statistics regarding cases against journalists are as follows:¹

OCTOBER 2024

In October, a total of 86 journalists and media workers stood trial in 38 separate cases. The first hearings of four cases were held. While 12 of the cases were concluded, 26 were postponed to future dates. In eight of the 12 cases that concluded, a total of 13 journalists were sentenced. In six of these cases, 10 journalists (Pelin Özkaptan, Mehmet Ali Ertaş, Can Ataklı, Ahmet Erkan Yiğitsözlü, Çetin Yılmaz, Yedigöller Aygün, Pınar Gayıp, Eylem Nazlıer, Zeynep Kuray, Esra Soybir) were sentenced to a total of 13 years, 6 months and 14 days in prison, one journalist (Serpil Ünal) was sentenced to a judicial fine equivalent to 5 months in prison, while in two of these cases two journalists (Emre Orman, Naci Sapan) were sentenced to a total judicial fine of 5,700 TL. In two of the cases that concluded, two journalists (Furkan Karabay, Dicle Müftüoğlu) were acquitted, while in one case the charges against one journalist (Hayko Bağdat) were

¹ Discrepancies between quarterly and monthly figures may stem from such factors as a journalist being tried in more than one case, more than one journalist being tried in a single case or there being several hearings of one case during the three-month period covered by the report.

dropped due to statute of limitations, and a compensation case against one journalist (Turhan Koyuncu) was dismissed by the court.

In October, at least 10 new cases were filed against eight journalists (Melek Avcı, İsmail Arı, Enver Aysever, Oktay Candemir, Semra Turan, Tolga Güney, Melike Aydın, Barış Pehlivan) and five media outlets (BirGün newspaper, Cumhuriyet newspaper, Tele 1, Halk TV, T24).

OCTOBER 2024	
Number of journalists on trial	86
Number of trials	38
Number of concluded trials	12
Number of trials resulting in sentencing	8
Number of trials resulting in acquittal	2
Number of dismissed cases	2
Number of newly filed cases	10

The following judgments were rendered in the 12 cases that concluded in October:

1 October: Journalist Furkan Karabay was acquitted of the charges of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism” and “insulting a public official” in a case filed against him at Istanbul 24th High Criminal Court due to his news article titled “Bribery fight in mafia case in minutes,” published on Gerçek Gündem, and a social media post. Karabay was arrested on 29 December 2023 as part of the investigation and released on 8 January 2024 following an objection to his arrest.

9 October: Journalist Pelin Özkaptan was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days in prison by Istanbul’s 13th High Criminal Court in the third hearing of her trial on “terrorism propaganda” charges based on two social media posts. The announcement of the sentence was deferred.

10 October: Mehmet Ali Ertaş, managing editor of Xwebûn newspaper, was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in prison by Diyarbakır

9th High Criminal Court in the second hearing of his retrial on charges of “terrorism propaganda” due to his social media posts. The announcement of the sentence was deferred. In 2022, the Constitutional Court ruled that the deferral of sentence decision was a violation of rights and sent the file to the court of first instance for a retrial.

10 October: Journalist Can Ataklı was sentenced to 10 months in prison by Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of First Instance in the third hearing of his trial on charges of “inciting the public to hatred and hostility” for criticizing the statements of the father of a soldier who died in a clash during a Turkish Armed Forces operation in Iraq. The sentence was postponed.

15 October: KHK TV reporter Ahmet Erkan Yiğitsözlü, who was dismissed from his job at Anadolu Agency with a statutory decree, was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison on the charge of “membership in a terrorist organization” at his trial overseen by Osmaniye 2nd High Criminal Court.

15 October: A lawsuit filed against journalist Turhan Koyuncu by Siirt University Rectorate demanding 15,000 TL compensation for his news posts on corruption allegations regarding Siirt University was dismissed by Siirt 3rd Civil Court of First Instance.

17 October: Journalist Emre Orman, who was charged with “resisting law enforcement to prevent the fulfillment of duty” after being violently detained by the police during a commemoration of the Sivas massacre in Istanbul in July 2023, was sentenced to 5 months imprisonment by Istanbul's Anadolu 20th Criminal Court of First Instance. The court commuted the sentence to a judicial fine of 3,000 TL.

22 October: The 17th hearing of the case filed against journalist Hayko Bağdat on charges of “insulting the president” for his remarks in a program broadcast on Bugün TV in 2015 was held at Istanbul's 51st Criminal Court of First Instance. The court decided to dismiss the case against Bağdat since the eight-year statute of limitations set

out in Articles 66/1 and 67/4 of the Turkish Penal Code had expired between 21 October 2016, the date of the indictment, and the date of the hearing.

24 October: Dicle Müftüoğlu, co-chair of Dicle Firat Journalists' Association (DFG) and editor of Mezopotamya News Agency (MA), was acquitted of the charges of "membership in an armed terrorist organization" and "establishing or leading an illegal organization" at her final hearing at Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court. Müftüoğlu was arrested along with journalist Sedat Yılmaz on 3 May 2023, World Press Freedom Day, as part of an investigation carried out by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, and released at her third hearing on 29 February 2024.

24 October: Manisa 2nd High Criminal Court sentenced journalist Çetin Yılmaz to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days in prison on the charge of "terrorism propaganda" in his retrial, repeating the initial judgment of 2022. Yılmaz was sentenced in the case that concluded on 30 March 2022 and the announcement of the sentence was deferred. The retrial was ordered by the Constitutional Court, which ruled that the deferral decision had violated the journalist's right to a fair trial.

31 October: Istanbul's Anadolu 22nd Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced journalists Eylem Nazlier, Serpil Ünal, Yedigir Aygün, Pınar Gayıp, Zeynep Kuray and Esra Soybir to 5 months in prison each on charges of "violating the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations." The court deferred the announcement of the sentences for five journalists except Serpil Ünal, whose sentence was commuted to a judicial fine because she was already under supervision for a previous deferred sentence. The journalists were on trial for gathering in Istanbul's Kadıköy on 29 April 2023 to protest the operations against journalists in Diyarbakır.

31 October: Tigris News Chief Editor Naci Sapan was sentenced to 135 days of judicial fine on the charge of "insulting a public official" for reporting on allegations of corruption and irregularities in the sale of zoned lands during the trustee administration of Diyarbakır

Metropolitan Municipality. Delivering its judgment in accordance with the “simple trial” procedure, without holding a public hearing, Diyarbakır 5th Criminal Court of First Instance commuted Sapan’s sentence into a judicial fine of 2,700 TL and decided to defer the announcement of the sentence.

Court of appeals judgments:

- According to news reports on 9 October, the Diyarbakır Regional Court of Justice’s 2nd Criminal Chamber, on 30 September 2024, unanimously rejected an objection by the Ministry of Treasury and Finance to the payment of a 75,000 TL compensation to journalist Aziz Oruç for his 11-month imprisonment in a case he was tried on “membership in a terrorist organization” and “terrorism propaganda” charges and acquitted in 2023. The ministry’s lawyers claimed that the compensation payment, ordered by Diyarbakır 2nd High Criminal Court on 16 October 2023, would “cause unjust enrichment.”

October also saw the continuation of court cases filed by journalists or media outlets for violations they have been subjected to. Four of these cases concluded:

- The second hearing of the case against two defendants who carried out an armed attack against Başka Gazete Editor-in-Chief Yaman Kaya in Bursa was held on 2 October 2024. In the first hearing held in May, the court had ruled for the release of the defendants. In the second hearing, the prosecutor demanded the acquittal of the defendants on the grounds that no evidence was found in the swap samples (bullet trace on the hands), there were no eyewitnesses who saw and identified the person who committed the attack, and there was no convincing evidence that the defendants committed the crimes attributed. The Bursa 6th High Criminal Court acquitted defendants Zülküf B. and Sedat M. due to lack of evidence.
- A compensation lawsuit filed by WDR Cosmo Turkish Director Tuncay Özdamar against the Treasury for his unlawful detention for 14 hours at Ankara’s Esenboğa Airport on 30 September 2023

resumed at Istanbul's 15th High Criminal Court on 18 October 2024. The court ordered the Treasury to pay Özdamar 380 TL in pecuniary and 1,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages. The investigation against Özdamar was concluded with a decision of non-prosecution on 30 November 2023.

- On 24 October 2024, Istanbul's 35th Civil Court of First Instance dismissed a 50,000 TL lawsuit filed by journalist Şirin Payzın against Zafer Party Chairman Ümit Özdağ over his remarks on social media, in which he wrote, "Şirin Payzın has always been on the side of enemies of Turkey."
- In the case filed by Açık Radyo against RTÜK's program suspension penalty decision in May, the Ankara 21st Administrative Court had issued a stay of execution on 8 July 2024. Issuing a new decision on the case on 8 October 2024, the court rejected Açık Radyo's request for a stay of execution, even though the previous decision had been approved by the higher court. Açık Radyo appealed against the latest decision. However, RTÜK, without waiting for the outcome of the appeal, notified Açık Radyo of the 3 July license revocation decision on 11 October 2024. Thereupon, Açık Radyo's broadcast was terminated on 16 October 2024.
- The eighth hearing of the trial of 15 public officials charged with "premeditated intentional killing" and "violating the Constitution" in connection with the 2007 murder of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink was held on 11 October 2024 at Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court. The trial was adjourned until 10 January 2025 for the final statements of the defendants.
- The trial of 12 people on charges of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order," "membership in a terrorist organization" and "committing crimes on behalf of an illegal organization" in connection with the murder of journalist Hrant Dink continued on 16 October 2024 at Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court. The prosecutor, repeating his final opinion presented in the previous hearing, requested that the charge of "committing a crime on

behalf of an organization" against the instigators Ahmet İskender, Erhan Tuncel, Yasin Hayal, Tuncay Uzundal, Zeynel Abidin Yavuz and Ersin Yolçu and the shooter Ogün Samast be dropped due to the statute of limitations. The prosecutor demanded the acquittal of former Trabzon Anti-Terror branch director Adem Sağlam of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order," "intentional killing by negligent act" and "intentional killing" and sentencing on the charge of "membership in a terrorist organization"; and also demanded sentencing for former police chiefs Ali Fuat Yılmaz and Ramazan Akyürek on the charge of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order." The trial was adjourned until 10 January 2025.

