

SPECIAL REPORT

**AUTHORITARIANISM UNVEILED: TURKEY'S
HUMAN RIGHTS CATASTROPHE**



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SPECIAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Dunja Mijatović, Flags Non-Implementation of Judgments from ECHR, Venice Commission, and Turkish Constitutional Court as Serious Threat to Rule of Law, Public Trust and Constitutional Order

Commissioner issued a comprehensive Memorandum on March 5, 2024, assessing the state of freedom of expression, media, and human rights defenders in Turkey calling for urgent measures to address these challenges, emphasizing alignment with international human rights standards.

ECHR Ruling as a Milestone - Yalcinkaya Judgement

In a recent landmark decision, the ECHR ruled in favor of Yüksel Yalçinkaya, associated with the Gulen (Hizmet) movement, stating violations of his rights to a fair trial, freedom of assembly, association, and no punishment without law. This decision carries significant weight for Hizmet movement volunteers targeted by the Erdogan regime. IHD (Human Rights Association) of Turkey, referring to the UN Special Rapporteur's report, emphasizes the necessity of a precise and clear definition of terrorist acts to prevent their misuse, particularly when charges are applied for reasons unrelated to counter-terrorism or "thought crimes" as described by authorities. They criticize the broad and vague definition of terrorism outlined in Turkey's Anti-Terror Laws, which focuses on intent or target rather than specific criminal acts. This broad definition enables individuals and organizations to be labeled as terrorists even if they have not committed violent acts. Consequently, various individuals in Turkey, including journalists, authors, academics, human rights defenders, and politicians, have been unjustly accused solely for expressing their opinions without engaging in violence.

Tragedy Unfolds: 984 Lives Lost

The repercussions of the state of emergency decrees have resulted in a tragic toll of 984 lives lost, encompassing sorrow, stress, prison deaths, suicides, attempted border crossings, traffic accidents, and work-related incidents. Many individuals who were purged have been compelled to work in roles for which they lack training or experience, exacerbating risks related to workplace safety.

Alarming Prison Conditions

Prison conditions remain alarming, with overcapacity, torture cases, and inadequate investigations. Torture and ill-treatment extend beyond detention centers, affecting thousands.

Post-Coup Actions and Violations

Post-2016 coup attempt, Turkey terminated or placed on leave tens of thousands of public servants, detained over 95,000 individuals, and closed 1,500 NGOs. Notably, over 160,000 individuals faced investigations for "insulting the President," leading to trials, convictions, and imprisonment. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that, as of July 18, 2016, authorities in Turkey had declared over 7,500 arrests, which included 755 judges and prosecutors, along with the suspension of numerous judges, prosecutors, and police officers. Furthermore, on the same day, 20 news websites were forcefully closed, surpassing the shutdown of 200 media outlets in the aftermath. The rapidity and magnitude of these arrests, particularly of high-ranking judges, imply a purge rather than a procedure grounded in substantive evidence, according to Hugh Williamson, the director for Europe and Central Asia at Human Rights Watch.

Unprecedented Challenges for Women

The report emphasizes the unprecedented challenges faced by women, with over 50,000 detained between 2016 and 2024, and escalating femicide cases. Urgent measures are urged to address the root causes and promote gender equality.

Defenders Face Unlawful Detentions

Human rights defenders face unlawful detentions, with Turkey disregarding international rulings. The government's actions reveal a systematic disdain for human rights advocacy, further highlighted by the confrontation between Turkey's highest courts.

Civil Death and Social Genocide

The latest Freedom House report highlights a troubling trend termed "civil death," employed as a strategic tool by authoritarian regimes to marginalize opponents by imposing restrictive measures that effectively exclude them from society. Relatedly, the term "social genocide" is used to describe systematic actions conducted by those oppressive leaders against social groups, primarily executed through emergency decrees, affecting families and denying fundamental rights.

Transnational Repression

Turkey's transnational repression campaign since 2014, targeting perceived adversaries globally, has resulted in 58 documented renditions. The Freedom House report enforced disappearances, abductions, and the systematic use of torture by state entities, particularly escalating after 2016.

Call for Urgent International Attention

AST calls for urgent international attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in Turkey, urging accountability, adherence to international standards, and comprehensive measures to rectify violations.

ADVOCATES OF SILENCED TURKEY

AST is a 501(c)(3) Not for Profit charitable and educational organization based in NJ, exclusively for defending human and civil rights.

