

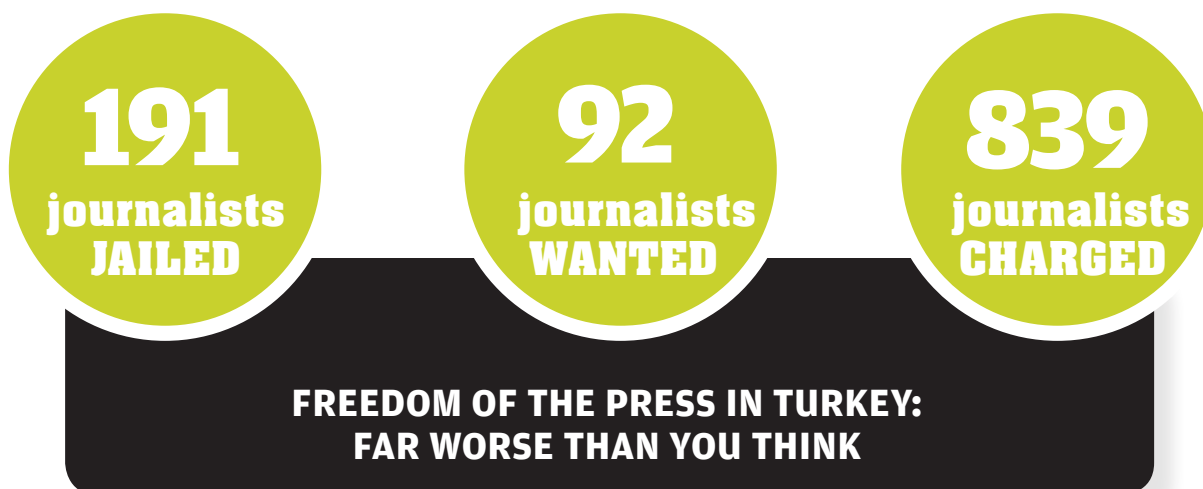


FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN TURKEY: **FAR WORSE THAN YOU THINK**

The Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is a newly launched advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms with a special focus on Turkey, a nation of 80 million that is facing significant backsliding in its parliamentary democracy under its autocratic leaders.

SCF, a non-profit organization, was set up by a group of journalists who have been forced to live in self-exile in Sweden against the backdrop of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey .

SCF is committed to serving as a reference source by providing a broader picture of rights violations in Turkey, monitoring daily developments on fact-based investigative journalism and documenting individual cases of the infringement of fundamental rights. The founders of SCF are top-notch journalists who had managed national dailies in Turkey and worked for leading media outlets before they were forced to leave. They have the expertise, human resources and network on the ground to track events in Turkey despite serious challenges.



IMPRISONMENT, EXILE AND CENSORSHIP

This report by the Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is about journalists who were arrested, convicted, exiled or otherwise faced harassment in Turkey's abusive criminal justice system. The main focus is naturally on those who have lost their freedom and are behind bars, although many others suffer in one way or another from the relentless persecution perpetrated by the Turkish government against critical, independent and opposition journalists.

Concrete information, confirmed by the national/international press and human rights organizations, indicates that Turkey is not a free country in terms of freedom of the press.¹ Turkey currently has the highest number of journalists in jail worldwide. More than half the journalists who are in prison around the world are in Turkey.²

This is an effort to attract the attention of the Turkish and world public to the journalists who have been deprived of their freedom. It confirms, complements and expands research done by other press freedom advocacy and watchdog organizations.

1] Reporters without Borders-2016 World Press Freedom Index

<https://rsf.org/en/turkey>

Freedom House-Freedom in the World 2016 report

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/turkey>

2] Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) 2016 prison census as of December 1, 2016 & Stockholm Center for Freedom

There are obvious discrepancies between the numbers and names of jailed journalists as prepared by the press and human rights monitoring organizations. These differences can be attributed to diverse methodologies utilized by these organizations. At the same time, access to correct and confirmed data is further hindered given that numerous independent and critical media outlets have been shut down by the Turkish government; there has been pressure on correspondents and experts working in the field; and the authorities have refrained from informing the public of the operations launched against the media in recent months. The news and information flow regarding correspondents and media workers has been rather limited except in the case of several public figures.

Families and colleagues of journalists are increasingly concerned about the lack of information disclosed by the authorities. This scarcity of information is further exacerbated by the fact that jailed journalists are faced with the challenge of finding lawyers to represent them since some bar associations refuse to provide certain suspects with lawyers despite clear provisions in the Code on Criminal Procedure (CMK) and the fact that some lawyers avoid disclosing information about their clients in an effort to protect them. Restrictions on access to case files and a lack of transparency in proceedings are other challenges.

Nevertheless, SCF has been able to obtain updated information about the number of arrested and convicted journalists thanks to phone interviews, face-to-face meetings with sources and an analysis of lists drawn up by reputable media organizations and human rights groups. There were 191 press members in jail as of Jan. 26, 2017. (Twenty-nine former employees of state-run broadcasting network TRT were arrested on Dec. 29, 2016. SCF has confirmed only two journalists' names and charges leveled by the Ankara Public Prosecutor's Office and have not added the remaining 27 to its list because their names have not been released to the public.) Detention warrants have been issued for 92 journalists.

In addition to these, around 100 journalists were detained in the wake of an attempted coup on July 15, 2016 before they were released under judicial supervision or after police interrogation. Last year, 839 journalists appeared in court simply for reporting the news, according to a new report released by the Journalists Association of Turkey (TGC)³ These figures are much higher than

3] Gazeteciler için 2016 zorlu geçti

<http://www.tgc.org.tr/32-gundem/419-6-ayda-24-ulkede-71-gazeteci-olduruldu.html>

the numbers reported thus far and indicate that the problematic situation of freedom of the press in Turkey is far worse than many people think. It should be noted that this figure may change at any moment due to ongoing police raids and detentions. For these challenges, SCF acknowledges that despite its best efforts, there might be certain shortcomings and errors in its lists.