Charges faced by journalists on trial

Journalists faced a total of 20 different charges in 38 separate cases in October. In this month, journalists were prosecuted mostly on charges of "terrorism" and "insult."

In October, journalists were charged with "terrorism propaganda" in nine separate cases and "membership in a terrorist organization" in seven cases. The third most common charge was "insult," which was used in seven cases. Journalists were accused of "insulting a public official" in four of these seven cases. The charges of "insulting the president" and "inciting hatred and hostility," each used in four separate cases, were among the top five most common charges faced by journalists in October.

In this month, journalists were charged with "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations" and "resisting to prevent the fulfillment of duty" in three cases each, and with "denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the State," "establishing or leading an illegal organization," "incitement to commit a crime," "praising crime and criminals" and "libel" in two cases each.

The charges of "political or military espionage" and "disclosing information that should remain confidential" under the heading "Crimes against

State Secrets and Espionage" in the Turkish Penal Code were used in one case each, while the charges of "violating the confidentiality of an investigation," "targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism," "dissuading the public from military service," "failing to report a crime," "encouraging drug use" and "opposing the Law on the Prevention of Financing Terrorism" were each used once. There was also one compensation case against journalists during this period.

At least 10 new cases were filed against eight journalists and five media outlets in October:

- According to news reports on 3 October, a new case was filed against JinNews reporter Melek Avcı on charges of "terrorism propaganda" for her social media posts. The indictment issued by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office was accepted by Ankara 19th High Criminal Court.
- According to media reports on 14 October, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal filed a lawsuit against BirGün newspaper and reporter İsmail Arı, demanding 100,000 TL for a news article published in BirGün on 24 September 2024.
- According to news reports on 15 and 16 October, journalist Enver Aysever was sued by main opposition CHP Chairman Özgür Özel for 100,000 TL and 50,000 TL, respectively. Aysever said that the lawsuits were filed due to the sarcastic expressions he used in his broadcasts on YouTube, adding that the CHP leader also requested a broadcast suspension, but the judge rejected the request.
- According to reports on 25 October, Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has issued an indictment against journalist Oktay Candemir on charges of "insult" for a social media post he shared on 5 April 2022 about AKP MP Osman Gökçek, who is the son of former Ankara Mayor Melih Gökçek.

- Media reported on 31 October that three separate indictments issued against Mezopotamya News Agency (MA) reporters Semra Turan and Tolga Güney and JinNews reporter Melike Aydın on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” were accepted by Izmir 13th High Criminal Court on 30 October. All three journalists were detained in house raids in Izmir on 13 February 2024. The court ruled for the trials of all three journalists to begin on 10 February 2025.
- Media reported on 31 October that Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has issued an indictment against BirGün newspaper reporter İsmail Arı on charges of “insult” upon a complaint by pro-government journalist Ferhat Murat. Murat had claimed on a television program that a news report by Arı was false, and Arı had responded to him on his social media account.
- According to media reports in October, Cengiz Bayırlı, an entrepreneur living in the United States, filed a lawsuit against Cumhuriyet newspaper and its columnist Barış Pehlivan for an article titled “How they were defrauded while buying a house,” claiming that his personal rights were violated. Bayırlı also sued BirGün newspaper, Tele 1, Halk TV and T24 for a total of TL 2,500,000 in damages. The complaint dated 25 September 2024 also demanded that a correction be published for the related news article.

NOVEMBER 2024

In November, 45 hearings were held in 43 separate cases against 79 journalists and media workers. Two of these cases were new cases. While eight of the cases were concluded, 35 were postponed to future dates. One of the eight cases that concluded resulted in sentencing. In this case, one journalist (Gözde Bedeloğlu) was sentenced to a judicial fine of 7,080 TL. In six of the concluded cases, six journalists (Sibel Tekin, Ali Duran Topuz, Furkan Karabay, Faruk Eren, Ahmet Sever, Osman Akın) were acquitted, while in one case the charges against two journalists (İnan Kızılkaya, İhsan Çaralan) were dropped.

In November, a total of nine new cases were filed against eight journalists (Merdan Yanardağ, Sedef Kabaş, Bülent Kılıç, Delal Akyüz, Kâzım Güleçyüz, İsmail Arı, Abdullah Kaya, Erk Acarer) and one television channel (Tele 1).

NOVEMBER 2024	
Number of journalists on trial	79
Number of trials	43
Number of concluded trials	8
Number of trials resulting in sentencing	1
Number of trials resulting in acquittal	6
Number of dismissed cases	1
Number of newly filed cases	9

The following judgments were delivered in the eight cases that concluded in November:

7 November: The fourth hearing of the case filed against documentary filmmaker and journalist Sibel Tekin on charges of “terrorism propaganda” and “violation of freedom of work and employment” for her coverage of the protesters who broke into NTV’s Ankara office in November 2015 was held at Ankara 2nd High Criminal Court. Ruling in line with the prosecutor’s opinion, the court acquitted Tekin due to lack of clear and convincing evidence.

7 November: Artı Gerçek Editor-in-Chief Ali Duran Topuz was acquitted of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism” at the fourth hearing of his trial overseen by Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court on the grounds that the charged act was not defined as a crime in the law. Topuz was on trial for publishing news on the relocations of a prosecutor who led the investigation against 18 journalists in Diyarbakır and the judge who issued an arrest warrant for the same journalists.

12 November: BirGün newspaper columnist Gözde Bedeloğlu was sentenced to a judicial fine of 7,080 TL by Istanbul 2nd Criminal

Court of First Instance on the charge “insulting a public official” in the case filed upon the complaint of MHP MP Sermet Atay for her article published on 9 April 2023. The court deferred the announcement of the sentence.

19 November: Journalist Furkan Karabay was acquitted of “insulting a public official” and “libel” charges against him in his trial overseen by Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of First Instance. The accusations in the case, launched upon a complaint by President Erdoğan’s former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal, stemmed from three social media posts Karabay shared on 11 August 2022, 27 April 2023 and 2 November 2023.

22 November: The fourth hearing in the retrial of journalists İnan Kızılkaya and İhsan Çaralan on charges of “insulting the president” due to a news article published in the shut-down Özgür Gündem newspaper was held at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. The court decided to dismiss the case against Kızılkaya and Çaralan due to the expiration of the probation period of the deferral of the announcement of the sentence.

22 November: Journalist Faruk Eren was acquitted of the charge of “failure to duly publish a correction” (Article 18 of the Press Law) in his retrial at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. The retrial was ordered by the Constitutional Court, which held that the deferral of the sentence in the initial case, filed over a news article published in Cumhuriyet in 2018, had constituted a violation of his rights.

22 November: Journalist Ahmet Sever was acquitted of “insult” charges in his retrial overseen by Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance in accordance with a Constitutional Court ruling. The case had been filed upon a complaint by former Industry and Technology Minister Mustafa Varank. In 2016, Sever was sentenced to a fine of 10,620 TL and the announcement of the sentence was deferred. On 29 March 2023, the Constitutional Court concluded that the interventions arising from the deferral of the announcement of sentences did not meet the criteria of legality and that Sever’s freedom of expression had been violated.

22 November: Osman Akin, managing editor of Yeni Yaşam newspaper, was acquitted of “denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the State” in his retrial at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. Akin was on trial for a news article published in the newspaper on 1 March 2019. In accordance with the Constitutional Court’s judgment dated 29 March 2023, the trial court acquitted Akin due to the lack of the elements of the charged offense.

Court of appeals judgments:

- According to news coverage of 21 November 2024, the 4th Civil Chamber of Istanbul Regional Court of Justice ruled to vacate a 50,000 TL compensation decision issued by Istanbul’s 26th Civil Court of First Instance against BirGün newspaper in a lawsuit filed by IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation for a news article published in June 2021. Dismissing the lawsuit, the appellate court pointed out that there was public interest in the news article and ruled that the lawsuit did not require a retrial.
- Journalist Mustafa Hoş was ordered to pay 81,000 TL in compensation in a lawsuit filed by Çorlu Public Prosecutor Galip Yılmaz Özkurşun due to a book he wrote, his social media posts and his statements in various TV shows about the deadly Çorlu train crash in 2018. Announcing the decision on his social media account on 25 November, Hoş stated that the decision delivered on 9 May 2024 by the Istanbul 19th Civil Court of First Instance upon Özkurşun’s complaint was upheld and finalized by the 4th Civil Chamber of the Istanbul Regional Court of Justice on 31 October 2024 without the possibility of further appeal and that a foreclosure order was issued within 10 days.
- Media reported on 25 November that the 2nd Criminal Chamber of Diyarbakır Regional Court of Justice has rejected the appeal against the life sentence and 12 years and 1 month imprisonment sentence given to journalist Rojhat Doğru in January 2022 by Diyarbakır 8th High Criminal Court on charges of “disrupting the unity and integrity of the state,” “membership in a terrorist organization” and “terrorism propaganda.” A

judge on the panel wrote a dissenting opinion on the grounds that Dođru did not admit to the crime attributed to him during the trial, the content of the video footage from the day of the incident, the complainant's complaint had been filed after İlke News Agency's coverage, and the identification process was carried out approximately three years after the incident. The judge noted that there was no sufficient, conclusive and convincing evidence that Dođru had committed the crime of "attempted murder" and that he should be acquitted of this crime. The case against Dođru was filed on the basis of the footage he had recorded during the Kobani protests on 6-8 October 2014.