Our aim is, address all forms of human rights violations being perpetrated in Turkey-- including civil, political, economic, social and cultural-- based on the tenets upheld in fundamental human rights documents;

To speak up against any forms of genocide, crimes against humanity, arbitrary detentions, cases of torture and ill treatment, and discrimination, and stand up for principles and values such as the right to life, the rule of law, the right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of associations;

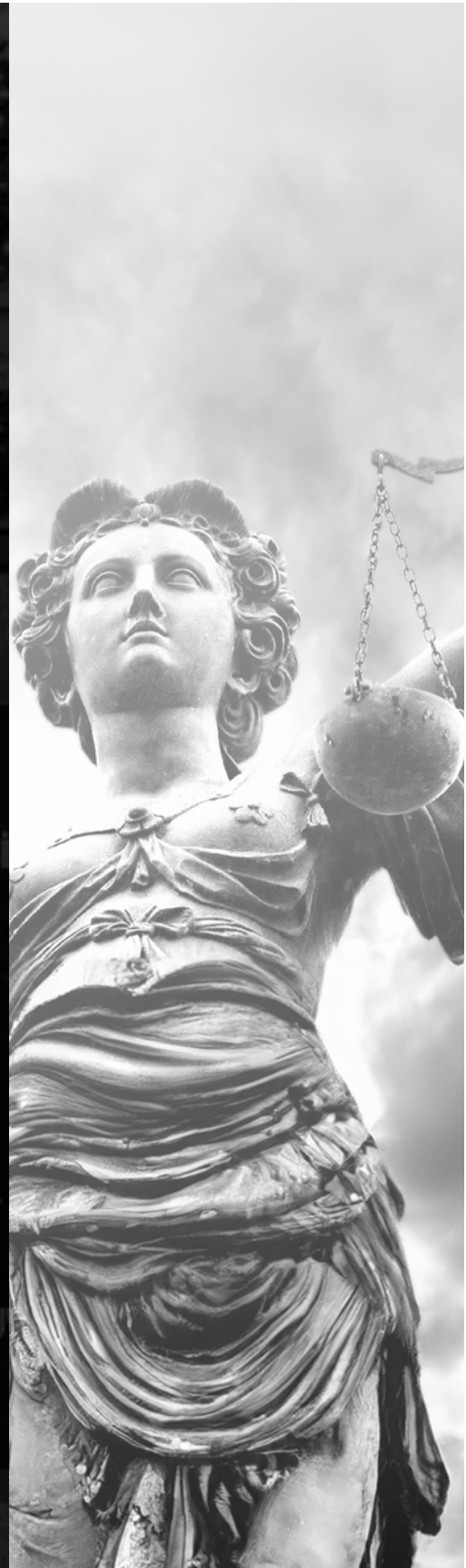
To utilize all human rights advocacy tools, mechanisms, and systems that can possibly be utilized in order to protect and demand the fundamental human rights of those whose voices are being silenced in Turkey and beyond;

And to hold accountable the perpetrators who are denying individuals in Turkey and beyond their fundamental Human Rights while providing the victims with the opportunity to obtain justice and reparation.

REPORT

SPECIAL REPORT: AUTHORITARIANISM UNVEILED: TURKEY'S HUMAN RIGHTS CATASTROPHE

March, 2024



ECHR RULING AS A MILESTONE - YALCINKAYA JUDGEMENT



“Commissioner Flags Non-Implementation of Judgments from ECHR, Venice Commission, and Turkish Constitutional Court as Serious Threat to Rule of Law, Public Trust and Constitutional Order”

The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Dunja Mijatović, released a Memorandum on March 5, 2024, encompassing a comprehensive analysis of the state of freedom of expression, the media, and the situation of human rights defenders and civil society in Turkey.¹ The key points of analysis include her concerns regarding:

1. Long-standing issues related to the independence and impartiality of the Turkish judiciary, identifying them as posing an existential risk to the rule of law.
2. Adverse effects of emergency decrees on justice accessibility, effective remedies, legal certainty, and foreseeability.
3. Extensive and persisting use of problematic provisions in the Turkish Criminal Code and the Anti-Terror Law to suppress free speech, disregarding judgments and recommended corrective actions from the European Court of Human Rights and the Venice Commission.
4. Authorities’ defiance of extensive guidance provided by international bodies, including the European Court of Human Rights and the Venice Commission.