Virtually all of the journalists under arrest were charged with “membership in a terrorist organization,” “spreading terrorist propaganda,” “attempting to overthrow the current government” or “espionage.”

Of the journalists and media workers in jail, more than 85 percent of them were taken into custody and arrested after the attempted coup of July 15. Virtually all of the journalists under arrest were charged with “membership in a terrorist organization,” “spreading terrorist propaganda,” “attempting to overthrow the current government” or “espionage.” The practices of silencing journalists through the abuse of the criminal justice system and expanding the scope of the definition of terrorism to use it against defendants are among the

human rights violations frequently cited in human rights reports as well as in documents from the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).⁴

This report gives ~~limited emphasis to human rights violations suffered by~~ jailed journalists. Claims about long periods of detention, isolation, solitary confinement, physical and psychological torture, inadequate healthcare services, restrictions on visitors, overcrowded cells and the limited or unsatisfactory availability of books are often brought to the agenda by official visitors and relatives of jailed journalists.

4] European Commission Turkey 2016 Report

http://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_turkey.pdf

(UN The Human Rights Committee-Periodic report on Turkey) Published 31 October 2016
<http://www.ohchr.org>

Democratic governments must ensure media freedom and journalists’ safety
<http://www.osce.org/fom/255546>

Council of Europe-Resolution 2141 (2017)1Attacks against journalists and media freedom in Europe

<http://semantic-pace.net/tools/pdf.aspx?doc=aHR0cDovL2Fzc2VtYmx5LmNvZS5pbmQvbncveG1sL1hSZWYvWDJILURXLWV4dHIuYXNwP2ZpbGVpZD0yMzQwMCZsYW5n-PUVO&xsl=aHR0cDovL3NlbWFudGljcGFjZS5uZXQvWHNsdc9QZGYvWFJlZi1XRC1B-VC1YTUwyUERGLnhzbA==&xsltparams=ZmlsZWlkPTIzNDAw>

Another problem in terms of media freedoms is the case of journalists for whom detention warrants were issued or who were forced to flee the country and live in exile. Interviews with these journalists revealed that they complain about serious financial hardship, pressure on their family members and relatives in Turkey, denial of consular services at Turkish embassies and consulates, stigmatization by pro-government media outlets, uncertainty of their legal status in their respective countries and their inability to engage in their profession. Some of these journalists indicated that they were compelled to conceal themselves for reasons of safety in their countries of asylum.

The journalists working in the few remaining independent and critical media organizations in Turkey are faced with death threats, arrest, violence, hate speech, discrimination, profiling and censorship. There are numerous ongoing criminal cases against these journalists.

The number of media organizations seized and shut down by the government has reached 189. This is indicative of not only an enormous blow to the functioning of media scrutiny on behalf of the public, but also widespread unemployment across the media landscape. Due to the ongoing anti-democratic pressures, more than 30 percent of journalists in the media sector have lost their jobs.⁵ Many journalists and media workers who have been blacklisted by the government are not even able to find jobs in non-media sectors. If they happen to find any employment, these journalists tend to work at jobs where they cannot use their education and professional achievements, unable to draw on their intellectual capabilities. On the other hand, courts pass controversial seizure orders on the assets of journalists in prison or in exile, further victimizing journalists and their families.

SCF is seriously concerned that 2017 might be worse in terms of fundamental rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of the press and freedom of expression, if President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government do not dispense with their anti-democratic actions and reverse authoritarian policies that are incompatible with universal values. Constitutional amendments that further empower the office of the presidency with unchecked powers including abolishing the parliament might have catastrophic effects on freedom of the press and expression.

5] Gazetecilerin üçte biri işsiz kaldı
<http://www.tgc.org.tr/18-slider/1087-gazetecilerin-ucte-biri-issiz-kaldi.html>



Ayşenur Arslan



Ayşenur Parıldak

THE COUNTRY OF AYŞENURS

Veteran journalist Ayşenur Arslan, known for her Kemalist views, announced that she had decided not to continue with her TV program in an effort to draw attention to jailed journalists immediately after her regular program host, Hüsni Mahalli, another journalist, was arrested on charges of insulting the president. “I won’t pretend that everything is normal, given the current state of affairs in Turkey,” said the 66-year-old veteran journalist⁶ “Sometimes silence is the strongest reaction. I am screaming by keeping silent.”

One of Ayşenur Arslan’s colleagues for whom she quit her TV program in protest of their deprivation of freedom is her namesake, who is much younger than her. Ayşenur Parıldak, who has embraced a worldview that completely contrasts with that of Arslan, has been in prison since Aug. 11, 2016. The 26-year-old journalist is accused of being a member of a terrorist organization. Parıldak was kept in custody for eight days before she was arrested on charges of having worked at the Zaman newspaper, the highest circulating national daily in Turkey, which was first seized in March 2016 and then shut down by the government in July 2016; of having an account at Bank Asya for the payment of her monthly salary; and of being followed on Twitter by a government insider and whistleblower named @fuatavni.


Most recently, Parıldak came to the agenda when she sent a letter from

6] Ayşenur Arslan veda etti
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bAkaQ8dg0M

prison to the Cumhuriyet newspaper.⁷ In her letter Parıldak complained that she had been battered and sexually harassed. “I was interrogated round the clock for eight days. The interrogators were drunk and they boasted of being so. I am afraid I will be forsaken here,” she wrote in her letter. The Justice Ministry denied her allegations in a statement.⁸

The government argues that the number of arrested and convicted journalists is not as high as claimed. A newly enacted cover-up tactic is revoking the government-issued press accreditation cards of arrested journalists and then claiming they are not journalists at all. Holding a press card issued by the government is the basic criterion for the Justice Ministry to define a person as a journalist. In 2016 the Prime Ministry canceled 780 press cards, according to the Turkish Journalists Association. With newly introduced

regulations, professional organizations were left completely outside the process of issuing of press cards, which are now issued by the public authorities.⁹



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Despite these developments, President Erdoğan repeatedly maintained that there is no country more advanced than Turkey in terms of rights and freedoms.¹⁰ He said on several occasions that all jailed journalists are terrorists and that they are not imprisoned for journalistic work. The Turkish

government stuck to the same story line and repeated it in international fora while defending its record. A Turkish diplomat, Umut Deniz, even told the UN back in September 2016 that not a single journalist has been detained or convicted because of their journalistic work.