Cases involving journalists or media organizations as complainants also continued in November:

- The trial of Adem Tembel, who shot and wounded journalist Azim Deniz, editor-in-chief of Kayseri Deniz Postası TV, as he left his house in Kayseri on 5 February 2024, continued on 7 November 2024 at Kayseri 2nd High Criminal Court. The defendant, who is charged with "attempted intentional killing" and "buying, possessing or carrying unlicensed firearms and bullets," claimed that he had known Deniz for years, that he was offended by the statements he made about Deniz on social media, and that he went to the journalist's house to talk to Deniz on the day of the incident. Deniz, on the other hand, said that he did not know the defendant, that although his workplace address was known, he was doing reconnaissance to find out the location of his house, and that on the day of the incident, as he was leaving his house, Tembel approached from behind and shot him. Deniz also stated that businessman S.Ç. had threatened him not to report news again and that S.Ç. was the instigator of the attack and filed a complaint. The court decided to hear S.Ç. and Y.H. and adjourned the case to 19 November. At the hearing held on this date, the case was adjourned to 9 January 2025 for the evaluation of expert reports and witness statements.

Charges faced by journalists on trial

Journalists faced a total of 21 charges in 43 separate cases in

November. The most common charges against journalists this month were again “terrorism” and “insult.”

Journalists were charged with “membership in a terrorist organization” in nine cases and “insult” in nine other cases in November. In six of the nine “insult” cases, journalists were accused of “insulting a public official.” In eight cases, journalists were charged with “terrorism propaganda.” The charge of “insulting the president,” which was used in seven cases this month, continued to be among the most frequently used charges against journalists.

The charges of “publicly disseminating misleading information” and “libel” were used in three cases each, while the charges of “denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the State” and “inciting the public to hatred and hostility” were used in two cases each.

The charges of “attempting to overthrow the constitutional order,” “attempting to overthrow the parliament” and “attempting to overthrow the government,” listed under the heading of crimes against the constitutional order in the Turkish Penal Code, were used in one case each. The charges of “knowingly and willingly aiding a terrorist organization without being a member,” “violating the Law on the Prevention of Financing Terrorism,” “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations,” “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism,” “unlawful seizure or dissemination of personal data,” “entering military restricted areas,” “threatening to cause fear and panic among the public,” “violation of freedom of work and labor,” “incitement to disobey the law” and “failure to duly publish a correction” were each also used once.

Five compensation cases filed against journalists were also heard this month.

In November, nine new cases were filed against eight journalists and one television channel:

- Journalist Merdan Yanardağ announced on Tele1’s “18 Minutes”

program on 1 November that Selçuk Bayraktar, President Erdoğan's son-in-law and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Baykar Makina, had filed a lawsuit against him and Tele1, seeking 500,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages.

- According to news reports on 6 November, Selçuk Bayraktar, President Erdoğan's son-in-law and Chairman of Baykar Makina, filed a lawsuit against journalist Sedef Kabaş for 250,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages due to her critical comments in a program broadcast on Tele1. The lawsuit notification was received by the channel on 6 November.
- According to media coverage of 7 November, a case was filed against photojournalist Bülent Kılıç on charges of "insulting a public official" upon the complaint of Hanifi Zengin, Security Branch Director of Istanbul Security Directorate. Kılıç learned about the case against him when he was detained on the grounds of an arrest warrant at Istanbul Airport on 29 October.
- According to news reports on 8 November, Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued an indictment against Mezopotamya Agency (MA) reporter Delal Akyüz, who was detained in Izmir in February 2024 along with journalists Semra Turan, Tolga Güney, Melike Aydın, Cihan Başakçioğlu and Funda Akbulut, and has been under "house arrest" judicial control measure since then, on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization." Izmir's 13th High Criminal Court accepted the indictment, which accuses Akyüz of journalistic activities, and scheduled his first hearing for 12 February 2025. The court ordered the continuation of the judicial control measure against Akyüz on the grounds that "the evidence has not been collected."
- Media reported on 12 November that Istanbul's 28th High Criminal Court accepted the indictment issued against Yeni Asya newspaper Editor-in-Chief Kâzım Güleçyüz, who was arrested on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" in October for a social media post he shared following the death of Fethullah Gülen. The court ruled for Güleçyüz's continued detention and scheduled his first hearing for 19 December 2024.

- According to news reports on 13 November, President Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal filed a lawsuit against BirGün newspaper and reporter İsmail Arı, demanding 250,000 TL in non-pecuniary damages for a news article published in BirGün on the same date. The article contained allegations about public tenders received by Mahmut İnal, the son of İnal's uncle.
- During the 22 November 2024 hearing of journalist Abdullah Kaya, a former reporter for Dicle News Agency (DİHA), which was shut down under a statutory decree, the presiding judge of Ağrı 2nd High Criminal Court stated that a new indictment issued against Kaya on charges of "terrorism propaganda" over his social media posts had been sent to the court between hearings and registered with a new docket number. The court decided to merge the new case with the ongoing trial on the grounds of legal and factual connection.
- According to a public announcement published online on 28 November 2024, Turkish Youth Foundation (TÜGVA) filed a compensation case worth 20,000 TL against journalist Erk Acarer in a petition dated 9 November 2021, filed with Istanbul 18th Civil Court of First Instance, for a post the journalist shared on social media on 26 October 2021. It was stated that the notice issued to Acarer's address abroad was not served due to the return of the invitation and that for this reason, the lawsuit petition was served through public announcement.

December 2024

In December, 28 hearings were held in 26 separate cases against 38 journalists and media workers and one newspaper. Five of these cases were newly filed cases. Seven of the 26 trials concluded while 19 were postponed to future dates. Two of the seven concluded cases resulted in sentencing. In one case, three journalists (Hüseyin Aykol, Reyhan Çapan, Ayşe Batumlu Kaya) were sentenced to a total of 11 years, 5 months and 2 days in prison. In the other case, one journalist (İnan Kızılkaya) was sentenced to a judicial fine of 7,080 TL, while the file against one journalist (Can Dündar) was

separated. In five of the concluded cases, six journalists and media workers (Ercan Yeltaş, Aziz Oruç, Yağmur Kaya, Bülent Kılıç, İzel Sezer, Batuhan Batan) were acquitted.

In December, six new cases were filed against six journalists (Yüstra Batihan, Ayşenur Arslan, Cengiz Erdinç, Ali Ergin Demirhan, Çağdaş Gökbel, Nevşin Mengü).

DECEMBER 2024	
Number of journalists on trial	39
Number of trials	27
Number of concluded trials	7
Number of trials resulting in sentencing	2
Number of trials resulting in acquittal	5
Number of dismissed cases	-
Number of newly filed cases	6

The following judgments were rendered in the seven cases that concluded in December and in one other case that had been concluded earlier but for which a hearing was held for the announcement of the sentence:

3 December: Ercan Yeltaş, former distributor of the shut-down Özgürlükçü Demokrasi newspaper, was acquitted at his retrial overseen by Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court. Yeltaş was tried on charges of “terrorism propaganda” and acquitted in 2019, but was sentenced to 7 months and 15 days in prison in 2022 after his acquittal was overturned on appeal and the announcement of the sentence was deferred. His retrial was ordered by the Constitutional Court, which ruled that Yeltaş’s right to a fair trial had been violated.

5 December: Journalist Aziz Oruç, who was sentenced to 2 years and 1 month in prison in 2020 on charges of “terrorism propaganda” for his social media posts containing news reports published by the shut-down Dicle News Agency (DİHA), was acquitted at the

first hearing of his retrial overseen by Diyarbakır 9th High Criminal Court. Oruç's sentence was reversed by the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation in 2024.

9 December: At the fourth hearing of a case filed against photojournalist Bülent Kılıç on charges of "insulting a public official" upon a complaint by Istanbul Security Branch Director Hanifi Zengin, the prosecutor demanded Kılıç's acquittal on the grounds that no concrete and convincing evidence of the alleged crime was obtained. Istanbul's 67th Criminal Court of First Instance acquitted Kılıç in line with the prosecutor's opinion.

9 December: Journalist Yağmur Kaya, who was detained along with 51 Boğaziçi University students while she was following the police intervention against the students who wanted to hold a press statement for their friends who were detained in March 2021, was acquitted of the charge of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations" on the grounds that there was no concrete and convincing evidence that she had committed the alleged crime.

12 December: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced journalist İnan Kızılkaya to a judicial fine of 7,080 TL on the charge of "insulting a public official" for a news article published in the shut-down Özgür Gündem newspaper on 22 June 2016, the day on which Can Dündar participated in the "editor-in-chief on duty" campaign. The court decided to separate the file against Can Dündar, who has a warrant for his arrest as part of the case.