¹ <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-freedom-of-expression-and-of-the-media-human-rights-defe/1680aebf3d>

The Commissioner advocates for urgent and comprehensive measures to address these challenges, emphasizing the importance of aligning with international human rights standards and recommendations.

In relation to the judgements from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), significant decision was recently issued regarding the treatment of individuals associated with the Gulen (Hizmet) movement in Turkey. This decision is considered a milestone after more than seven years of intense government actions following a mysterious, failed coup attempt, which resulted in a severe crackdown on Hizmet movement volunteers in Turkey. The ruling in favor of Yüksel Yalçinkaya at the Strasbourg court holds great importance for the hundreds of thousands of Hizmet movement volunteers who have faced unjust targeting by the Erdogan regime.

At the core of Mr. Yalçinkaya's case were allegations related to the use of a phone app called ByLock, the use of a bank account, and membership in a trade union, which the Turkish government used as supposed concrete evidence of involvement in a terrorist organization, despite a lack of supporting evidence. The ECHR determined that the Turkish government's prosecution and judicial decisions violated his rights to a fair trial (Article 6 § 1), rights to freedom of assembly and association (Article 11), and the right to no punishment without law (Article 7).

As stated in the ECHR's ruling, "There are currently approximately **8,500 pending applications** before the Court involving similar complaints under Articles 7 and/or 6 of the Convention, and considering that authorities had identified around **100,000 ByLock** users, many more applications may potentially be submitted. The problems leading to findings of violations were systemic in nature."



POST-COUP ACTIONS AND VIOLATIONS

Following the 2016 coup attempt, authorities have **terminated** or **placed on leave** tens of thousands of public servants and government employees. This includes over **60,000 police** and military personnel, as well as more than **4,000 judges** and prosecutors. Additionally, they have detained or **incarcerated over 95,000 individuals** and shuttered more than **1,500 non-governmental organizations** on terrorism-related charges. These actions are predominantly based on alleged connections to the movement inspired by cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom the government accuses of orchestrating the 2016 coup attempt.²

332,884 detained and arrested **101,000** individuals since the coup attempt on grounds of alleged affiliation with the Gulen movement.³

Since 2014, over **160,000** individuals have been subject to investigations for “insulting the President,” with more than **35,000** facing legal proceedings. A total of over **38,000** people, which includes over **1,000 children**, have stood before a judge. Out of these trials, **12,881** individuals were found guilty, and **3,625**, including **10 children**, received prison sentences.⁴

² <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>

³ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>

⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>





PRISON CONDITIONS

396 prisons with a capacity for 286,797 inmates and was over capacity by 49,518 prisoners (an estimated total inmate population of 336,315.⁵

980 persons were subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment in places of official detention. Government opened **2,190** investigations into allegations of torture and mistreatment. Of those, **953** resulted in no action being taken by prosecutors, **866** resulted in criminal cases, and **317** in other decisions, with the remaining still under investigation. As far as can be determined, there are currently a total of **1,517** sick inmates in Turkish prisons, with **651** of them being critically ill.⁶

Torture and Ill-Treatment in Detention⁷

Torture and Ill-Treatment in Detention 1452 cases
 Torture and Ill-Treatment Outside Detention Centers 2947 cases, including 42 involving children
 Torture and Ill-Treatment by Village Guards 11 cases
 Torture and Ill-Treatment in Prisons 277 cases
 Threats and Offers of Espionage by Law Enforcement 312 cases
 Individuals Beaten and Injured as a Result of Security Forces' Intervention in Public Protests 4553 cases

⁵ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>

⁶ <https://www.ihd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2022-y%C4%B1l%C4%B1-bilanc%CC%A7osu.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.ihd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2022-y%C4%B1l%C4%B1-bilanc%CC%A7osu.pdf>



Regrettably, instances of torture are not confined to detention or prison facilities in Turkey. Particularly after the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, the prevalence of torture has markedly risen, manifesting a systematic pattern and impacting a larger number of victims. Despite this surge, reflected in human rights organizations' reports, those responsible for torture continue to enjoy impunity. Government employees implicated in torture have been shielded by Turkish government institutions and officials for an extended period, evading accountability. Even when legal action is initiated against them, measures are taken to ensure these employees retain their roles and, in some cases, receive promotions, preventing prosecution and imprisonment. Prolonged legal proceedings against many of them contribute to the avoidance of prosecution.

In response to this alarming trend, AST has undertaken the initiative to compile a series of reports on torturers, drawing from hundreds of torture cases and published reports. Relying on testimonies from torture victims, witness accounts, and court proceedings, the objective of reports is to curb the prevalence of torture and hold perpetrators accountable.