In May of 2016, Adana deputy Meral Daniş Beştaş submitted a question in Parliament requesting that Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ provide the number

7] ‘Darp edildim, tacize uğradım’

http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/610115/_Darp_edildim__tacize_ugradim_.html

8] Basın Açıklaması (06.10.2016)

<http://www.basin.adalet.gov.tr/BasinAciklamasi/basin-aciklamasi-06102016>

9] Freedom of the Press 2016-Turkey

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2016/turkey>

10] Erdoğan: “Hak ve özgürlükler bakımından Türkiye’den daha ileri bir ülke yoktur

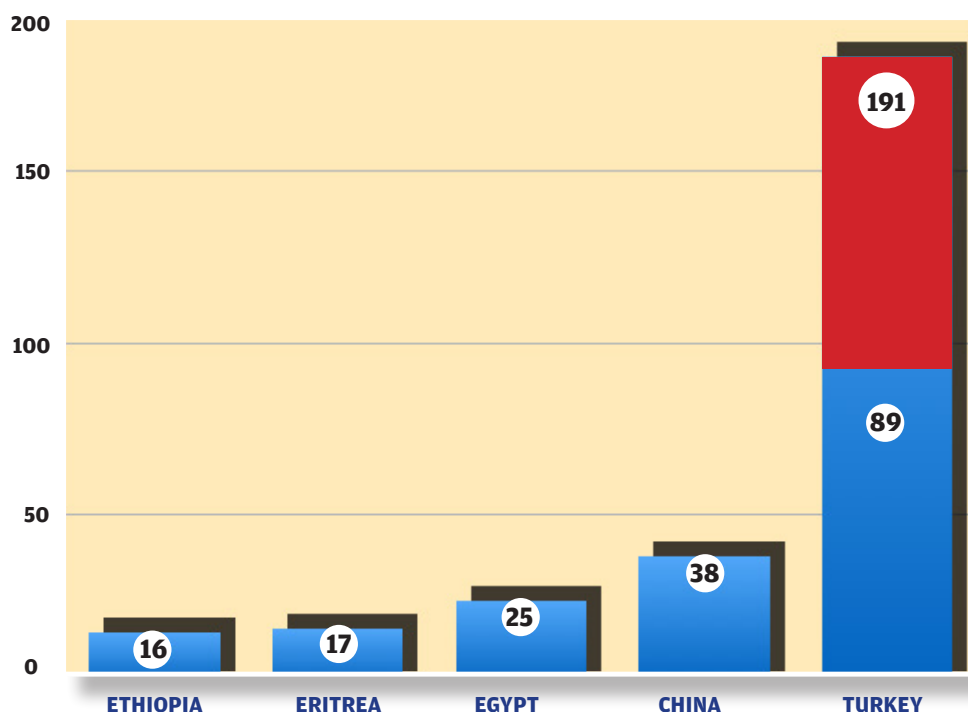
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rTxPPp9Oz0>

of journalists in prison. Responding to the question seven months later, Bozdağ announced that there were only three journalists in prison as of May. Minister Bozdağ argued that it is impossible to determine the exact number of journalists in prison. He maintained that inmates themselves fill in information on forms and that it is not possible to check whether they are declaring their true professions.¹¹

As a result of extended efforts and intensive communication with local contacts, SCF was able to obtain updated information on the number of jailed journalists in Turkey. The figures were expanded using the lists drawn up by national and international organizations, and the SCF determined that 191 journalists and media workers were arrested or penalized for their journalistic activities. (ANNEX 1)

WORST JAILERS OF JOURNALISTS

Turkey currently has the highest number of journalists in jail worldwide. More than half the journalists who are in prison around the world are in Turkey. Turkey is followed by China with 38 journalists behind bars and Egypt with 25.



NUMBERS OF JOURNALISTS IN JAIL.

(SOURCE: Blue columns show figures appearing in CPJ's "2016 prison census," as of December 1, 2016; Turkey's figures, updated by SCF, are shown in red.)

11] <http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/7/7-5136sgc.pdf>

WHO IS IN PRISON?

Through painstaking research, SCF found that virtually all the jailed journalists were arrested and/or convicted for alleged terrorism or related charges. Of 191 arrestees and convicts, 189 are accused of membership in a terrorist organization and disseminating terrorist propaganda.

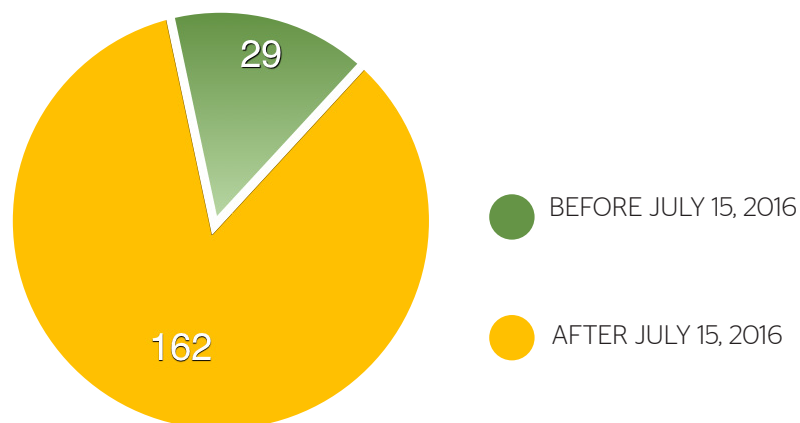
The majority of the arrested and convicted journalists in prison are those who are associated with Hizmet, a civic movement inspired by the teachings of US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen and which focuses on science education, volunteerism, philanthropic activity, charitable endeavors and interfaith dialogue. The government refers to the Hizmet movement as a terrorist organization (namely, the Gülenist Terror Group, or FETÖ). It accuses the Hizmet movement of being behind the failed coup of July 15. Mr. Gülen, however, rejects the accusations and has called for an independent international commission to be set up to investigate the failed coup. The Turkish government has failed to present any direct evidence linking the cleric to the abortive coup.

