

# MEDIA MONITORING REPORT



# 2024



**M4D PROJECT**

MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRACY FOR MEDIA



Avrupa Birliđi tarafından finanse  
edilmektedir

## It's a Publication of the Journalists' Association

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Association of Journalists and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Bu yayın Avrupa Birliđi'nin maddi desteđi ile hazırlanmıřtır. İerik tamamıyla Gazeteciler Cemiyeti sorumluluđu altındadır ve Avrupa Birliđinin grşlerini yansıtmak zorunda deđildir.



This report was produced by the Media for Democracy/Democracy for Media Project team of the Journalists' Association, with financial support from the European Union. It incorporates open-source materials, media monitoring, various applications and notifications submitted to the project office, media ownership, and journalists' job satisfaction surveys conducted under the M4D Project, as well as the Association's Press for Freedom reports. Any part or all of this report may be reproduced, provided the source is credited. The content is the sole responsibility of the Association of Journalists and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

**Editors:** Yusuf Kanlı, Kenan řener

**Typesetting:** Elif Yazıcı Gmřbıak

**Cover Photo:** SOPA Images via ZUMA Press Wire - Depo Photos Warsaw Poland / Volha Shukaila

Special thanks to:

We gratefully acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Media for Democracy/Democracy for Media Project team whose efforts were essential to the preparation of this report. We also thank Dr. ađrı Kaderođlu Bulut and the members of the Press for Freedom Working Group for their valuable contributions, the National Committee members of the M4D Project for their expert guidance, and Nazmi Bilgin, President of the Journalists' Association for his support in making this work possible. This report would not have been possible without their invaluable contributions.

Association of Journalists Press House

### Telephone

**Mobile:** +90 533 045 08 67

**Telephon:** +90 312 468 12 09

**Fax:** +90 312 468 23 84

### E-Post

[info@gc-tr.org](mailto:info@gc-tr.org)

[info@media4democracy.org](mailto:info@media4democracy.org)

### Web Address

[www.gc-tr.org](http://www.gc-tr.org)

[www.media4democracy.org](http://www.media4democracy.org)

### Address

skp Caddesi (evre Sk.)

No:35, ankaya, Ankara



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	7
<b>1- PRESS FREEDOM CLIMATE IN TURKEY IN 2024</b> .....	8
a. Digital Monopolies: A New and Rising Threat.....	10
<b>2- LEGAL REGULATIONS ON PRESS FREEDOM: STATE AND GOVERNMENT POLICY</b> .....	11
a. Legal Regulations, Court Cases and Detained Journalists.....	11
Legal Regulations.....	11
Press Advertisement Agency's Internet Traffic Regulation.....	11
Disinformation Law Targets Independent Media.....	11
Foreign Influence Bill Withdrawn.....	12
Constitutional Court Rulings.....	12
European Court Rulings.....	12
Press Trials.....	13
Press Card Regulations.....	14
b. Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK and Press Advertisement Agency (BİK).....	15
RTÜK.....	15
TV License Imposition on YouTube.....	16
YouTube Becomes Escape Route.....	16
Article 8 of RTÜK's Regulations .....	17
c. TRT during Election Period .....	18
d. Human Rights Violations: Censorship, Violence, Targeting, Threats, Discrimination .....	18
Compensation Fines.....	19
Journalists Under Target.....	19
Türkgün Newspaper Targets Four Journalists.....	20
Grey Wolves Target Journalists with Threats.....	20
Özlem Gürses Faces Online Backlash and House Arrest.....	20
e. 2024 Internet Access Restrictions .....	21
Access to Media Platforms and News Sites .....	21
Distribution of News Subjected to Access Restrictions.....	21
<b>3- THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MEDIA</b> .....	23
a. Transparent Financial Policy, Editorial Principles, and Accountability.....	23
b. Media Ownership .....	23
Nefes Newspaper Launched.....	23
Flash Haber TV Changes Hands Twice.....	23
Ciner Group Exits Media Industry .....	24
Ekol TV Launched.....	24
CNBC-e Makes Return to Broadcasting .....	24
"Lack of Transparency in Media Capital Damages Journalism" .....	24
No Legal Barriers to Monopoly in Media .....	25
c. Circulations.....	25
Paper .....	26
Annual Average Circulation.....	26
d. Rating Shares.....	27
e. Condition of Press Workers.....	28
Forms of Employment .....	29
Wages, Working Hours and Job Security in Journalism.....	30
Journalists in the News Production Process and Accessing Information .....	31
Practices of Censorship and Self-Censorship.....	31
Practices of Threats, Criminalization, Detention, and Prosecution.....	33
Experiences of Gender-Based Discrimination.....	34
<b>4 - DISINFORMATION AND INFORMATION MONOPOLY</b> .....	35
<b>5- ACTIVITIES OF ASSOCIATIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS</b> .....	37
The Activities of Associations, Political Parties, and CSOs in 2024.....	37
Key Reports on Press and Freedom of Expression in 2024.....	38
<b>6- CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT</b> .....	39
Suggestions .....	39
1. Legal Reform and the Establishment of Judicial Independence.....	40
2. Transformation of Media Ownership and Economic Structure .....	40
3. Strengthening Solidarity and Collective Resilience Mechanisms.....	40
4. Transforming International Support Mechanisms.....	40
5. Media Literacy and Public Awareness.....	40