Despite hundreds of torture victims seeking assistance from human rights organizations annually, many refrain from pursuing their rights due to safety concerns. Waning confidence in the judiciary's independence, influenced by President Erdoğan, stands as a significant deterrent. Thus, documents and official statements in AST's reports indicate a lack of substantive action by the Turkish government to prevent torture, with instances of directives to erase torture evidence during visits by international commissions.

The Turkish government must actively strive to prevent human rights violations by upholding the Turkish Constitution, Turkish Penal Code, and international conventions it has ratified. Comprehensive inspections should be conducted in security agencies, prisons, and detention centers where systematic torture is employed and accordingly legal measures should be implemented.

More than 200 perpetrators of torture, documented in AST's reports, along with those endorsing, concealing, or inciting torture, should be brought into justice ⁸⁻⁹

8 <https://silencedturkey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Erdogans-Torture-Squads-1.pdf>,

9 <https://silencedturkey.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/report-torture-vol2-en-web.pdf>

CIVIL DEATH AND SOCIAL GENOCIDE IN THE MAKING: MILLIONS IMPACTED



Freedom House emphasizes the use of “civil death” as a strategic tool by repressive regimes like Turkey, aimed at **excluding opponents from active participation in society through a combination of restrictive measures.**

This strategy extends beyond mere physical confinement, encompassing subtle tactics such as travel restrictions, monitoring, limited opportunities, blacklisting, and asset seizures. In contrast to overt imprisonment, these methods receive less international scrutiny, enabling regimes to target opponents on a large scale. The cumulative impact serves to discourage opposition and criticism, ultimately impeding democratic change in the long term. Those subjected to this strategy often carry a lasting stigma, encapsulated in the phrase “When you leave the jail, the mark and the trace leave with you.”¹⁰

In a parallel vein, the term “**social genocide**” is informally used to describe deliberate actions or policies by governments systematically targeting specific social groups, resulting in severe harm, marginalization, or even the eradication of those groups.¹¹ Drawing a parallel with the concept of genocide, which traditionally **denotes the intentional and systematic destruction of a racial, ethnic, religious, or national group**, “social genocide” may encompass practices like **discrimination, forced assimilation, displacement, or systematic oppression against a particular social or cultural community.** In Turkey, emergency decrees (KHK) have long been utilized to dismiss targeted individuals or groups, affecting hundreds of thousands, if not millions when considering families. These decrees deny fundamental civil rights, including access to the state’s welfare services, healthcare, employment, and the right to travel, within the framework of a broader transnational repression operation.

¹⁰ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/free-them-all/2024/visible-and-invisible-bars>

¹¹ Campbell, B. (2009). Genocide as Social Control. *Sociological Theory*, 27(2), 150–172. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40376129>; Feierstein, D., & Town, D. A. (2014). *Genocide as Social Practice: Reorganizing Society under the Nazis and Argentina’s Military Juntas*. Rutgers University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wq9vn>



TRAGEDY UNFOLDS: 984 LIVES LOST DUE TO STATE OF EMERGENCY (OHAL) AND STATUTORY DECREE (KHK) RAMIFICATIONS

Between 2016 and 2023, due to the violations of rights experienced which conclusively have lead to civil and real death:



After the deaths of these 21 victims, they were reinstated to their jobs. As of March 2023, AST has identified 986 victims who have passed away as a result of the state of emergency (OHAL) and statutory decree (KHK) consequences.



Since July 15, 2016, Turkey's democratic structures have faced unprecedented challenges due to the government's systematic persecution of all political opponents and critics. The tally of individuals dismissed through emergency decrees has now surpassed 300,000, impacting both the public and private sectors, with a significant number of women bearing the brunt. Alongside preexisting violations of women's rights and gender-based violence, the current administration employs arbitrary arrests and prolonged pretrial detentions to imprison courageous women who resist oppression in various capacities. This relentless persecution has profoundly impacted the lives of numerous women, along with their infants and children. Between 2016 and 2024, **over 17,000 women have faced detention and imprisonment, with cases reported in 2016 alone—marking the highest number of detained women in the Republic's history.**

Additionally, following the July 15 coup attempt, emergency decrees in Turkey led to the closure of **11 women's associations, the dismissal of 860 female academics from university positions, the arrest of 35 female co-mayors,** and the destruction of achievements regarding women's participation in local administrations through appointed trustees' actions. 30 women journalists were detained, with 16 facing arrest.