Since a state of emergency was declared immediately after July 15, 88,642 people have been taken into custody. A total of 42,452 were arrested and sent to prison, while 135,356 civil servants were dismissed.¹² Among them are 6,986 academics and 3,843 judges and prosecutors.¹³ One day after the failed coup, 2,854 judges and prosecutors were detained.¹⁴ This swift decision lends credence to the claim that these people had been profiled long before the attempted coup. The subordination of the judiciary and Parliament to the government has effectively done away with judicial and legislative oversight of the actions of the executive branch, leaving well over 100,000 people in Turkey without an effective remedy. The rule of law has apparently been

12] Labor minister says 135,356 purged from state bodies over Gülen links
<https://www.turkishminute.com/2017/01/10/labor-minister-says-135356-purged-state-bodies-gulen-links/>

13] <http://turkeypurge.com> -A monitoring group tracking the post-coup purge

14] Hakkında gözaltı kararı olan hakim ve savcı sayısı 2 bin 854'e ulaştı
<http://aa.com.tr/tr/15-temmuz-darbe-girisimi/hakkinda-gozalti-karari-olan-hakim-ve-savci-sayisi-2-bin-854e-ulasti/610554>



162 JOURNALISTS ARRESTED AFTER JULY 15, 2016

suspended and the courts are neither independent nor impartial.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye, called Turkish government's great purge as a violation of standards of international human rights law.¹⁵

The opposition parties point out that the Penal Courts of Peace, introduced in 2014 to be "project courts," as President Erdoğan put it, have facilitated the creation of a judiciary controlled by the government to stifle the right to dissent and to muzzle critics. Decisions that were considered to be punishing journalists and pressuring media outlets were handed down by these controversial courts in 2016.¹⁶ The government exerts immense pressure on the judiciary through its control of a key judicial council, the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK), a body that decides on the promotion, dismissal, reassignment and disciplinary action for judges and prosecutors in Turkey.

The journalists in prison come from diverse ideological backgrounds, but they have at least one thing in common: a critical stance against the government. Almost all of them are accused of being associated with one or more organizations deemed terrorist by the government.

Journalists who had worked for media outlets that were affiliated with the Hizmet movement are accused of "membership in a terrorist organization," "disseminating propaganda for a terrorist organization" and "attempting to overthrow the government of the Republic of Turkey." All 124 journalists who were charged with

15] Freedom of expression: UN and OSCE experts deplore crackdown on journalists and media outlets in Turkey
<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20319&LangID=E>

16] 'Proje Mahkeme'lere Tepki Çığ Gibi: "Güçlünün Sopası Oldular"
<http://www.baroturk.com/proje-mahkemelere-tepki-cig-gibi-guclunun-sopasi-oldular-15690h.htm>

terrorism and complicity in the coup d'état by way of working with these media outlets were arrested.

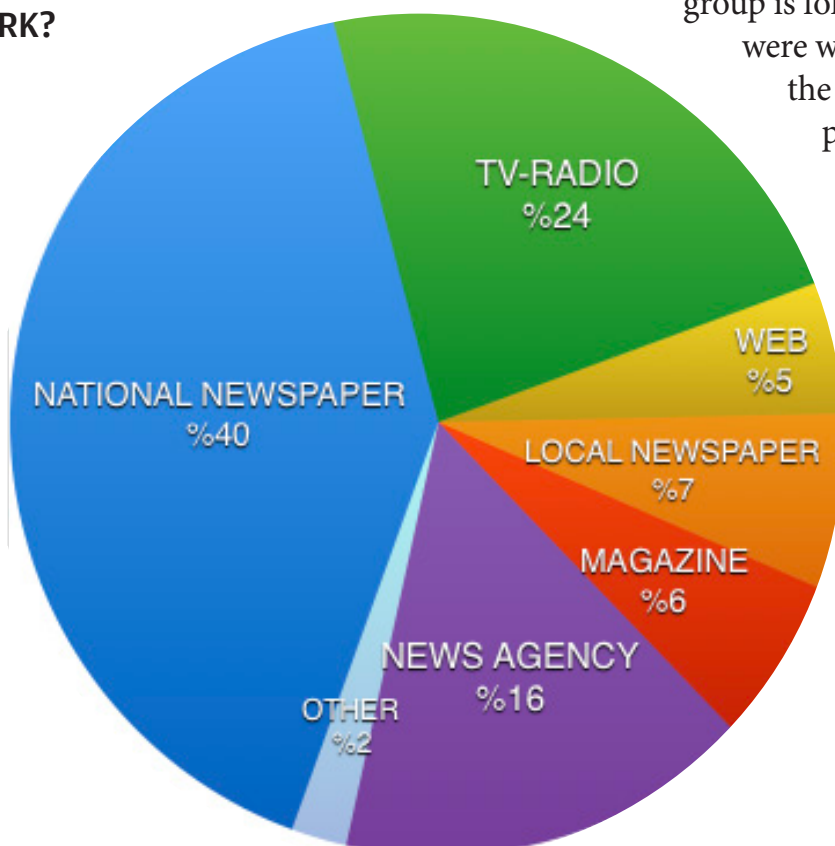
Forty-four arrested or convicted journalists in prison were charged with membership in the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)/Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK).

Eleven media members from the center-left Cumhuriyet newspaper were arrested on charges of committing crimes on behalf of both the Hizmet movement and the PKK/KCK. Ahmet Şık is also accused of disseminating terrorist propaganda for the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) as well.