# TABLES AND GRAPHS

---

GRAPH 1: The Number of Journalists in Prison: 2012-2024.	12
GRAPH 2: Press Card Ownership	13
TABLE 1: Significant Administrative Fines from January to December 2024	16
GRAPH 3: "How often do you experience concerns of criminalization or prosecution for your reporting?"	19
GRAPH 4: News Topics Impacted by Access Restrictions in 2024	21
GRAPH 5 : Average Circulation in 2024: 12-Month Overview	24
TABLE 2 : 2024 Daily Average Sales of Widely Circulated Newspapers	25
GRAPH 6 : Hürriyet Newspaper's Average Circulation Over the Years	26
TABLE 3 : 2024 Average Rating Shares Between 19:00 and 24:00 Across All Viewers	26
GRAPH 7 : 2024 Prime Time Average Rating Shares	27
GRAPH 8: Unionization Rates by Industry Over the Years (Percentage)	28
GRAFİK 9 : Journalists' Forms of Employment	29
GRAFİK 10 : Journalists' Wages	30
GRAPH 11 : "My journalistic activities have been subjected to censorship at times."	31
GRAPH 12 : "There have been times when I refrained from reporting due to concerns about being censored or criticized."	31
GRAPH 13: "How often do you experience concerns of criminalization or prosecution for your reporting?"	32
GRAPH 14: "I have faced threats as a consequence of my journalism at certain times."	33
GRAPH 15: "I have faced detention or legal prosecution as a result of my journalistic activities."	33



# INTRODUCTION

---

The Media for Democracy / Democracy for Media (M4D) Project, implemented by the Journalists Association with the financial support of the European Union, was launched in 2019 with the aim of monitoring, documenting, and sharing developments regarding press and freedom of expression in Turkey. This project is not merely a monitoring initiative; it is also a multi-layered civil society effort that seeks to strengthen solidarity among journalists, make structural problems in the media sector visible, and generate solution proposals to address these problems.

The project completed its initial three-year implementation phase in April 2022. The second three-year phase commenced in July 2022. During this new phase, media monitoring activities have been carried out in a more systematic and comparative manner through semi-annual and annual reports. While the semi-annual reports evaluate developments from the first half of the year, the annual reports include both year-round developments and specific field research such as the Professional Satisfaction Survey.

Media monitoring studies related to 2023 were presented to the public in two separate reports. The first part was published in August 2023, and the second and complementary part was released in April 2024. These reports highlighted not only pressure and rights violations in the media sector but also provided insight into social indicators such as journalists' working conditions, economic situations, and levels of professional satisfaction.

Prepared within this framework, the 2024 Annual Media Monitoring Report is the product of monitoring activities carried out throughout the year under the M4D Project, regional meetings held with journalists, and consultations with civil society actors. The report comprehensively addresses legal developments concerning press and freedom of expression, judicial processes, the practices of RTÜK and the Press Advertisement Agency (BİK), problems related to media ownership and monopolization, physical and digital threats to journalists, and economic vulnerabilities in the media sector.