A pressing concern is the escalating femicide crisis in Turkey, with a significant surge in violence against women resulting in devastating consequences. **In 2023, 315 women were killed, and in 2022, there were 334 reported cases of femicide.**¹² AST emphasizes the urgent need to address the root causes of this crisis, implement effective legal measures, and foster a culture of gender equality for the safety and well-being of women in Turkey and globally.

Acknowledging Turkey's persistent human rights abuses against women, AST urges Turkey to take immediate, decisive action to rectify these violations and to adhere to international human rights norms for its global standing.

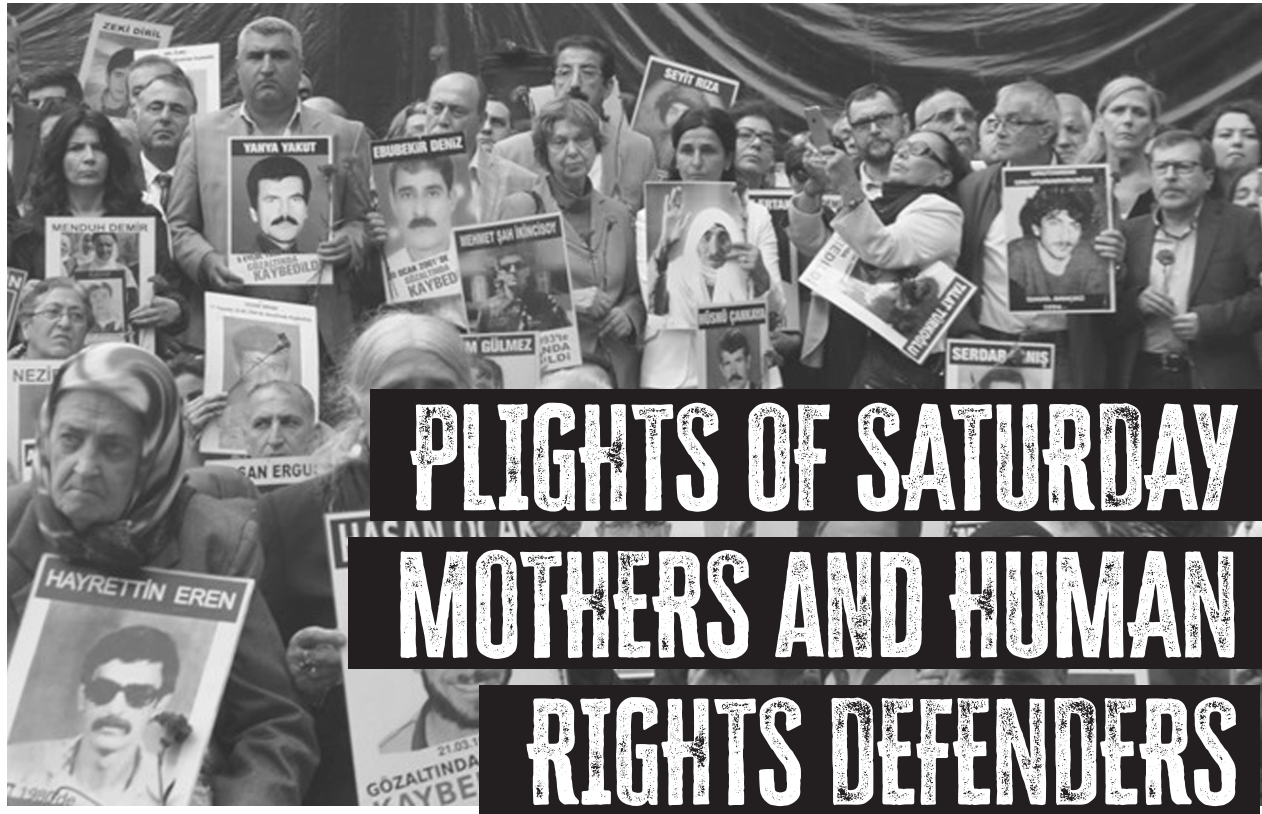


Since 2014, the Turkish state has orchestrated an extensive and forceful global campaign of transnational repression, particularly intensifying after the 2016 coup attempt. This widespread effort, aimed at perceived adversaries, extends to at least 31 countries across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. A distinctive feature of this campaign is the Turkish government's heavy reliance on renditions, compelling other nations to surrender individuals without adhering to due process. **The Freedom House** report underscores that, within this timeframe, there have been **58 documented renditions**, a notably high and unprecedented number compared to other states engaging in similar actions. This suggests a pervasive and systematic initiative by the Turkish government. Furthermore, the Turkish authorities have sought to manipulate Interpol for targeting exiles. In the aftermath of the coup attempt, there are allegations that they attempted to mass-upload around 60,000 names onto Interpol's notification system.¹³