Eighty-eight percent of journalists in prison were incarcerated after the attempted coup of July 15. The number of journalists and media workers who were in prison before July 15 was 29. This significant change is proof that the pressures against the media skyrocketed in the wake of the failed coup, which was described by Erdoğan as a "blessing from God."

A majority of journalists surveyed by SCF were working for national newspapers (77 people). They were followed by those who were employed at radio and TV stations (45 people). This group consists largely of former employees of the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). This group is followed by 30 media members who were working for news agencies. Twelve of the jailed journalists were working for periodicals.

WHERE DO THEY WORK?



Currently, there are 15 women journalists, arrested or convicted, in Turkish prisons. Virtually all of these journalists were jailed after July 15.

A significant portion of the 191 media members in prison who were arrested or convicted in connection with their journalistic activities are correspondents and media workers. Twenty people who were arrested or convicted in

connection with media activities are managers or other administrative staff who were working at media outlets.

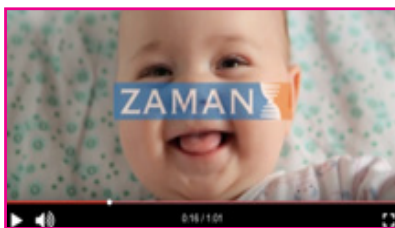
The Turkish government goes after not only journalists but also publishers and media workers to disrupt the operation of critical outlets, often leading to subsequent government takeover and in most cases shutdown.

Therefore, SCF treats the case of media workers and managers who were confirmed to have been detained or arrested in connection with the institutions or organizations for which they were working as falling under the category of serious media freedom violations, and like other international press organizations and human rights organizations, includes their names in its lists.

For example, 60-year-old Tahsin Kürklü, who was working as a driver for the Cihan news agency, was taken into custody on charges of serving as a driver for Ekrem Dumanlı, the former editor-in-chief of the Zaman newspaper, who was arrested for membership in a terrorist organization. In his testimony Kürklü indicated that he had never worked as a driver for Dumanlı, who confirmed Kürklü's statement from his Twitter account.

Furthermore, newspaper distributors Arap Turan and Ferit Toprak, who had been detained during a police raid on Azadiya Welat, which was later shut down by the government, were arrested on charges of membership in a terrorist organization.

Şenol Buran, in charge of managing the canteen for the Cumhuriyet newspaper, was arrested on charges of insulting President Erdoğan on Dec. 24, 2016 upon a police officer's statement to that effect. The court argued that there was a strong suspicion that Buran had committed the crime of insulting the president and that he was very likely to exert pressure on the witnesses who reported him to the authorities. Buran was released one week later upon the objection of the daily's lawyers.



Yakup Şimşek, the brand marketing manager of the Zaman newspaper, was arrested on Aug. 6, 2016 on charges of “sending a subliminal message for a coup d’état” [there is no such provision in Turkish Penal Code] in a TV commercial aired by the paper approximately nine months before the failed coup. Şimşek was accused by the court of “attempting to change the constitutional order” and “sending a message to the armed wing of the alleged organization.”

INHUMANE TREATMENT AND PRISON CONDITIONS

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer published a preliminary report of the investigation he conducted in Turkey between Nov. 27 and Dec. 2, 2016. Noting that they had the impression that widespread torture and ill treatment were taking place in Turkey, the UN rapporteur pointed out that inmates who were affiliated with the Hizmet movement refrained from filing complaints, fearing that their relatives would be harmed or that their complaints would go unanswered.¹⁷

Azadiya Welat reporter Adnan Kümek, who was detained in Bitlis on Sept. 27, 2016, stated that he had been tortured by the police in a derelict building for two days. Kümek indicated that the police melted his press card and let the molten plastic drip on his legs.


İbrahim Karayegen, a former editor for the Zaman and Yeni Hayat newspapers, was detained on July 16, 2016, but his whereabouts were long kept secret from his family and the public. His colleagues posted social media messages expressing concern for his safety, and on Aug. 25, 2016, the authorities announced that Karayegen had been arrested and was being held in Silivri Prison.

On Oct. 11, 2016, the lawyers for Ercan Gün, the news director for Fox TV, submitted a complaint to the court claiming that a search conducted with a metal detector before their client was taken to the hospital did not turn up anything, yet he was subjected to an intrusive search by hand that amounted to sexual harassment. When Gün objected, he was called a traitor by the guards. Later, they stated that Gün was punished by being “deprived of receiving visitors” for filing an objection to the harassment, and they raised an objection to this punishment as well.

17] BM Raportörü Melzer: 15 Temmuz sonrası yaygın işkence tanıklığı var
<http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-38188498>

It is frequently asserted that periods of detention, which were extended to up to 30 days under the post-coup state of emergency, lead to numerous grievances. As reported by the relatives of inmates, journalists were kept for up to 30 days in crowded cells at the police station without sufficient healthcare, hygiene or nutrition in what amounts to punishment and ill-treatment. Moreover, despite the fact that some journalists voluntarily surrendered themselves to the police after learning about warrants issued for their detention, they were handcuffed in violation of established procedures that stipulate only violent criminals must be handcuffed. SCF regards these practices as physical and psychological torture.

The living conditions of jailed journalists have worsened all the more since the number of inmates has reached a record high and the prisons are woefully overcrowded. The imprisonment conditions for journalists who are forced to stay in crowded cells vary depending on prison type and the provinces where these prisons are located. Some journalists indicate that they have to share a cell with three or four people although it was designed to hold only two inmates.



Jailed journalists are prohibited from sending or receiving letters under the state of emergency

As reported by relatives of jailed journalists and members of parliament visiting prisons, the restrictions on visitors have amounted to systematic psychological torture. These restrictions, imposed under the pretext of the state of emergency, vary from one prison to another. It is reported that visitations could be decreased from once a month to once every two months. Moreover, the jailed journalists are deprived of their right to visitation by three friends in addition to their closest relatives.

