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State  
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Turkey

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## Turkey: Seizure of Media Holding, with Police Raids and Temporary Closure of Two Major Television Channels, Days Prior to Elections

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY ⓘ ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

**PARTNER: Article 19, AEJ, EFJ/IFJ, Index**

At 4.30 am on Wednesday 28 October 2015, Turkish police raided the offices of BugunTV and KanalTurk, two major independent television stations, owned by Koza Ipek, a pro-opposition media group. Tarik Toros, General Manager of BugunTV, claimed live on air that police had not shown a warrant or court order prior to the raid. Video footage of the raid shows police violently forcing their way into the building and using tear gas against protesters outside. One reporter, Kamil Maman, was detained by police. Broadcasting by both channels was cut off in the afternoon.

Prior to the raid, on 26 October 2015, a Turkish court ordered the seizure of Koza Ipek. According to reports, the Ankara Chief Prosecutor said the seizure was linked to an ongoing investigation of Koza-Ipek on suspicion of 'terrorist propaganda' and 'financing terrorism'. The charges relate to the conglomerate's alleged links to the US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose movement, the 'Hizmet Movement', has been declared a terrorist organisation by the Turkish state. The legal definition 'terrorism' and 'financing terrorism' in Turkish law is broad and the Hizmet movement has been declared a terrorist organization, despite no evidence of acts of violence by the movement.

Further to the court order, the owner of Koza Ipek has been removed and a board of trustees appointed to take over administration of the conglomerate, which includes two newspapers and two television stations that have been highly critical of the ruling AKP party. Some independent newspapers have raised concerns that the board is not independent from the AKP party. On Thursday 29 October 2015, concerns about the political neutrality of the board were heightened following the online release of video footage showing the dismissal of a number of Bugun Daily employees, including the editor-in-chief, during an editorial meeting.

**05 Nov 2015:** Up to 71 journalists and media workers have been dismissed from the İpek Media Group, on 3 November 2015

➔ Article by Today's Zaman

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** ▼

- ➔ Article by the Guardian: "Turkish police storm opposition media offices as election looms"
- ➔ Article by The Telegraph: "Turkish police storm opposition TV station Bugun during live broadcast"
- ➔ Article by Reuters: "Turkish police raid media group linked to Erdogan foe as election looms"
- ➔ Article on IFJ website: "IFJ and EFJ slam Turkish government over latest media clampdown ahead the elections"

**STATE REPLIES** ▼



**25 Nov 2015** | Response from the Turkish Government

- ➔ Letter from the Permanent Representation of Turkey to the Council of Europe

**FOLLOW-UPS** ▼



**30 Oct 2015** | Statement by the Spokesperson of the Secretary General

- ➔ Tweet by the Spokesperson



**30 Oct 2015** | The Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks condemns the Turkish police's violent raids against the media

- ➔ Facebook post by the Commissioner



**30 Oct 2015** | OSCE Representative condemns police raid against media outlets in Turkey, calls on authorities to restore and ensure media pluralism

- ➔ Statement by Dunja Mijatović

## RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS



04 Apr 2016 | Factsheet on Freedom of Expression and the Broadcasting Media

 **Overview of the ECHR case law and other relevant Council of Europe resources related to Freedom of Expression and the Broadcasting Media**

**DISCLAIMER**

This section presents a non-exhaustive selection of CoE instruments and ECHR case-law. This information is not a legal assessment of the alert and should not be treated or used as such.