As per the **AST report titled "Beyond Turkey's Borders: Unveiling Global Purge, Transnational Repression, Abductions"** released in May 2023, the instances of enforced disappearance and abductions, both within Turkey and internationally, surpassed 150 after the year 2016. **The report by AST documented 156 cases, including the abduction of Yusuf Bilge Tunç, a former Ministry of Industry employee expelled through a decree law, in Ankara** on August 6, 2019. Despite the family's application to the ECtHR due to the Turkish authorities' indifference, the application was rejected, with the court finding no serious flaws in the investigative proceedings. **Tunç's whereabouts remain unknown.** The recent abduction cases by the Turkish government exemplify its transitional repression tactics, notably involving Orhan İnanlı and Selhattin Gülen. According to HRW, President Erdoğan publicly acknowledged İnanlı's abduction by MIT in July 2021, praising the Turkish spies' efforts, while Gülen, nephew of Fethullah Gülen, faced detention in Kenya shortly after arriving from the US on a tourist visa due to an Interpol Red Notice Alert issued by Turkey. The Turkish state systematically employs kidnappings and enforced disappearances, notably escalating after 2016, as a means to eliminate dissidents, particularly targeting the Gülen movement and the Kurds. The involvement of state entities and intelligence agents in these incidents is strongly suggested by evidence and eyewitness statements. Testimonies from victims who reappeared after disappearances unveil the inhumane treatment and practices they endured, pointing to the implication of secret state units. The response, statements, attitudes, and policies of the Turkish state toward these incidents serve as conclusive evidence of its active participation or complicity. The lack of thorough and impartial investigations, coupled with restrictive measures against victims' rights, indicates a deliberate effort by the state to suppress the truth and obstruct justice.¹⁴

13 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/turkey>

14 <https://silencedturkey.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/beyond-turkeys-borders-unveiling-global-purge-transnational-repression-abductions-report-2023.pdf>



The authorities persistently violated the right to freedom of peaceful assembly for a collective known as the **Saturday Mothers/People** in Galatasaray Square. This group had been consistently gathering to protest against the forced disappearances of the 1980s and 1990s. The unjust limitations on the freedom of assembly adversely affect this group, as lawyers and families associated with them are routinely detained. Other affected groups include students from Bogazici University and participants in women's marches, all experiencing violations of their freedom of assembly.¹⁵

Human rights defenders in Turkey face the threat of unlawful detentions and restrictions, with the courts failing to implement international judgments in cases like Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtaş. Government officials, including the president, falsely claim that these decisions are not binding on Turkey. Co-defendants of Osman Kavala received 18-year prison sentences, while Professor Şebnem Korur Fincancı, head of the Turkish Medical Association, was detained for advocating an independent investigation into chemical weapons use in Iraq against the PKK. The actions of the Turkish government demonstrate a disregard for international rulings and human rights advocacy. In a significant confrontation between the highest courts in Turkey, the foremost appeals court not only invalidated the Constitutional Court's November 2023 ruling, which called for the release of Can Atalay—a lawyer and elected parliament member detained since April 2022—but also lodged criminal complaints against the Constitutional Court members who supported his release.¹⁶

¹⁵ Amnesty <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/turkey/report-turkey/>

¹⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/turkey/report-turkey/>

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN NUMBERS



2.2 MILLION PEOPLE PERSECUTED:

Since the onset of the crackdown on dissidents in Turkey following the 2016 coup attempt, a staggering 2,217,572 individuals have been investigated on bogus charges related to terrorism.¹⁷



OVER 600,000 DETENTIONS:

Large numbers of individuals have been detained in operations orchestrated by the political establishment aimed at silencing opposition voices, particularly targeting the volunteer-driven Gülen Movement.¹⁸



MORE THAN 500,000 ARRESTS:

Individuals were arrested despite their lack of involvement in any violent activities, and there was no evidence connecting them to terrorism.¹⁸



OVER 200,000 PASSPORTS REVOKED:

As part of the political power's efforts to suppress all opposition voices through social genocide, passports were revoked.¹⁹



OVER 300,000 OFFICERS EXPELLED:

Following the coup attempt in 2016, under the declared state of emergency, over 300,000 civil servants were dismissed from their positions without even being granted the opportunity to present their defense.¹⁷

¹⁷ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ze1QP8OUYx19w0qggqZBwBwGIvxq0fP_S/view

¹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/supported_browsers?next_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Ffeature%3Dshared&v=vnYrUqE7UqM

¹⁹ <https://platformpj.org/wp-content/uploads/Cancellation-of-Turkish-Passports.pdf>

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN NUMBERS



ONE OF EVERY 3 JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS PURGED:

More than 4,000 judges and prosecutors were dismissed, leading to the elimination of one-third of Turkey's total population of legal professionals in a short period. This purge resulted in the swift appointment of members from the ruling party to fill these vacancies, compromising the independence of the judiciary and transforming the law into a tool for government purges.¹⁹



7000+ ACADEMICS DISMISSED:

More than 7,000 academics have been dismissed from both public and private universities, including those who signed a declaration advocating for peace and those employed in closed universities.¹⁷



NUMBER OF FEMALE PRISONERS IN TURKEY SURPASSED 17,000:

The number of incarcerated individuals in Turkey has surpassed its historical record, straining prison capacity. Particularly alarming is the significant increase in the number of imprisoned women, with over 17,000 detained amid mass purges for political reasons.²⁰



AROUND 3,000 YOUNG CHILDREN GREW UP IN PRISON:

Over 3,000 young children have been imprisoned since the 2016 coup attempt, with over 850 babies being incarcerated alongside their mothers due to the imprisonment of both parents in many cases.²¹

¹⁹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>

²⁰ <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Ceza-Infaz-Kurumu-Istatistikleri-2020-37202>

²¹ <https://cte.adalet.gov.tr/Resimler/Dokuman/istatistik/istatistik-4.pdf>

NUMBERS OF CLOSED INSTITUTIONS WITH EMERGENCY DECREES²²



48 healthcare institutions



2,281 private educational institutions (schools, courses, dormitories, hostels, etc.)



104 foundations



1125 associations



15 private universities - leaving 3,041 permanent staff members unemployed



201 media outlets closed, including print and visual media

Also:



The activities of 19 unions and confederations have been terminated.



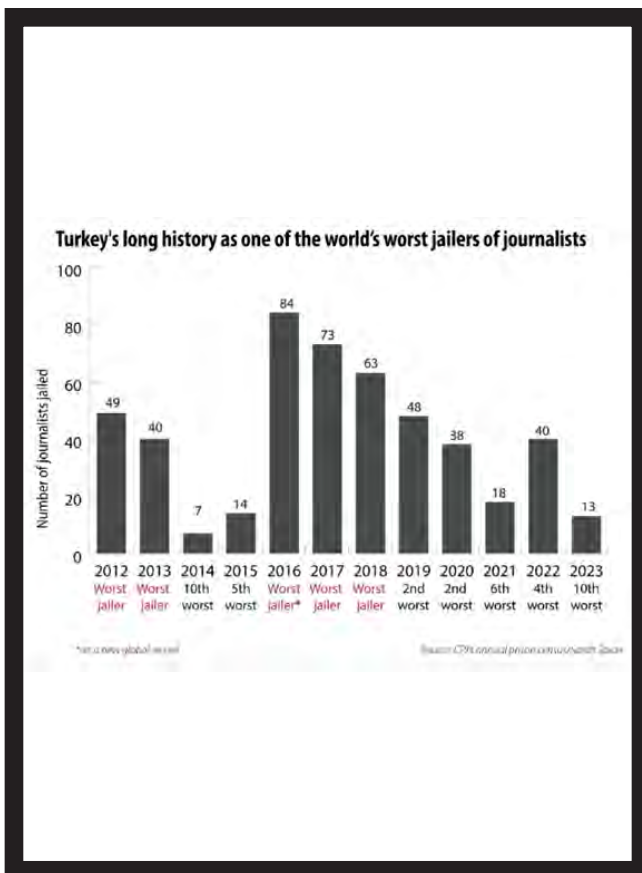
985 companies have been seized by the state and appointed with trustees The number of workers employed in these companies is 49,587.