This report on 2024 is further supported by data recorded daily under the Journalists Association's long-standing "Journalism for Freedom (ÖiB)" Project, helping to present a robust document in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The report also includes the results of the 2024 Professional Satisfaction Survey, conducted online in February–March 2025 with the participation of 292 journalists working in various regions of Turkey. This survey offers current and comparative data on various topics, from working conditions and income levels to censorship experiences and job satisfaction, providing a concrete overview of the structural problems in the sector.

Beyond all this content, what distinguishes the M4D Project reports is that they not only diagnose problems but also generate solutions. Therefore, at the end of the report, concrete recommendations are presented to help strengthen press freedom in Turkey, including policy proposals, solidarity models, and suggestions for enhancing international support mechanisms.



# 1 - PRESS FREEDOM CLIMATE IN TURKEY IN 2024

2024 was marked by a clear increase in pressure on press freedom and freedom of expression in Turkey. The proposed bill introducing a new crime definition based on “Foreign Influence,” which remained on the agenda throughout the year despite not being enacted, RTÜK’s record broadcast bans on TV channels based on controversial legal grounds, new blows to the economic independence of the press due to the Press Advertising Agency’s regulations and Google’s arbitrary algorithm changes, physical attacks on journalists covering protests and the increasing use of arbitrary house arrest sentences for journalists deepened Turkey’s press freedom crisis in 2024.

No measures were introduced to strengthen the press and freedom of expression, and with the Disinformation Law enacted in January, censorship and methods of punishing journalists gained a new legal form. In addition to the disruption of journalism and freedom of expression through legal regulations, the police’s intervention methods against journalists, as well as the judiciary’s prolonged detention periods and house arrest sentences, became standard forms of unlawful punishment.

In 2024, a total of 112 journalists were detained in Turkey over the year. The number of journalists arrested increased significantly, reaching 43, compared to the previous year. By the end of 2024, the number of journalists either detained or imprisoned was determined to be at least 30. According to the Job Satisfaction Survey conducted as part of the M4D Project, 36% of journalists reported being detained or prosecuted due to their journalistic work and nearly half experience frequent concerns about prosecution during news production. More than 40% of the journalists who participated in the survey reported that they refrained from pursuing certain stories due to concerns about legal action.

In 2024, Turkey’s media crisis extended beyond legal interventions and law enforcement barriers. Ciner Group’s decision to divest its media holding and the controversies surrounding the sale of Flash Haber TV heightened concerns over media ownership transparency. Journalists’ Association President Nazmi Bilgin noted that the persistence of non-transparent “gray zone” financing within Turkey’s media capital continues to undermine both journalism and democracy, and he urged full disclosure of the press’s financial relationships.

One of the most significant political events of 2024 was the March 31 local elections, during which allegations of ballot trafficking and attacks on journalists’ right to report came to the fore. After the vote, journalists attempting to cover protests against the appointment of a trustee in Van were blocked by law enforcement and six were detained, and in Diyarbakır’s Sur district, reporters were assaulted while an Anadolu Agency vehicle was struck by gunfire.

In addition to threats and pressure on press and freedom of expression, poverty remained one of the principal challenges facing journalists in Turkey in 2024. Since 2019, the severe impoverishment and price inflation felt across society have rendered wages insufficient, representing a major barrier to the sustainability of journalism under insecure working conditions. The 2025 Professional Satisfaction Survey offers key insights into journalists’ struggles with remuneration, job security, and poverty.

When examining the wage distribution in the field, it is observed that ascending the professional–organizational hierarchy corresponds with increasing salaries for a diminishing number of journalists, while descending the tiers aligns with decreasing salaries for a growing number of journalists. In this respect, the wage distribution can be described as a “pyramid” model.

When this relatively structured situation is compounded by the country’s economic crisis, inflation, and the erosion of purchasing power, a dire picture emerges regarding journalists’ wages.

