

06

Dec 2018

Lvl. 2

Resolved

Turkey

Alert created on: 21 Aug 2015

## Journalist Fired over Tweets Critical of Erdoğan

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Unknown

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

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

On 23 July 2015, journalist Kadri Gürsel, was fired from Milliyet newspaper over a tweet criticising President Erdoğan. The tweet, which was issued from the journalist's personal account, implied that Erdoğan had some responsibility for a bombing in the Turkish town of Suruç. Gürsel had been writing for Milliyet newspaper since 1998 and is the president of the International Press Institute's Turkish national committee. Milliyet Newspaper issued a statement saying that Gürsel had breached media ethics and damaged the working environment. Gürsel's comments constitute criticism of government policy, which is a legitimate activity of responsible journalism and does not breach media ethics. Press freedom associations, including the International Press Institute, of which Gürsel is a member, as well as president of their Turkish National Committee, expressed concern that the Turkish government had applied pressure on Milliyet to fire Gürsel.

### RESOLVED

**06 Dec 2018:** On 6 December 2018, considering the fact that no complaint was lodged against Milliyet, as specified in the state reply to this alert, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  Article published on the blog Turkish News Review: "Turkish editor-in-chief Derya Sazak was fired after refusing to throw out a columnist"
-  Article written by Kadri Gürsel for the news portal Al Monitor: "Has press freedom fallen victim to AKP's Syria policy?"

 **Press release issued by the International Press Institute: "Head of IPI's Turkish National Committee fired over tweet critical of Turkish president"**

 There have been accusations of government interference in decision making at Milliyet paper before; in March 2014, audio-recordings of a conversation between Demirören and then-Prime Minister Erdoğan were leaked on YouTube. The recording apparently revealed that the Prime Minister was putting pressure on Demirören to change the content of reporting in the newspaper. In October 2014, Editor-in-Chief of Milliyet, Derya Sazak said that the government pressured Milliyet owners to force him to leave his job after refusing to fire journalist Can Dündar over his critical reporting over the 'Gezi Park' protests.

**STATE REPLIES** 



**08 Sep 2015** | Response of the Turkish Government

 **Letter from the Permanent Representation of Turkey to the Council of Europe**