²² <https://www.ihd.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/OHAL-KHKlar%C4%B1-Raporu.pdf>

ATTACKS ON PRESS FREEDOM AND FREE SPEECH IN NUMBERS: 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

MORE THAN 13 JOURNALISTS ARE STILL IMPRISONED:

Turkey ranks among the highest in terms of the number of journalists in prison, along with countries such as China and North Korea. According to the Reporters Without Borders, **since 2016, a total of 146 journalists have been through detention and incarceration in Turkey.**



23 (graph retrieved from <https://cpj-org.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/cpj.org/2024/02/drop-in-jailed-turkish-journalists-belies-a-long-simmering-press-freedom-crisis/amp/>)



24 (graph retrieved from <https://rsf.org/en/country-t%C3%BCrkiye>)

WOMEN JOURNALISTS PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED AND LEGALLY HARASSED:

- 6 Turkish journalists were assaulted while reporting on the aftermath of earthquakes
- 8 journalists were targeted with legal proceedings including travel bans, and bogus legal charges like "insulting of public officials."
- Kurdish women journalists are targeted most by the government, cynically using terrorism charges to censor and persecute them.²⁵

SANCTIONS and RESTRICTIONS OF ACCESS: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, has imposed a total of 570 sanctions on TV stations. Turkish government restricted Twitter following deadly earthquakes.²⁶

\$80 BILLION ILLEGALLY SEIZED and CONFISCATED & \$32.25 BILLION TRANSFERRED to TREASURY and INDIVIDUALS or ASSOCIATIONS in ERDOGAN'S CLOSE CIRCLE:

80 billion USD: The market value of the closed institutions, NGOs, and media organs associated with the Gülen Movement, and also of the illegally seized, confiscated, and expropriated private enterprises and assets of individuals allegedly affiliated with the Gülen Movement

32.25 billion USD: The net worth of the assets transferred to individuals or associations belonging to Erdogan's close circle²⁷

TRUSTEES HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO 48 HDP MUNICIPALITIES: The political Islamist government increased its pressure on the Kurdish peoples in Turkey by entering into an alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party, which stands out with its racist and xenophobic stance. In this context, by disregarding democratic principles and institutions, The Turkish government has removed from office 48 co-mayors from the Peoples' Democratic Party and 72 co-mayors had been arrested since the first trustee appointment in June 2019.²⁸

336,315 PEOPLE ARE IN JAIL WHILE THE TOTAL CAPACITY OF THE PRISONS IS 286,797: Prisons have become overcrowded due to arbitrary detentions and political revenge operations. Despite its total capacity of 286,797 people, the number of detainees and convicts in Turkish prisons is 336,315 (over capacity by 49,518 prisoners).²⁹

25 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/615e9c03e618583383cc9786/t/64a680da1d3bca76310608f9/1688633574637/Q1+2023.pdf>

26 <https://stockholmcf.org/press-freedom-in-turkey-2023-in-review/>

27 <https://www.institute.org/report/persecutory-confiscation-amounting-to-crimes-against-humanity-case-of-the-gulen-group>

28 <https://stockholmcf.org/trustees-appointed-to-municipalities-upon-erdogans-instructions-interior-minister-says/>

29 <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/turkey/>

TURKEY'S GLOBAL DECLINE: DEMOCRACY AND JUDICIARY IN CRISIS

165th OUT OF 180 COUNTRIES IN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS:

"Authoritarianism is gaining ground in Türkiye, challenging media pluralism. All possible means are used to undermine critics." Reporters Without Borders

Turkey ranked 165 among 180 countries in the 2021 Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders.³⁰

117TH OUT OF 142 COUNTRIES IN THE RULE OF LAW INDEX:

Turkey ranks 117th out of 142 countries in the Rule of Law Index and 133rd out of 142 countries in terms of fundamental rights.³¹

147TH OUT OF 163 COUNTRIES IN THE SAFETY RANKING:

Turkey is ranked 147th out of 163 countries in the World's Safest Countries index according to the Economy and Peace Institute.³²

140 OUT OF 169 COUNTRIES IN THE DEMOCRACY INDEX:

Turkey ranked 140th in the Liberal Democracy Index list, categorized as an electoral autocracy, and defined as among the worst offenders along with Nicaragua, Central African Republic, and Guatemala.³³

30 <https://rsf.org/en/country-t%C3%BCrkiye>

31 <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/global>

32 <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GPI-2023-Web.pdf>

33 https://v-dem.net/documents/43/v-dem_dr2024_lowres.pdf