17 December: İzel Sezer, editor-in-chief of İleri Haber, and Batuhan Batan, managing editor, were acquitted of "insult" and "libel" charges in the sixth hearing of their trial overseen by Istanbul's 25th Criminal Court of First Instance on the grounds that the alleged act was not defined as crime in the law. The case had been filed upon a complaint by Mustafa Doğan İnal, former lawyer of President Erdoğan.

18 December: According to media reports, imprisoned journalist Murat Verim was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in prison

after the finalization of another sentence he had been given by İpsala Criminal Court of First Instance on the charge of "border violation." The Mardin 3rd High Criminal Court lifted the deferral of the sentence decision it issued in 2019 for Verim in a case where the journalist was tried and sentenced on the charge of "terrorism propaganda."

26 December: Concluding the retrial of former Özgür Gündem Co-Editors-in-Chief Hüseyin Aykol and Eren Keskin, managing editor Reyhan Çapan and columnist Ayşe Batumlu Kaya on charges of "terrorism propaganda" and "incitement to commit crime," Istanbul's 14th High Criminal Court sentenced Aykol and Çapan to 4 years, 4 months and 15 days in prison each, and Batumlu Kaya to 1 year, 21 months and 2 days in prison. The sentences previously handed down to the journalists were reversed by the Court of Cassation in 2023.

December also saw at least two court cases filed upon complaints by journalists. One of these cases concluded:

- The final hearing of the case filed against the police officer who attacked journalist Ardi Batmaz during news coverage in April 2022 was held on 3 December 2024 at Elazığ 5th Criminal Court of First Instance. Ömer Faruk Taş, the bodyguard of Elazığ Mayor Şahin Şerifoğulları, had attacked Batmaz while he was covering the visit of then Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu and Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change Murat Kurum. Batmaz's lawyer Kader Arat stated that Hasan Celal Kaya, whom the court heard as a witness, was one of the people who attacked his client, and requested that a criminal complaint be filed against Kaya and that the indictment to be prepared be merged with the ongoing case. Arat stated that since Kaya was heard between the hearings, they were deprived of their right to question the witness and that this was a violation of the right to a fair trial. The court rejected Arat's request and sentenced Taş to a judicial fine of 4,800 TL on the charge of intentional injury. The court deferred the announcement of the sentence on the grounds that "the sentence

was a judicial fine, the defendant had no previous conviction for an intentional crime, there was no concrete damage suffered or claimed by the victim, and that the court had a positive opinion that the defendant would not re-offend."

- According to media reports dated 15 December 2024, the trial of the perpetrator of an armed attack against Cafer Elmas, the owner of local newspaper Bilecik Yarın, began at Bilecik High Criminal Court. Elmas was shot by Ahmet Yasir Beşkardeş on 19 June 2023 after he published a news article. The defendant Beşkardeş, who was arrested after the incident and released six months later, is charged with "attempt to premeditated intentional killing." After hearing the parties and eyewitnesses, the court adjourned the case to 29 April 2025.

Charges faced by journalists on trial

Journalists faced a total of 15 different charges in 26 separate cases heard in December. The most common charge against journalists this month was "terrorism propaganda," which was used in eight cases. The second most common charge was "insult," which was used in five cases. In two of these five cases, journalists were accused of "insulting a public official." The third most common charge in December was "membership in a terrorist organization," which was used in four cases.

In fourth place was the charge of "insulting the president," which was used in three separate cases. In fifth place were the charges of "violating the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations" and "denigrating the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the state," which were used in two cases each. In one case each, journalists were charged with "knowingly and willingly aiding a terrorist organization without being a member," "publicly disseminating misleading information," "libel," "threat," "unlawful acquisition or dissemination of personal data," "violation of privacy," "incitement to commit a crime," "obtaining information that should remain confidential for the security or

domestic or foreign political interests of the state" and "disclosing information that should remain confidential for the security or domestic or foreign political interests of the state."

A compensation case filed against a journalist was also heard in December.

Six new cases were filed against six journalists in December:

- According to reports dated 5 December, Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued an indictment against journalist Yüusra Batıhan on charges of "publicly disseminating misleading information." The indictment accuses Batıhan over her social media posts on the content of the news she reported on relief efforts following the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes of February 2023. Upon the instruction of Ankara 75th Criminal Court of First Instance, which accepted the indictment, Batıhan gave her statement at Mersin 16th Criminal Court of First Instance.
- According to news coverage of 5 December, a case was filed against journalist Ayşenur Arslan on the charge of "terrorism propaganda" for her statements about the bomb attack in front of the Ministry of Interior in Ankara in her show "Medya Mahallesi," broadcast on Halk TV on 2 October 2023. The indictment was accepted by Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court.
- According to news reports dated 11 December, Ali Ergin Demirhan, editor of the news website Sendika.org, which was targeted by Yeni Akit after the access ban on the Charlie Hebdo issue published in 2015 was lifted by the Constitutional Court in 2024, was summoned to give a statement at the police department. After Demirhan's statement, the prosecutor referred the file against Demirhan on the charge of "publicly denigrating the religious values of a section of the public" to the court.
- According to news coverage of 11 December, an indictment was issued against Kısa Dalga columnist Cengiz Erdinç on charges

of “spreading misleading information.” Erdinç was detained on 2 November 2023 in a raid of his house in Balıkesir on the grounds of his social media posts, in which he quoted excerpts from a book, and was later released. Ayvalık 1st Criminal Court of First Instance accepted the indictment and scheduled the first hearing for 7 January 2025.

- soL columnist Çağdaş Gökbel announced on YouTube on 20 December that Selçuk Bayraktar, Erdoğan's son-in-law and Chairman of Baykar Makina, has filed a lawsuit against him, seeking 250,000 TL in damages. Gökbel said the lawsuit was filed on account of his expressions in a post he shared on his personal social media account in August 2024 about unmanned aerial vehicles produced by Baykar.
- Media reported on 25 December that the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued an indictment against journalist Nevşin Mengü on charges of “terrorism propaganda” due to her interview with PYD Presidential Council Member Salih Müslim. Mengü was detained on 13 December on suspicion of “praising a crime and a criminal” after broadcasting the interview on her YouTube channel and was released later that day after her statement was taken by the prosecutor.

Detentions and Investigations

In the fourth quarter of 2024, at least 58 journalists and media workers were detained on one or more occasions:

2 October: The police intervened a protest organized by the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) on Istanbul's İstiklal Street to protest the Israeli attacks and violently detained Gazete Patika reporter **Yadigar Aygün**.

11 October: Serhildan Andan, a journalist and board member of the Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG), was detained along with 14 other people in Diyarbakır. Andan and 14 others were detained

as part of an investigation launched by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office following a tip-off that they were going to "protest" at a rally in Diyarbakır on 13 October. Andan and 14 others were released on 14 October following procedures at Diyarbakır Security Directorate.

14 October: Etkin News Agency (ETHA) editor **Pınar Gayıp** was detained due to a criminal complaint filed by lawyer Sezgin Keleş, who was sentenced to 3 years in prison in 2022 for sexually assaulting an intern. Gayıp went to Istanbul Kocamustafapaşa Şehit Sinan Acar Police Station to give a statement about a criminal complaint filed by Keleş and was detained there on the grounds of an arrest warrant. After a health check, Gayıp was taken to Istanbul's Anadolu Courthouse and released the same day after giving her statement to a prosecutor.

15 October: Mezopotamya News Agency reporters **Zeynep Durgut** and **Mahmut Altıntaş** and JinNews reporter **Derya Ren** were violently detained during the intervention of security forces while covering the "No to war, peace now" demonstration in Silopi district of Şırnak. They were released on 16 October.

22 October: Journalist **Aysın Komitgan**, an anchor for the news website Bursa'da Bugün, was detained within the scope of an investigation launched by Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" due to the expressions she used on live broadcast while announcing the death of Fethullah Gülen. Komitgan was referred to the courthouse, where she was released under judicial control measures.

23 October: Yeni Asya newspaper Editor-in-Chief **Kâzım Güleçyüz** was detained as part of an investigation launched by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" due to a social media post he shared following the death of Fethullah Gülen. Güleçyüz's statement was taken at the prosecutor's office and he was arrested by the judge to whom he was referred with a request for arrest.

29 October: Photojournalist **Bülent Kılıç** was detained at Istanbul Airport on the grounds of an arrest warrant issued in a case filed against him for “insult.” Kılıç, who learned that a case had been filed against him while he was detained at the airport, was released after his statement was taken. Kılıç then went with his lawyer to Istanbul 67th Criminal Court of First Instance on 1 November to make his statement to the court.

3 November: Halktv.com.tr Managing Editor **Dinçer Gökçe** and Gazete Pencere Managing Editor **Nilay Can** were detained on suspicion of “publicly disseminating misleading information,” “insulting a public official” and “libel” as part of an investigation into the news reports that “the prosecutor who brought down the Yenidoğan gang had been suspended.” As part of the investigation, 23 news websites and 13 social media accounts were reportedly examined. After procedures at the police station, Gökçe and Can were referred to Istanbul’s Bakırköy Courthouse and released by a criminal court of peace under judicial control measures.

4 November: Batman Sonsöz newspaper reporter **Serhat Aslan** was detained while covering the protests against the appointment of a trustee to Batman Municipality by the Ministry of Interior. The police raided the office of the local newspaper on the grounds that the moment of the detention of protesters was being filmed from inside the newspaper. Aslan was released after a few hours.