Also, serious restrictions have been imposed on the meetings between arrested or convicted journalists and their lawyers. Although the duration of such meetings is unlimited under the law, it has been reduced to one hour, once a week. Moreover, lawyer-client privilege has been abolished. Thus, a guard attends the inmate-attorney meetings, which are also videotaped.

Jailed journalists complain about the lack of books or library facilities or the inadequacy of existing ones. Many are not provided with access to computers so that they can keep writing from their jail cell or prepare their legal defense. They are not allowed to bring books into prison, and they must content themselves with whatever prison libraries can provide. They indicate that their demands for books to read can hardly be fulfilled due to the insufficient number, type and quality of books available.

Furthermore, jailed journalists are prohibited from sending letters to their relatives or receiving letters from them under the state of emergency. Main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) deputy Utku Çakırözer reported that the inmates regard this arbitrary practice as psychological torture.¹⁸

Another major problem for the jailed journalists is the inadequacy of healthcare services. Conditions in prison also have an adverse effect on older journalists or those with chronic diseases.

It is alleged that Ahmet Gök, the Ankara representative of the Ekmek ve Adalet magazine, who was convicted of membership in the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), has not been released despite a medical certificate showing that he suffers from the Wernicke–Korsakoff syndrome. The Justice Ministry maintains that Gök was jailed for non-journalistic activities and that he was involved in a number of violent terrorist acts. However, if there is a medical certificate as is claimed by his lawyers, Gök must be released immediately in accordance with the established procedures for the prison system in Turkey.

Likewise, Emre Soncan, who was arrested for being a reporter with the Zaman newspaper, has a serious kidney disease. His relatives are concerned about Soncan's health.

18] CHP'li Çakırözer: Aslı Erdoğan'ın felç riski, Şahin Alpay'ın 11 hastalığı var <http://www.diken.com.tr/chpli-cakirozer-asli-erdoganin-felc-riski-sahin-alpay-in-11-hastaligi-var/>

Journalist Mustafa Ünal's son stated that despite repeated requests by his imprisoned father, Ünal was not taken to a hospital until six days after he contracted shingles and the medication prescribed for Ünal by the doctor was not delivered to him.

Zaman columnist Şahin Alpay reportedly has 11 chronic disorders. Journalist and writer Ali Bulaç has heart disease and diabetes. The people who visited Ahmet Turan Alkan in prison reported that he is suffering from extreme weight loss.

The condition of journalist Hüsni Mahalli, who suffers from MS (multiple sclerosis) and was arrested and sent to prison on Dec. 15, 2016, worsened, and he was taken to the Cerrahpaşa Hospital. He was released on Jan. 20, 2016. An indictment prepared by İstanbul Public Prosecutor Can Tuncay seeks a jail sentence of up to seven years for him on charges of insulting President Erdoğan.



It is frequently reported that jailed journalists experience problems in referrals to hospitals as they are taken to a hospital but sent back to prison without being examined by a physician, and they have to wait their turn for the next referral. Also, jailed journalists are reportedly handcuffed during hospital transfers. Some journalists refrain from going to the hospital although they are sick, as reported by their families, because they do not want to go through the ordeal that amounts to psychological torture. Journalist Şahin Alpay told

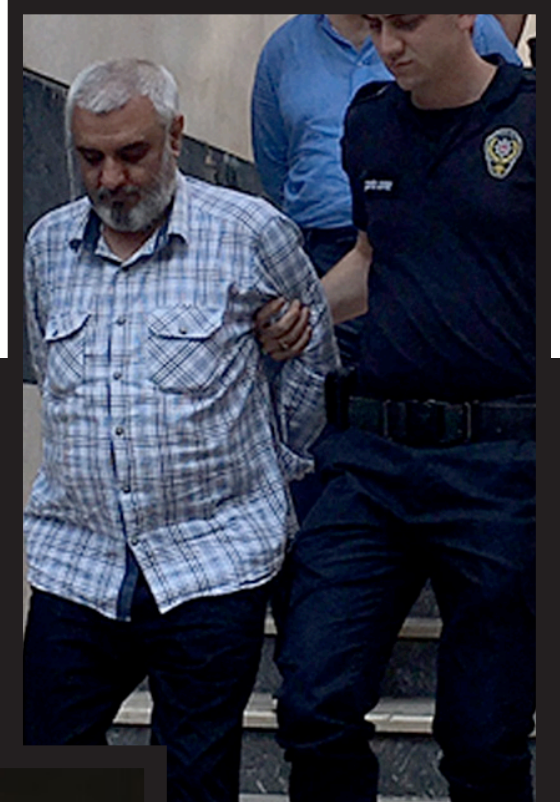
the CHP delegation that visited him: “They handcuff my both hands while taking me to the hospital. Two people take my arms on the way to the hospital to denigrate me.

19

19] Ali Bulaç, Ahmet Altan, Sabuncu, Taş, Aksoy, Gürsel, Habip Güler, A.Turan Alkan, CHP heyetine konuştu
<http://www.tr724.com/ali-bulac-ahmet-altan-sabuncu-tas-aksoy-kadri-gursel-habip-guler-ahmet-turan-alkan-chp-heyetine-konustu/>

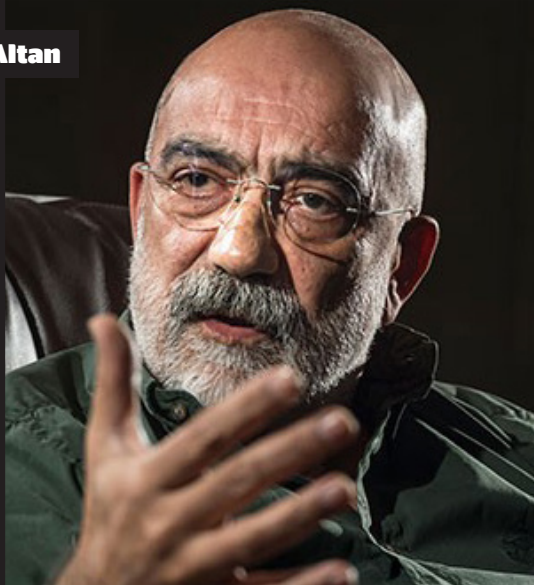


Nazlı Ilıcak



Ali Bulç

Ahmet Altan



During talks with their family members, we learned that many young journalists have started to take pills for depression.