Accordingly, in 2024, 77.1% of journalists earned up to ₺30,000 (three out of four journalists), whereas in 2025 this proportion fell to 56.2%. The proportion of journalists earning ₺30,000–₺60,000 rose from 15.7% in 2024 to 21.3% in 2025. Despite this nominal increase, given that official inflation has continued to exceed 40% in this period, the fact that more than half of journalists still earn no more than ₺30,000, and that only one-fifth reach the ₺30,000–₺60,000 bracket, represents an alarming situation. Considering that as of March 2025 the hunger threshold stood at ₺23,615 and the poverty line at ₺76,922, this scenario becomes even more bleak.



The persistence of such low wages in a socially vital profession like journalism not only undermines journalists' ability to meet basic living expenses but also severely restricts their financial capacity for professional development and participation in socio-cultural activities, a situation that can be said to exert a suppressive effect on their professional and societal competencies.

In parallel, journalists' statements regarding their wages and livelihood practices are striking: 77.1% of journalists disagree with the statement "I can comfortably cover my expenses with the wage I receive," meaning three out of four indicate they cannot meet their basic needs on their current pay, while only 8.7% agree that their salary suffices (Graph 13). According to these outcomes, journalists in Turkey believe they are unable to make ends meet or receive fair compensation for their labor, a situation that is likely to precipitate professional burnout and disillusionment.

In 2024, pressures on the press and media in Turkey were also reflected in reports by international organizations.

In its report on Turkey's March 31, 2024 local elections, the Council of Europe noted that a deteriorating environment for freedom of expression and of the media also influenced the electoral process. "The worsening state of freedom of expression and the media has not only created an atmosphere of threats and pressure but through fear of prosecution-induced self-censorship has impeded the delivery of impartial and balanced information to citizens. At the same time, laws designed to safeguard the neutrality of news processes and the state agencies charged with upholding them have frequently been neglected,"\* the report observed.\*

While the report acknowledged that certain preparations for digital transformation in the Turkish media sector are underway, it raised explicit concerns about the independence of RTÜK. On the legislative front, it found that "the regulations governing radio, television and on-demand media services are unclear in terms of scope, definitions and licensing criteria, and include controversial provisions empowering restrictions on online broadcast content and granting broad judicial oversight."\*\*

According to the Media Freedom Rapid Response January–June 2024 report, Turkey registered the highest alarm levels among EU member and candidate states, followed by war-torn Ukraine.\*\* The organization's annual report identifies Georgia and Turkey as the countries where police and security forces carried out the most attacks on press freedom. Moreover, of the 82 documented attacks on media workers across EU member and candidate states during the year, Turkey accounted for the largest number.\*\*\*

According to Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, Turkey fell to 158th place, with President Tayyip Erdoğan's re-election cited as a new source of concern for press freedom \*\*\*\*

In Article 19's Global Expression 2024 report, Turkey dropped to 138th place, with the report highlighting an increase in attacks on journalists and self-censorship over the past decade. .

The Women's Press Freedom Q1 2024 report drew attention to one female journalist murder and the detention of former TRT correspondent Elif Akkuş, noting that Turkey ranks among the leading countries for attacks and rights violations against women journalists, with 56 rights violations documented and 30 separate lawsuits filed against women journalists in the first four months of 2024.

The M4D Project's Professional Satisfaction Survey also revealed striking findings regarding women in the profession, observing that the proportion of women declines with age, indicating that it is more difficult for women than men to remain in journalism into later stages of their careers.

Finally, Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2024 report placed Turkey in the "Not Free" category after a 27-point decline in freedom over the past decade, drawing attention to government control over the media and to the pressures, prosecutions, and attacks faced by journalists.