5 November: JinNews reporter **Pelşin Çetinkaya** and Yeni Yaşam newspaper employee **Veysi Akören** were violently detained while covering protests against the appointment of a trustee to Batman Municipality. The detainees were later released. The police told Çetinkaya and Akören that they were detained “by mistake.”

8 November: Journalist **Furkan Karabay** was detained in the morning hours of 8 November due to his news reports and social media posts about the investigation against Esenyurt Mayor Ahmet Özer, who was replaced by a trustee. Karabay was arrested on 9 November on charges of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism.”

- 21 November:** Journalist **Gökhan Özbek**, owner of the social media account 23 Derece, announced in a post on his social media account that he was detained. Later, Özbek made a statement about the reason for his detention and said: "The prison sentence I was given in 2022 for criticizing the unlawfulness of the Osman Kavala indictment was converted into a judicial fine. I made my payment, I am free."
- 26 November:** At least 230 people, including journalists, writers, translators, politicians and rights defenders, were detained in police raids carried out in 30 provinces including Diyarbakır, Istanbul, Mardin, Şırnak, Ankara and Antalya as part of an investigation by the Eskişehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. **Roza Metina, Erdoğan Alayumat, Ahmet Sümbül, Bilal Seçkin, Suzan Demir, Tuğçe Yılmaz, Havin Derya** and **Serap Güneş**, who were among 10 journalists detained in various provinces as part of the investigation, were released under judicial control measures, while **Hamza Kaan (Bilge Aksu)** and **Mehmet Uçar** were arrested on 29 November. Journalist Gülcan Dereli's house was also raided as part of the investigation.
- 13 December:** Journalist **Nevşin Mengü** was detained as part of an investigation launched ex officio by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of "praising a crime and a criminal" after she broadcast an interview with PYD leader Salih Muslim on her YouTube channel. Mengü was released under judicial control measures by the judge the same day.
- 15 December:** Sendika.org reporters **Tankut Serttaş** and **Nisan Çıra** were violently detained by the police while covering a march in Ankara demanding a decent life and the right to secure work. The police also confiscated the phones and cameras of the reporters.
- 20 December:** The police intervened in a demonstration held in Van for journalists Nazım Daştan and Cihan Bilgin, who were killed in a drone attack in Syria, and detained **10 journalists** and several politicians. JinNews reporter **Memihan Zeydan**, MA reporters **Ruken Polat, Özlem Yacan, Mazlum Engindeniz** and **Sema**

Yüce Polat, Ajansa Welat reporters **Bazid Evran** and **Fırat Tunç**, journalists **Zelal Tunç**, **Oktay Candemir** and **Nimet Ölmez** were detained during the intervention.

20 December: Journalist **Özlem Gürses** was detained in Ankara as part of an investigation launched by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information" for allegedly describing the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) as an occupying organization acting in concert with terrorist organizations in a video on her YouTube channel. Gürses, who was transferred to Istanbul, was released on 21 December under judicial control measures of not leaving her residence and a ban on leaving the country.

21 December: The police intervened in a press statement organized in Şişhane, Istanbul, for journalists Daştan and Bilgin, who were killed in Syria. The police detained **20 journalists and media workers**, including **Ferhat Sezgin, Melik Çelik, Rozerin Gültekin, Pınar Gayıp, Enes Sezgin, Osman Akın, Hayri Tunç, Yadigar Aygün, Serpil Ünal, Zeynep Kuray, Mustafa Subaşı, Saliha Aras, Gülistan Dursun, Elif Bayburt, Rojdan Erez, Ahmet Güneş, Pelin Laçın, Mahsum Sağlam, Can Papila** and **Umut Taştan**, and many protesters. While 45 of the detainees were released after their statements at the police department, 14 were referred to the prosecutor's office. The prosecutor referred five of the 14 to a judge demanding judicial control measures and nine people, including seven journalists, to a judge for arrest on charges of "terrorism propaganda" and "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations." On 22 December, the judge ordered the arrest of Pınar Gayıp, Serpil Ünal, Gülistan Dursun, Osman Akın, Hayri Tunç, Enes Sezgin, Can Papila and two others.

25 December: Yeni Yaşam newspaper employee **Veysi Akören** was detained at Batman Airport upon his arrival from Istanbul. Akören was taken to Batman Provincial Police Department and the reason for his detention was not disclosed.

In the fourth quarter of the year, at least 44 journalists were subjected to one or more investigations or had criminal complaints filed against them:

- 11 October:** An investigation was launched against journalist **Oktay Candemir** on suspicion of “violating privacy” based on his news report and social media post about Ferman Yıldırım, a mayoral candidate from the AKP in Van’s Çaldıran district. In his post, dated 30 March 2024, Candemir had stated, “AKP candidate for mayor of Çaldıran will not be able to vote in Çaldıran in the 31 March elections because he is still registered in Antalya.” As part of the investigation launched upon Yıldırım’s complaint, Candemir went to the police station and gave a statement.
- 14 October:** An investigation launched by the Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office against JinNews News Director **Öznur Değer** on suspicion of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism” over her news article titled “Criminal complaint against commander Kamil Aksoy, the perpetrator of torture in Nisêbîn,” published in July 2024, was sent to the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. Değer went to the Diyarbakır Police Department’s Anti-Terror Branch to give her statement on 14 October as part of the investigation.
- 15 October:** Journalists **Erdoğan Alayumat** and **Mehmet Aslan** found out in the court’s interim ruling during the first hearing of their trial held on 15 October at Istanbul 25th High Criminal Court that a new investigation had been launched against them on suspicion of “membership in a terrorist organization” and that a confidentiality order had been issued regarding the investigation file.
- 22 October:** Mezopotamya News Agency editor **Abdurrahman Gök** found out that a new investigation has been launched against him in 2024 by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. In its interim ruling at the end of Gök’s 22 October 2024 hearing of his trial on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” and “terrorism propaganda,” the Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court decided to request a copy of the investigation file.

22 October: Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against journalist **Aysin Komitgan** on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" due to the expressions she used during live broadcast while announcing the news of Fethullah Gülen's death. A detention warrant was issued for the journalist as part of the investigation.

23 October: Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terror and Organized Crimes Investigation Bureau launched an investigation against Yeni Asya newspaper Editor-in-Chief **Kâzım Güleçyüz** on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" due to social media posts he shared following the death of Fethullah Gülen. Güleçyüz was arrested and sent to prison.

31 October: Elazığ Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against **Evren Demirdağ**, Elazığ correspondent for Sözcü newspaper, on suspicion of "fabricating a crime" and "publicly disseminating misleading information" following a criminal complaint filed against him over a news report on tenders awarded to businessman Veysel Demirci's company. Demirdağ went to the police station on 31 October and gave a statement.

3 November: Journalists **Dinçer Gökçe** and **Nilay Can** were detained as part of an investigation launched by the Bakırköy Chief Public Prosecutor's Office into news reports and social media posts about the allegations that "the prosecutor who brought down the Yenidoğan gang was removed from the case." According to the state-run Anadolu Agency, 23 news websites and 13 social media accounts were examined as part of the investigation.

8 November: Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against journalist **Furkan Karabay** on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information," "targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism" and "insult" on account of his news coverage and social media posts about the investigation against Esenyurt Mayor Ahmet Özer, who was replaced by a trustee. Karabay, who was detained in the morning hours of 8 November, was arrested and sent to prison on 9 November.

- 20 November:** An investigation was launched against Sözcü reporter **Evren Demirdağ** following a criminal complaint filed by Elazığ Governor's Office and Elazığ Special Provincial Administration over his reporting on a tender. In the criminal complaint filed to the Elazığ Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Demirdağ was accused of "provoking the public" against Elazığ Special Provincial Administration and the Governorate. Demirdağ went to the police station on 20 November and gave a statement.
- 21 November:** An investigation was launched against journalist **Oktay Candemir** on suspicion of "inciting the public to hatred and hostility" for a column he wrote after the appointment of a trustee to Istanbul's Esenyurt Municipality. Candemir went to Van Security Directorate on 21 November and gave his statement.
- 22 November:** According to media reports, the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Press Crimes Investigation Bureau launched an investigation against journalists **Fatih Altaylı** and **İsmail Saymaz** on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information" on account of expressions in an article by Altaylı and a claim by Saymaz during a live broadcast on Halk TV.
- 26 November:** At least 230 people, including journalists, writers, translators, politicians and rights defenders, were detained in police raids carried out in 30 provinces including Diyarbakır, Istanbul, Mardin, Şırnak, Ankara and Antalya as part of an investigation by the Eskişehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. **Roza Metina, Erdoğan Alayumat, Ahmet Sümbül, Bilal Seçkin, Suzan Demir, Tuğçe Yılmaz, Havin Derya** and **Serap Güneş**, who were among 10 journalists detained in various provinces as part of the investigation, were released under judicial control measures, while **Hamza Kaan (Bilge Aksu)** and **Mehmet Uçar** were arrested on 29 November. Journalist **Gülcan Dereli**'s house was also raided as part of the operations.
- 11 December:** Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against journalist **Ruşen Takva** on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information" for a post he shared

on 3 December 2024 about Turkey's policy towards Kurds in Syria. Takva went to Van Police Department on 11 December and gave a statement. In the post subject to investigation, Takva wrote: "Kurds living in Turkey have a deep-rooted and unshakable emotional bond with their compatriots in Syria. Therefore, you cannot bomb the Kurds in Syria and make peace with the Kurds in Turkey."