SCF is deeply concerned that lengthy detentions and prison conditions may lead to new psychological disorders for the journalists, with only a few exceptions, who are awaiting their indictment and referral to court.

LIFE IN EXILE

Arrested or convicted journalists in prison aside, the number of journalists for whom detention warrants have been issued is quite high. As of Jan. 1, 2017, 101 media members face the risk of being detained by the police when they get caught. We have learned that some of them traveled abroad before July 15 by normal means, while others are in hiding or have left the country through illegal methods, risking their lives in the process. The whereabouts of numerous journalists are not known.

In interviews SCF conducted with journalists for whom detention warrants were issued and their family members, they said they are struggling with serious problems.

Personal safety was identified as the biggest risk faced by journalists who try to survive abroad due to the warrants of detention issued for them. These journalists noted that pro-government media outlets are constantly putting a bull's-eye on them and that they receive serious threats from the Turkish diaspora in particular. The journalists in exile said they receive threatening messages from the social media accounts of people who are known to be members of pro-AKP associations. They take smear campaigns by pro-government media outlets and social media accounts linked to the government seriously, because their threats often materialize or public prosecutors act on their allegations. Journalists further indicated that Turkish authorities abroad are profiling, surveilling and gathering information about them.

At a panel discussion in Zürich, Switzerland, journalist Can Dündar, for whom there is a detention warrant in force, was harassed by pro-Erdoğan Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) President Murat Şahin Can, who said to Dündar, “Turkish people know who you are: a vile traitor.” Following the ensuing disturbance, security guards had to remove Dündar. Dündar has been receiving severe criticism and insults from President Erdoğan and pro-government media outlets. “He will pay a heavy price [for reporting on the incident]. I will not let him go [unpunished]”²⁰ Erdoğan had

20] Erdoğan: Can Dündar ağır bedel ödeyecek öyle bırakmam onu
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4482VsR3Vrc>

said, referring to Dündar's news story on an illegal arms shipment to Syrian rebels. Pro-government columnist Cem Küçük had argued on a live TV program that the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) should assassinate Dündar.²¹ Later, he had referred to Dündar as a "German dog" for having been received by the German president.²² Before he was forced to leave Turkey, Dündar survived an armed attack, on May 6, 2016, while he was waiting in front of the Çağlayan Courthouse for a hearing.²³

Likewise, Today's Zaman Ankara Representative Abdullah Bozkurt was targeted by pro-government media outlets in the wake of the assassination of the Russian ambassador in Ankara on Dec. 19, 2016. The pro-government media outlets and social media figures published a forged document claiming that the assassin was on leave on July 15, the day of the failed coup, and that he stayed at Bozkurt's house. Although Bozkurt posted an official document proving that the address on the forged document had nothing to do with his real address, the pro-government media outlets continued to put forward the same argument. On Dec. 23, 2016, the police raided the house of Bozkurt's mother in Bandırma. After searching the house, the police took Bozkurt's 79-year-old-mother Semiha Bozkurt to the police station and interrogated her. Bozkurt told SCF that he was targeted because he, as a journalist, has long been covering violent radical Islamist groups and frequently reported on the government's tolerance of these groups.

In September of last year, the Sabah newspaper published several news stories that were later covered by other pro-government papers depicting the places where exiled journalists live abroad along with photos and information on their private lives. These media outlets also posted a video showing Ekrem Dumanlı, the former editor-in-chief of the Zaman newspaper, and his wife at a shopping center in the United States.

Following these news stories, these journalists and their families reportedly received many death threats and calls for their assassination. Of these exiled

21] Cem Küçük: MİT TIR'ları olayı ABD'de yaşansaydı CIA o muhabirleri öldürürdü
<http://haber.sol.org.tr/medya/cem-kucuk-mit-tirlari-olayi-abdde-yasansaydi-cia-o-muhabirleri-oldururdu-129833>

22] Cem Küçük: Can Dündar'ın başına ödül konulacak
<http://beyazgazete.com/video/webtv/guncel-1/cem-kucuk-can-dundar-in-basina-odul-konulacak-454266.html>

23] <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201605061022598696-dundar-silah/>

journalists whose photos were published by pro-government media outlets, Adem Yavuz Arslan indicated that the news story about him being on the run and in hiding was replete with false information on him as no warrant of detention has been issued for him and his address has been known to the Turkish Embassy in Washington for two-and-a-half years.



Adem Yavuz Arslan secretly videotaped in Washington, DC by Sabah Daily was targeted by pro-government media outlets.

Housewife Hacer Korucu, the wife of Bülent Korucu, the editor-in-chief of the Yarına Bakış newspaper, was detained by the police without a court order when they failed to find her husband during a raid on their home. The police urged Hacer Korucu to contact her husband on the phone, after failing at which she was taken to the police station. The detention warrant was verbally issued against the wife by the prosecutor, who instructed police to enforce his order.

Eyewitnesses indicated that the police officers threatened Korucu's son at home, saying, "Next time we will come to take you as well." Hacer Korucu was kept in custody for 10 days before she was arrested, on Aug. 9, 2016. She is still in prison.

Several detention warrants were issued for Bülent Keneş, the former editor-in-chief of the Today's Zaman newspaper. His brother, Levent Keneş, who has been teaching physics for 20 years, was detained and arrested in order to pressure Bülent Keneş to surrender. Pro-

government media outlets, including the state-owned Anadolu news agency, reported that Levent Keneş had been arrested in place of his brother. Levent Keneş has been in jail since August, and an indictment was drafted only in Dec. 2016. He is still waiting to appear in court.

