

04

Apr
2019
▲ Lvl. 1

No state
reply yet

Turkey

Alert created on: 25 May 2016

Criminal Investigation Opened Against Journalists for Solidarity Campaign

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

🔴 1 Journalist in detention

CATEGORY ⓘ ▶ Detention and
imprisonment of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, Article 19, AEJ, CPJ, Index, IPI, RSF

On 18 May 2016 Turkish judicial authorities opened a criminal investigation against six journalists and trade unionists for participating in a solidarity campaign with the Kurdish daily newspaper Özgür Gündem. The journalists include Ertugrul Mavioglu, Faruk Eren, Ayse Düzkan, Mustafa Sönmez, Melda Onur and Erol Önderoglu.

The Co-Editorship-in-Chief campaign was launched by Özgür Gündem daily on 3 May 2016 for World Press Freedom Day (#WPFDD) where up to 16 journalists participated. Requests have been filed for the journalists and trade unionists to testify for articles that are being considered "terrorist propaganda" and an "incitement to crime" which were published whilst they participated in the solidarity campaign.

UPDATES

NEW **04 Apr 2019:** On 3 April 2019, the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court, convicted Faruk Eren, Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, Fehim Işık, Celal Başlangıç, Öncü Akgül, İhsan Çaralan, Celalettin Can and Dilşah Kocakaya to one year and three months on charges related to "terrorist propaganda". Hüseyin Aykol, former editor-in-chief of Özgür Gündem, was sentenced to three years and nine months on similar charges.

28 Feb 2019: On 27 February 2019, the prosecutor asked the court to convict Erol Önderoğlu and co-defendants Şebnem Korur Fincancı and Ahmet Nesin on charges of "terrorist propaganda," "condoning crime" and "inciting crime".

30 Jan 2019: On 29 January 2019, Ayşe Düzkan surrendered to authorities to serve an 18-month prison sentence handed down for serving as the symbolic editor-in-chief of Özgür Gündem.

➔ Article by Bianet : "Journalist Ayşe Düzkan Goes to Prison"

10 Dec 2018: On 30 November 2018, the court of appeal upheld sentences of journalists Ayşe Düzkan, Ragıp Duran, Mehmet Ali Çelebi, Hüseyin Bektaş and Hüseyin Aykol for "terrorism propaganda" in the Özgür Gündem trial.

12 Oct 2018: On 10 October 2018, the Istanbul 13th Heavy Criminal Court adjourned the trial of three defendants (Erol Önderoğlu, Şebnem Korur Fincancı and Ahmet Nesin) for the seventh time in nearly two years to wait for the execution of Ahmet Nesin's arrest warrant. The next hearing is scheduled for 28 January 2019, at which the prosecution is finally expected to present its summing-up and announce the sentences it wants the court to impose. On 11 October 2018, the trial of the other 11 defendants in the case was postponed to 17 January 2019. At the hearing, the Istanbul 23rd Heavy Penal Court ruled to lift the travel ban that had been imposed on Erin Keskin and decided to extend Kemal Sancılı's detention pending trial.

19 Jan 2018: On 16 January 2018 the 13th High Criminal Court in İstanbul convicted Ragıp Duran, Mehmet Ali Çelebi, Ayşe Düzkan and Hüseyin Bektaş to 18 months in prison for spreading "propaganda for a terrorist organization". The Court convicted Hüseyin Aykol to three years and nine months.

➔ Article published by RSF: "Two Turkish journalists get jail terms for solidarity campaign role"

09 Jun 2017: The fourth hearing in the trial took place at the Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court on 8 June 2017. Önderoğlu and Fincancı were in attendance, while Ahmet Nesin, who is abroad, was not present in the courtroom. The court adjourned the session until 26 December 2017 to wait for the implementation of the arrest order for Nesin and to obtain his defense statement.

01 Jul 2016: On 1 July 2016, Ahmet Nesin was freed. His release is also conditional. Charges against him are still outstanding.

30 Jun 2016: Turkey Human Rights Foundation (TİHV) Chair Şebnem Korur Fincancı, and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Turkey Representative Erol Önderoğlu, who were arrested on charge of "terrorist propaganda" for participating in Özgür Gündem daily's Editor-in-Chief solidarity campaign were released conditionally on 30 June 2016. Charges are still outstanding and indictments (propagandizing for a [terrorist] organization and praising a crime and criminals) have been accepted by Istanbul 13th Heavy Penal Court. The first hearing is to be held on 11 November 2016.

29 Jun 2016: On 26 June 2016, journalists Nadire Mater, Yıldırım Türker, Tuğrul Eryılmaz and Faruk Balkçı were the next four editors of Özgür Gündem to be questioned on "terrorist propaganda" charges for participating in the solidarity campaign with the newspaper.

20 Jun 2016: On 20 June 2016, a prosecutor issued a warrant for the pre-trial arrest of Şebnem Korur Fincancı, Erol Önderoğlu and Ahmet Nesin. Following a court decision, all three journalists were arrested.

- ➔ Article published on Bianet: "Özgür Gündem's Editors in Chief on Watch; Önderoğlu, Nesin, Korur Fincancı Arrested"
- ➔ Statement from EFJ: "Arrest of 3 editor-in-chief in Turkey is unacceptable ! "
- ➔ Statement from the AEJ: "AEJ joins Turkish journalists' united protest against arrests over 'Editors on duty' campaign of solidarity"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ➔ UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urges "quick release" of RSF's Turkey representative
- ➔ Article on the EFJ website on "Turkey must stop feeding its environment of fear for journalists and trade unionists"
- ➔ Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom Platform: "Turkey: Investigation opened against journalists for solidarity campaign"
- ➔ IPI-led joint statement: 26 free expression groups urge acquittal of Özgür Gündem guest editors in Turkey

FOLLOW-UPS

OSCE 04 Apr 2019 | **NEW** Sentencing journalists to prison greatly damages media freedom in Turkey, says OSCE Media Freedom Representative.

- ➔ Statement by Harlem Désir

OSCE 10 Dec 2018 | OSCE Representative is alarmed that Turkey appeals court upheld sentences of journalists Ayşe Düzkan, Ragıp Duran, Mehmet Ali Çelebi, Hüseyin Bektaş and Hüseyin Aykol for "terrorism propaganda" in the Özgür Gündem trial. Journalistic activities and solidarity are not crimes.

- ➔ Tweet by Harlem Désir

OSCE 20 Apr 2018 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative declared that interim decision to prolong trial of Kurdish newspaper Özgür Gündem editors, including Erol Önderoğlu, Ahmet Nesin and Şebnem Korur Fincancı means chilling effect these trials impose on journalists will continue in Turkey and urged for acquittal so they can continue their work freely.

- ➔ Tweet by Harlem Désir



20 Jun 2016 | CoE Commissioner for Human Rights appalled by detention of human rights defenders in Turkey will take this up with the authorities.

 [Tweet by Nils Muiznieks](#)

OSCE **20 Jun 2016** | OSCE Representative appalled by imprisonment of two journalists and a human rights activist in Turkey, urges their release

 [Statement from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media](#)

JOURNALISTS IN DETENTION

Currently in detention (1):

Ayşe Düzkan