11 December: Media reported that an investigation file against MA reporter **Firat Can Arslan**, initiated by the Konya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in 2022 on suspicion of "praising a crime and a criminal" and sent to the Kirşehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office due to lack of jurisdiction, had been recently sent to the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office due to lack of jurisdiction.

13 December: Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an ex officio investigation against journalist **Nevşin Mengü** on suspicion of "praising a crime and a criminal" after she broadcast an interview with PYD executive Salih Muslim on her YouTube channel. Mengü, who was detained within the scope of the investigation, was released under judicial control measures.

13 December: According to media reports, Aydın Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against Özgür Yurttaş News Director **Mehmet Murat Yıldırım** on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" for his social media posts following the 6 February 2023 earthquakes. Yıldırım stated that he became aware of the investigation, launched on 17 October 2024, in December.

17 December: Two separate investigations were launched against journalist **Aslıhan Gençay** for her articles published on P24 Blog about alleged corruption and irregularities in municipalities in Hatay. The investigations were launched following criminal complaints filed to the Hatay Chief Public Prosecutor's Office by Metin Savaş, the brother of Hatay Mayor Lütfü Savaş and HATSU executive, and former Samandağ Mayor Refik Eryılmaz.

- 20 December:** Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an ex officio investigation against journalist **Özlem Gürses** on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information" due to her remarks about the Turkish Armed Forces in a video broadcast on her YouTube channel. Gürses was taken into custody and released on 21 December under judicial control measures of not leaving her residence and a ban on leaving the country.
- 21 December:** Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau initiated an investigation against journalist **Seyhan Avşar**, editor-in-chief Gerçek Gündem news portal, and **T24 news website** on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" and "publicly disseminating misleading information" due to news reports and social media posts on the killing of journalists Cihan Bilgin and Nazım Daştan in Syria.
- 22 December:** Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against 14 people, including **11 journalists and media workers** who were detained during a press statement organized in Şişhane, Istanbul, for two journalists who were killed in Syria, and referred to the courthouse on 22 December on charges of "terrorism propaganda" and "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations." Journalists **Pınar Gayıp, Serpil Ünal, Gülistan Dursun, Osman Akın, Hayri Tunç, Enes Sezgin, Can Papila** and two others were arrested as part of the investigation. **Mahsum Sağlam, Zeynep Kuray, Yedigöller Aygün, Pelin Laçın** and one other suspect were released under judicial control measures.
- 23 December:** An investigation was launched against JINHA reporter **Medine Mamedoğlu** on suspicion of "inciting the people to disobey the law" after she published on social media footage of a child being detained during protests in Van following the 31 March local elections. Mamedoğlu went to Diyarbakır Provincial Security Directorate with her lawyer and gave her statement.

23 December: According to media reports, an officer at Marmara Prison in Silivri, Istanbul, filed a criminal complaint with the Silivri Chief Public Prosecutor's Office over journalist **Merdan Yanardağ**'s remarks about prisons in Turkey on his program "18 Dakika," broadcast on 19 December on Tele 1. The petition claimed that Yanardağ "acted with the aim of creating anxiety, fear, and panic among the public and publicly disseminated untrue information" and "insulted the Turkish nation, the state of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the state."

23 December: Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor's Office initiated an investigation against JinNews reporter **Öznur Değer** for "insulting a public official" after she reacted to a police officer who used a sexist expression towards her while she was covering a condolence event in Mardin on 22 December for journalists Cihan Bilgin and Nazım Daştan who were killed in Syria.

In the period covered by the report, investigations launched against five journalists were dismissed:

4 October: Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued a decision of non-prosecution in the investigation against Gazete Duvar reporter **Cihan Başakçioğlu**, who was detained on suspicion of "membership in a terrorist organization" during house raids in Izmir on 13 February 2024 and released under judicial control measures. The judicial control measures imposed on Başakçioğlu were lifted.

15 October: Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office decided not to prosecute journalist **Oktay Candemir** on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information" in the investigation launched in 2023 on the grounds of his social media post about the salary of İhsan Emre Aydın, district governor of İpekyolu district in Van and trustee of İpekyolu Municipality. The public prosecutor concluded: "There is no evidence that the post subject to the accusation was made with the motive of creating fear and

panic, the post was not of a nature to disrupt public peace, and the legal elements of the imputed crime did not occur.”

23 November: According to media reports, the Ministry of Justice rejected the request of the Ankara 22nd High Criminal Court to launch an investigation against journalist **İskender Kahraman** under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) in the case filed against him on “terrorism propaganda” charges for his articles published in Yüksekova Haber news portal. Kahraman’s trial will continue on 15 January 2025.

29 November: Following a criminal complaint filed by pro-government businessman Veysel Demirci, Sözcü newspaper’s Elazığ reporter **Evren Demirdağ** was investigated on suspicion of “publicly disseminating misleading information.” Elazığ Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office decided that the news reports subject to the complaint did not constitute the alleged offense.

18 December: Elazığ Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office decided not to prosecute Sözcü reporter **Evren Demirdağ** in an investigation launched upon a criminal complaint filed by Elazığ Governor’s Office and Special Provincial Administration over the journalist’s news coverage of a public tender.

24 December: According to media reports, an investigation against MA reporter **Ahmet Kanbal** on suspicion of “publicly disseminating misleading information” due to his article on the appointment of trustees to municipalities was dismissed because the elements of the alleged crime did not exist. Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office had decided not to prosecute Kanbal in the investigation initiated on suspicion of “terrorism propaganda,” but then decided to investigate the journalist on suspicion of “publicly disseminating misleading information” due to the phrase, “[the government is] aiming to appoint mayors to Kurdistan cities” in his article.



Arrests and Releases

As of 1 October 2024, the beginning of the period covered by the report, there were 26 journalists on the list of [journalists in prison](#), compiled by the Expression Interrupted platform based on information obtained from our trial monitoring efforts and research of open sources. In the three-month period covered by the report, 11 journalists were arrested and three journalists, two of whom were arrested during this period, were released from prison. As of 31 December 2024, the end of the reporting period, there were at least 34 journalists in prison in Turkey.

During the period covered by the report, 11 journalists were arrested:

23 October: Yeni Asya newspaper Editor-in-Chief **Kâzım Güleçyüz** was detained in Istanbul due to a post he shared on social media following the death of Fethullah Gülen. Güleçyüz, whose statement was taken at the prosecutor's office on suspicion of "terrorism propaganda" within the scope of the investigation launched by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terror and Organized Crimes Investigation Bureau, was arrested later that night.

9 November: Journalist **Furkan Karabay** was detained in the morning hours of 8 November as part of an investigation launched by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on suspicion of "publicly disseminating misleading information," "targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism" and "insulting a public official" based on his news coverage and social media posts about the investigation against Esenyurt Mayor Ahmet Özer, who was replaced by a trustee. On 9 November, Karabay was referred to the courthouse and was arrested on charges of "targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism" and sent to prison.

29 November: Journalists **Hamza Kaan (Bilge Aksu)** and **Mehmet Uçar**, who were among the journalists detained in operations carried out across 30 cities on 26 November as part of an investigation by the Eskişehir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, were arrested and sent to prison on 29 November.

22 December: Journalists **Pınar Gayıp, Serpil Ünal, Gülistan Dursun, Osman Akın, Hayri Tunç, Enes Sezgin** and **Can Papila**, who were among the journalists and media workers detained by the police during a press statement organized in Istanbul for journalists Daştan and Bilgin, who were killed in Syria, were arrested by the criminal court of peace on 22 December on charges of "terrorism propaganda" and "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations."

Three journalists were released from prison during the period covered by the report:

18 November: Journalist **Furkan Karabay**, who was arrested on 9 November on charges of “targeting public officials assigned with the fight against terrorism” as part of an investigation launched on account of his coverage of the investigation against Esenyurt Mayor Ahmet Özer, was released by the Istanbul 17th Criminal Court of First Instance, which accepted his lawyers’ objection to his detention. The court stated that the arrest measure was incompatible with the content of the file.

25 November: A3 News Editor-in-Chief **Süleyman Gençel**, who was arrested in February 2024 following the finalization of a prison sentence of 1 year, 2 months and 17 days he had been given on the charge of “insult” in a case filed upon a complaint by Izmir Dokuz Eylül University Rector Nükhet Hotar, was released on probation from Foça Open Prison in Izmir.

19 December: Yeni Asya newspaper Editor-in-Chief **Kâzım Güleçyüz**, who was arrested on 23 October for a social media post, was released pending trial at the first hearing of the case filed against him on charges of “terrorism propaganda” at Istanbul 28th High Criminal Court. The trial was adjourned until 4 March 2025.

Highlights from Trials

Some of the significant developments in some cases heard during the period covered by the report were as follows:

Trial of journalists Esra Solin Dal, Mehmet Aslan and Erdoğan Alayumat begins: The first hearing of the case filed against journalists Esra Solin Dal, Mehmet Aslan and Erdoğan Alayumat on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” was held on 15 October 2024 at Istanbul 25th High Criminal Court. The journalists stated that their news reports were made the subject of accusations and demanded their acquittal. The court decided to lift the judicial

control measures against the journalists. Noting that there is an open investigation against Alayumat and Aslan, the presiding judge decided to wait for the outcome of this investigation and adjourned the trial to 11 February 2025. The three journalists were detained on 23 April 2024 as part of an Istanbul-based investigation, arrested on 26 April on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” and released on 21 May after the indictment against them was accepted.