Journalists living in exile reported to SCF that they are not only concerned with their safety, but that they also are wrestling with serious financial hardship and accommodation problems. Unable to find a job in their respective countries of exile, the journalists note that like their colleagues who were deprived of their jobs at home, they rely on financial support from their families and friends.

FINANCIAL HARASSMENT

On Dec. 1, 2016, the 11th Criminal Court of the Peace issued a decision to confiscate the assets and properties of 54 people, including arrested and wanted journalists. The decision was made public after the one-week period for objections expired. However, there is no finalized court decision concerning the journalists who are accused of providing financial support to a terrorist organization. Given the fact that these journalists are still suspects and that no indictments have been prepared against some of them, this decision will have an adverse effect on the journalists and their families, financially and psychologically. Former Zaman columnist Zeki Önal, who wrote under the pen name of Ahmet Selim and who died three-and-a-half months before the said decision, is among those journalists whose assets were seized by the state. Likewise, former Zaman columnist İhsan Dağı was affected by the same decision. Although he was released by the prosecutor after his detention by the police, and no legal action was brought against him.

Another problem faced by journalists who are forced to live in exile is the uncertainty of their status in their respective countries. They have applied for political asylum and are now awaiting the completion of the asylum procedures. Although the practice varies from one state to another, some do not have work permits and may be required to reside in refugee camps under the laws of their countries of exile.

The journalists contacted by SCF mainly complain about their inability to work and pursue their professions. Some of the journalists who are forced to live in exile had to leave some family members back in Turkey. The relatives of some journalists are reportedly banned from traveling abroad, while others are not able to obtain passports, causing serious complications for divided families.

In many cases, journalists in exile cannot reach the audience in Turkey via social media accounts because the Turkish government secured orders from judges ordering Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to cancel or restrict their accounts. As a result, many journalists are deprived of their only means of responding to allegations against them.

CONCRETE EFFORTS ARE NEEDED

Freedom of expression is enshrined in the Constitution of Turkey, which states: “Everyone has the freedom of thought and opinion. No one shall be compelled to reveal his thoughts and opinions for any reason or purpose, nor shall anyone be blamed or accused on account of his thoughts and opinions.” (Article 25)

In the same vein, Article 26 of the Constitution reads: “Everyone has the right to express and disseminate his/her thoughts and opinions by speech, in writing or in pictures or through other media, individually or collectively. This right includes the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas without interference from official authorities. This provision shall not preclude subjecting transmission by radio, television, cinema, and similar means to a system of licensing.”

By ratifying the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Turkey has undertaken to provide guarantees for freedom of thought and freedom of the press.

SCF calls on the Government of the Republic of Turkey to fulfill the commitments it made in international conventions as well as adhering to the Turkish Constitution by respecting the rule of law and upholding the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms as well as human rights so that journalists in prison are immediately released.

SCF invites the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe and other relevant international bodies as well as Turkey’s allies and partners to exert concrete, sensible and conclusive efforts for the release of imprisoned journalists.

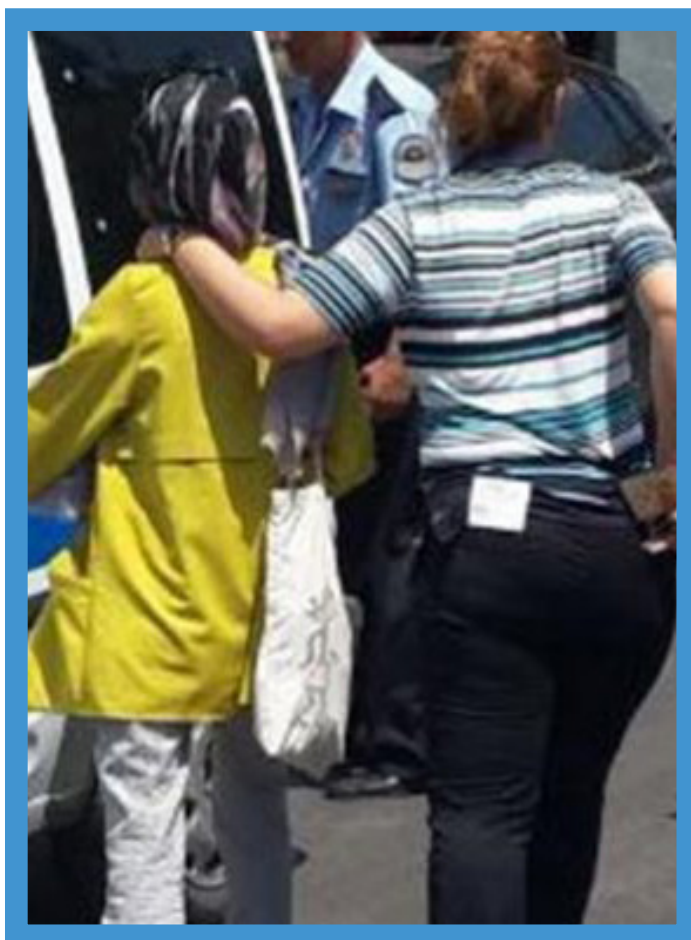
National and international civil society organizations (CSOs), nongovernmental organizations and advocacy groups should make increased contributions to the cooperation and joint efforts for the amelioration of the deplorable state of affairs in Turkey in terms of pressures on the media and freedom of the press.



Turkish police stormed the offices of the Zaman newspaper, then the best selling daily of Turkey. March 4, 2016

SCF calls on all countries for solidarity to ensure that the journalists in exile can engage in their profession and that their safety is guaranteed against the background of serious threats of harassment, abduction and even assassination.

Noting that no individual can be free in a country where the press is not free, SCF invites all citizens of the Republic of Turkey to insist on exercising their right to obtain information freely and to keep fighting for their fundamental rights and freedoms.



SCF stockholm
center for
freedom

stockholmcf.org

Ayşegül Parıldak

**26 year-old reporter
Ankara Sincan Prison**

**I am afraid
of being
forgotten here**