Prosecutor demands sentencing for journalist Asuman Aranca:

The first hearing of the case filed against journalist Asuman Aranca on charges of “violating the confidentiality of an investigation” for her news article titled “T24 accessed the expert report in the Sinan Ateş murder file” was held on 15 October 2024 at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. Presenting their final opinion on the case, the prosecutor claimed that Aranca “exceeded the limits of freedom of the press and reporting due to the manner of the news report and the disclosure of the contents of the expert report despite the lack of public interest” and demanded Aranca to be sentenced. The trial was adjourned until 11 March 2025.

New investigation launched against Abdurrahman Gök: At the fifth hearing of the case filed against Mezopotamya News Agency editor Abdurrahman Gök on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” and “terrorism propaganda” on the grounds of his professional activities and witness statements, Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court decided not to hear the secret witness who testified against Gök, as the court did not respond to the writ for hearing the secret witness. The court decided to wait for the finalization of another case pending review by the Court of Cassation and to request a copy of a new investigation file against Gök, launched by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office in 2024, and adjourned the trial to 30 January 2025.

Tunca Öğreten and Murat Baykara appear in court over documentary “Met Çıkmazı”: The first hearing of the case filed against journalists Tunca Öğreten and Murat Baykara on charges of “encouraging drug use” and “failing to report a crime”

for their documentary "Met Çıkmazı," about the current state of methamphetamine sales, was held on 31 October 2024 at Istanbul's Bakırköy 13th Criminal Court of First Instance. The court decided to summon the person who filed a complaint about the documentary to CİMER and adjourned the case to 25 March 2025.

New case against Abdullah Kaya merged with ongoing case:

Abdullah Kaya, a former reporter for Dicle News Agency (DİHA), appeared before Ağrı 2nd High Criminal Court on 22 November 2024 for ongoing trial on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization" and "terrorism propaganda." During the hearing, the judge stated that a new indictment issued by Ağrı Chief Public Prosecutor's Office against Kaya in 2024 on the charge of "terrorism propaganda" was sent to the court between the hearings and registered under a different docket number and decided to merge the new case with the ongoing case on the grounds of legal and factual connection. In his defense statement against the charges in the new case, Kaya stated that his posts on his Facebook account were within the scope of freedom of the press and demanded his acquittal. In its interim ruling, the court decided to inquire about the outcome of the case against Kaya on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization," currently pending review by the Court of Cassation, and adjourned the trial to 30 January 2025.

Prosecutor demands sentence for Merdan Yanardağ in retrial:

The retrial of Tele 1 Editor-in-Chief Merdan Yanardağ on the charge of "degrading the Turkish nation, the state of the Republic of Turkey, the institutions and organs of the state" started on 10 December 2024 at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. A prison sentence of 7 months and 15 days Yanardağ was given in 2023 was reversed by the 27th Criminal Chamber of Istanbul Regional Court of Justice. The accusation stems from an article by Yanardağ, published in BirGün newspaper in May 2021. Presenting his final opinion at the hearing, the prosecutor demanded that Yanardağ be sentenced for the imputed offense. The trial was adjourned until 22 May 2025.

ATTACKS, THREATS AND INTERVENTIONS AGAINST JOURNALISTS

According to data compiled by Expression Interrupted, at least 20 incidents of attacks, violent police interventions, threats or targeting of journalists and media outlets were recorded in October, November and December:

- During MHP's parliamentary group meeting on 1 October 2024, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli targeted and threatened journalists **Murat Ağirel, Timur Soykan, Şule Aydın** and **Barış Pehlivan** and **Halk TV** over their reporting on the Sinan Ateş murder case. Bahçeli said, "Halk TV and CHP, watch your step. You cannot question the MHP with four clown reporters, we will not let you question us."
- Gazete Patika reporter **Yadigar Aygün**, who was covering a march organized by the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) in Beyoğlu district of Istanbul on 2 October to protest Israel, was violently detained by the police.
- On 9 October, a **Halk TV** crew reporting on an illegal sect dormitory built on Treasury land in Karabağlar district of Izmir was attacked by cultists. The cultists tried to prevent Halk TV reporter **Yağmur Beril Varol** and her cameraman from filming, forcibly boarded the Halk TV vehicle, demanded that the journalists delete the footage they had taken and recorded the Halk TV team on their phones without permission.
- Halk TV programmer **Şule Aydın** announced on her social media account on 11 October that she had received threats of sexual violence. Aydın shared a video of the harassing content written on the wall of her house and said that she filed a complaint at the Kadıköy Pier Police Station.
- **Muhammed Halitoğlu**, the editor-in-chief of the news website Kars'ın Sesi, was subjected to an armed attack in the evening hours

of 11 October. Harun Çalkın, the brother of AKP Kars MP Adem Çalkın, fired four shots at the journalist on the grounds that he was reporting against him and his family. Çalkın wounded Halitoğlu in the leg and also wounded another person who was nearby. The journalist was hospitalized while the attacker surrendered to the police after the incident.

- Journalists **Heval Önkol**, **Ceylan Şahinli**, **Hevidar Önver** and **Sonay Ödengit** were prevented by the police from covering a march in Diyarbakır on 13 October that was banned by the governor's office. The journalists were subjected to threats and physical violence.
- According to news coverage of 30 October, JinNews reporter **Öznur Değer** was threatened by the person mentioned in the news article and her family members due to her reporting on a blackmail gang. Değer filed a criminal complaint with Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office regarding the threats she was subjected to, and demanded a restraining order against the person mentioned in the news article and his relatives.
- On 28 October, A Spor reporter **Emre Kaplan** was punched while he was covering the Galatasaray-Beşiktaş football match in Istanbul. Kaplan was hospitalized after the attack. Sezgin Gülnar, the driver of Beşiktaş Club President Hasan Arat, who was found to have attacked Kaplan, was arrested. Gülnar was released on 30 October.
- On 4 November, the police raided the offices of **Batman Sonsöz** newspaper, located across the street from the municipality building, while the newspaper was covering the protests in front of the municipality building following the appointment of a trustee to Batman Municipality. Journalist **Serhat Aslan** was briefly detained.
- On 5 November, JinNews reporter **Pelşin Çetinkaya** and Yeni Yaşam newspaper employee **Veysi Akören**, who were covering the protests in Batman, were beaten and dragged on the ground by the police and detained.

- **Veysi Akören**, an employee of Yeni Yaşam newspaper, was attempted to be detained by unidentified people who identified themselves as police officers during the trustee protests in Batman on 8 November. Fellow journalists present during the incident asked the people who dragged Akören on the ground and tried to put him into a car, for identification and the reason for the detention. The journalists intervened and prevented Akören from being detained.
- MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli responded to journalist **Hilal Köylü**'s question "Do you and Erdoğan have a difference of opinion on the resolution process?" by scolding the journalist after his party's group meeting on 12 November. Bahçeli accused Köylü of "fueling discrimination with false information" and told her to "quit the profession."
- **Hakan Sataroğlu**, editor-in-chief and concessionaire of Zeytin Efe newspaper published in Balıkesir, was violently attacked by Burhaniye Municipality Council member Nadir Bayram at a restaurant on 19 November. The CHP council member who punched and kicked the journalist was arrested on 23 November on charges of "intentional injury."
- On 22 November, the Izmir office of **Özgür Gelecek** newspaper was raided by the police. Numerous printed and digital materials were seized during the raid.
- Gazete Duvar reporter **Osman Çaklı** was beaten by the police as he was covering the 25 November march for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in Istanbul, which was banned by the governor's office.
- Devlet Bahçeli threatened **Halk TV** and broadcasters at MHP's 26 November group meeting: "I would like to announce that we have taken note of the specially assigned MHP enemies who have nested on TV screens, the ignorant and arrogant commentators who do not know what they say, what they propose, what kind of method and prescription they offer, and the media organs and media bosses,

especially Halk TV, who create an environment for attacks on the MHP and those who encourage them, and that we will bring them to heel one by one when the time and place comes, and that their apologies for the character assassination will not be accepted."

- On 15 December, during an İYİ Party meeting held in Çorum, a quarrel broke out between the bodyguards of Chairman Müsavat Dervişoğlu and members of the press who wanted to cover the event and the bodyguards attacked the journalists. Çorum Haber newspaper reporter **Volkan Sınayuç**, Haberci19 concessionaire **Cuma Şahin**, İHA reporter **Halil Can Özeker**, Leblebi TV Editor-in-Chief **Erkan Karaca** and Çorum Net TV concessionaire **Engin Erenler** were subjected to swearing, insult and physical attacks by the bodyguards.
- ANHA reporter **Cihan Bilgin** and freelance journalist **Nazım Daştan** were killed in an armed unmanned aerial vehicle attack in northern Syria on 19 December. The attack was allegedly carried out by a Turkish drone.
- On 20 December, a person entered the **Halk TV** building in Istanbul, used abusive language towards the staff and damaged the channel's equipment. Istanbul Police announced that the person, identified with the initials Y.P., was detained.
- On 21 December, a person claiming to be "carrying a grenade" forced his way into the **KRT TV** building in Sarıyer, Istanbul. The person, who breached the security, damaged the key card entry system and went up to the administration floor, was caught and detained by the police and judicial proceedings were initiated on the charge of "damaging property."

PENALTIES BY RTÜK AND BİK

The Radio and Television Supreme Council and the Press Advertisement Agency, which are among the regulatory and supervisory institutions and are required by law to be autonomous and impartial, continued to exert financial pressure on media outlets in the fourth quarter of 2024.

RTÜK Penalties

According to the year-end statistics published by İlhan Taşcı, a member of RTÜK elected from the main opposition CHP quota, the Council continued to exclusively impose fines on pro-opposition broadcasters throughout 2024.

In a post shared on his social media account on 28 December 2024, Taşcı stated that RTÜK imposed a total of 63,050,000 TL administrative fines on broadcasters including Tele 1, Halk TV, Flash Haber, NOW TV (formerly FOX), Sözcü TV and Açık Radyo in 2024, while the total fines imposed on pro-government networks amounted to 18,450,000 TL.

According to the statistics published by Taşcı, NOW TV was fined 10 times, Tele 1 and Flash Haber nine times each, Sözcü TV six times and Halk TV five times in 2024. Açık Radyo, whose broadcast license was revoked by RTÜK in 2024, was also fined three times.

Açık Radyo's broadcast shut down:

Following the revocation of Açık Radyo's terrestrial broadcasting license by RTÜK, the channel's broadcast, which had been continuing for nearly 30 years, was shut down on 16 October 2024.

RTÜK imposed a five-time program suspension penalty and an administrative fine on Açık Radyo in May, citing the phrase "Armenian genocide" in the program "Açık Gazete" that aired on 24 April 2024, and decided to revoke its broadcasting license on

3 July, citing the failure of Açık Radyo to implement the program suspension penalty. Ankara's 21st Administrative Court ruled on 8 July to halt the execution of the program suspension penalty. RTÜK appealed that decision, which was rejected by the Ankara 10th Regional Administrative Court, and the file was sent back to the 21st Administrative Court.

Re-evaluating the case on 8 October 2024, the 21st Administrative Court this time rejected Açık Radyo's request for a stay of execution. Without waiting for the outcome of Açık Radyo's appeal against this decision, RTÜK notified Açık Radyo of its 3 July license revocation decision on 11 October 2024 and thus the terrestrial broadcasting of the radio station was shut down on 16 October.

Broadcasters fined in the last quarter of the year:

According to data compiled by Expression Interrupted, in the three-month period covered by the report, RTÜK imposed administrative fines on broadcasters amounting to **31,459,795 TL** in total on the grounds that certain expressions or footage in news and discussion programs violated the broadcasting principles listed in Article 8 of the Law No. 6112. RTÜK issued the following fines on news broadcasters in this period:

- On 7 November 2024, RTÜK issued an administrative fine of 3 percent of the channel's advertising revenue (467,000 TL) to SZC TV on the grounds that the statements by politician Cemal Enginyurt on the program "Kitabın Ortası" broadcast on 29 October 2024 violated the principle that "Broadcasting services cannot include or encourage broadcasts that discriminate or humiliate individuals based on race, color, language, religion, nationality, gender, disability, political and philosophical opinion, sect or similar reasons."
- On the same date, RTÜK unanimously decided that expressions used by program host Aysin Komitgan in a program broadcast on 21 October 2024 on Bursada Bugün channel violated the principle of "Broadcasting services cannot praise or encourage terrorism,

cannot show terrorist organizations as powerful or justified, cannot reflect the intimidating and frightening characteristics of terrorist organizations" and imposed an administrative fine of 5 percent (13,532 TL) on the broadcaster due to the use of the phrase "may his place be in heaven" in the announcement of Fethullah Gülen's death.

- At the same meeting, NOW TV was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (10,418,121 TL) for the comments made by news anchor Selçuk Tepeli about the appointment of trustees to the municipalities of Mardin, Batman and Halfeti during the prime time news, broadcast on 4 November 2024, on the grounds that the comments violated the principle of "Broadcasting services must be based on the principles of impartiality, reality and accuracy and must not prevent the free formation of opinions in society ... exaggerated sound and image, effects and music other than natural sound cannot be included in the presentation of the news."
- At the same meeting, Halk TV was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (489,640 TL) for violating the principle of "Broadcasting services cannot contain defamatory, humiliating or slanderous statements that humiliate individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism" in the dialogues on the political agenda in the discussion program "Açıkça" that aired on 31 October 2024.
- At the same meeting, RTÜK issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (135,860 TL) to TELE 1, claiming that statements used by Emre Kongar and Merdan Yanardağ in the program "18 Dakika," which aired on 4 November 2024, violated the principle of "Broadcasting services cannot contain defamatory, insulting or slanderous statements that humiliate individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism."
- At the same meeting, RTÜK decided to impose administrative fines ranging from 135,860 TL to 11,883,211 TL, totaling 15,456,532 TL on 12 broadcasters (Kanal 3, tv100, Halk TV, Tele 1, Beyaz TV, Meltem TV, akit tv, SZC, Flash Haber, Show TV, TGRT Haber, CNN Türk) on the grounds that their news broadcasts on 23 and 24

October violated the broadcast ban issued by a court regarding the 23 October attack on the TAI facilities in Ankara.

- On 27 November 2024, RTÜK issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (135,860 TL) to Flash Haber on the grounds that expressions used by anchor Can Ataklı during the 14 November 2024 episode of the channel's prime time news show violated the principles of "Broadcasting services cannot contain statements that humiliate, insult or slander individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism" and "Turkish language must be used correctly, beautifully and comprehensibly without disrupting its characteristics and rules; no use of vulgar and slang can be included."
- At the same meeting, Flash Haber was issued a 3 percent administrative fine (135,860 TL) on the grounds that some expressions by moderator Fatih Ertürk in the 7 and 9 October episodes of the program "Başkentte Gündem" violated the principle that "Broadcasting services cannot include and encourage broadcasts that discriminate and humiliate individuals based on race, color, language, religion, nationality, gender, disability, political and philosophical thought, sect and similar reasons."
- Also on 27 November, SZC TV was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (633,651 TL) on the grounds that the comments and allegations about the "Yenidoğan gang" in the program "Arena" broadcast on 13 November 2024 violated the principle of "Broadcasting principles must be based on the principles of impartiality, reality and accuracy and must not prevent the free formation of opinions in society; news that can be investigated within the framework of press ethical principles cannot be broadcast without investigating or verifying its accuracy."
- At the same meeting, Halk TV was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (557,412 TL) for violating the principle of "Broadcasting services must be based on the principles of impartiality, truth and accuracy and must not prevent the free formation of opinions in society; news that can be investigated within the framework of

press ethical principles cannot be broadcast without investigating or verifying its accuracy” for the allegations made by journalist İsmail Saymaz on the program “Rota” on 20 November 2024.

- At the same meeting, Tele 1 was issued an administrative fine of 135,860 TL on the grounds that the comments anchor Musa Özüğurlu made about the pro-government Sabah newspaper and some of its columnists in the program “Sabah Pusulası” dated 20 November 2024 violated the principle of “Broadcasting services cannot be contrary to the principle of respect for human dignity, cannot contain statements that humiliate, degrade or slander individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism.”
- On 27 December 2024, RTÜK imposed three separate administrative fines on SZC TV for news and discussion programs broadcast on different dates. The Council fined the channel 703,866 TL for the expressions used about Türk-İş President Ergün Atalay in the prime time news show broadcast on 3 December and the program “Haber Saati” broadcast on 9 December; 703,866 TL for the allegations against Osman Gökçek in the program “Haber Saati” that aired on 17 December; and 633,651 TL for the dialogues about the “Yenidoğan gang” in the program “Arena” that aired on 27 November, for a total of 2,041,383 TL.
- Again on 27 December, Halk TV was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent (431,504 TL) for violating the principle of “Broadcasting services must be based on the principles of impartiality, truthfulness and accuracy and must not prevent the free formation of opinions in society; news that can be investigated within the framework of press ethical principles cannot be broadcast without investigating or verifying its accuracy” for the allegations against Osman Gökçek in the program “Kayda Geçsin” broadcast on 17 December 2024.
- At the same meeting, Tele 1 was imposed two separate administrative fines of 3 percent for violating the principle that “Broadcasting services cannot contain defamatory, humiliating or

slanderous statements that humiliate individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism." The channel was fined 135,860 TL for the political comments made by Editor-in-Chief Merdan Yanardağ in the program "Forum Haftasonu" dated 8 December 2024, and 135,860 TL for journalist Miyase İlknur's comments about the statements of Minister of Education Yusuf Tekin in the program "Söz Bizde" which aired 21 November 2024, for a total administrative fine of 271,720 TL.

- At the same meeting, Flash Haber was issued an administrative fine of 3 percent of its revenues (135,860 TL) on the grounds that some of the statements made by the program guests in the episodes of the program "Başkentte Gündem" that aired on 2 and 3 December 2024 violated the principle of "Broadcasting services cannot contain statements that humiliate, insult or slander individuals or organizations beyond the limits of criticism."

BiK Penalties

Evrensel newspaper's right to publish public advertisements and announcements was permanently revoked by the BiK in 2022 on the grounds of "bulk buying," "corporate subscriptions" and "irregularities in bookkeeping," and its appeal against the decision at the regional administrative court was rejected in early 2024. The public advertisement embargo imposed on Yeni Asya newspaper entered its fifth year in 2024. In the fourth quarter of the year, these two newspapers continued to be prevented from publishing public advertisements and announcements.

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