\* <https://rm.coe.int/local-elections-in-turkiye-31-march-2024-co-rapporteurs-david-eray-swi/1680b1c01c>  
\*\* [https://www.ab.gov.tr/siteimages/birimler/kpb/2024\\_trkiye\\_report\\_tr.pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/siteimages/birimler/kpb/2024_trkiye_report_tr.pdf)  
\*\*\* <https://www.ecpmf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/MR-2024-Final-Draft-Pages.pdf>  
\*\*\*\* <https://www.mappingmediafreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Monitoring-Report-2024.pdf>  
\*\*\*\*\* <https://rsf.org/en/2024-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-under-political-pressure>



## a. Digital Monopolies: A New and Rising Threat

In 2024, one of the growing challenges for journalists in Turkey was the harmful dominance of digital monopolies. Once a sphere that expanded freedom of expression, the internet has become a domain governed by the revenue objectives of major corporations, with rules continually reshaped to serve those interests. Rules that exceed national legislation and against which rights defenders can scarcely intervene and that are defined by the ethics of international monopolies rather than principles of freedom of expression have become one of the primary factors shaping Turkey's press freedom environment and are beginning to point to an even greater looming threat.

In its bid to “promote original journalism,” Google announced that it would implement periodic changes to its traffic algorithms beginning in 2024. In practice, however, these algorithm updates have penalized independent journalism rather than rewarding it.

Following Google's algorithm revision in May, independent media outlets in Turkey experienced a sharp decline in web traffic, with ad revenues falling by 60–70 percent and precipitating a new economic crisis. Although Google stated that the changes were intended to remove “copy-and-paste” and toxic, non-original content from search results, many news and content websites in Turkey and globally suffered significant harm as a result. Journalists at Turkey's independent and opposition outlets characterized the decision as a “threat to independent media” and “a form of censorship.”

Uğur Koç, Web Coordinator at BirGün, observed that “about a month ago, traffic from Google Discover and Google News was effectively reduced to zero. Today, independent media outlets are barely visible on either platform. While the public's right to information is being undermined, the existence of independent media is also under threat.”

T24 Editor Sibel Yüklük added on social media that “reader traffic has dropped by 80 percent. This means that every independent news site faces imminent bankruptcy, and thousands of press workers already struggling will be pushed into deep poverty.”

All news websites in Turkey known for their independent and dissenting coverage, closely followed by large segments of society, ended 2024 facing severe financial hardship. In the first quarter of 2025, as this report was being prepared for publication, leading independent outlet GazeteDuvar ceased all operations, shut down its website, and left 45 journalists unemployed. Diken, Artı Gerçek, Medyascope, T24, Ekonomim, Gazete Pencere, BirGün and Kısa Dalga issued a joint statement protesting “Google's destructive embargo” emphasizing that this issue had become a form of democracy crisis and calling on the public to take notice.\*

Google's non-transparent algorithm changes which have negatively impacted the revenues of online journalism have become a global media issue. The Sun, one of the UK's leading media outlets, reported a 50% decline in visits by the end of 2024 due to algorithm changes. The New York Times lost 27% of its traffic over the same period. Responses across the global press have varied, The Sun announced it would shift from its website to YouTube journalism to preserve traffic and ad revenue while the Canadian government filed suit against Google in November 2024 for violating antitrust laws. Google's emergence as an economic monopoly in online journalism remains one of the foremost challenges for digital media both worldwide and in Turkey.

\*<https://platform24.org/gazetecilik-komaya-girdi/>



## 2- LEGAL REGULATIONS ON PRESS FREEDOM: STATE AND GOVERNMENT POLICY

### a. Legal Regulations, Court Cases and Detained Journalists

#### Legal Regulations

##### Press Advertisement Agency's Internet Traffic Regulation

In September 2024, the Press Advertising Agency amended Articles 61 and 67, which regulate the minimum visitor traffic requirements for online news outlets. Citing that traffic fluctuations had suspended the right to publish official announcements and led to an increase in clickbait and SEO-driven journalism, the agency reduced the required minimum daily unique visitors and page views by 50% for websites eligible to publish official announcements. It was also decided to increase the coefficient rates for news outlets with higher traffic. The agency stated that the new regulation aims to support online journalism while preventing SEO-driven practices.

However, despite the reduction in traffic thresholds for official announcements, the current legislation still poses several challenges for online journalism. In the situation assessment meetings held in various regions as part of the M4D Project, local journalists consistently identified the limited revenue sources in online journalism and regulatory issues within the Press Advertising Agency as major concerns. Journalists working in local media pointed out that the absence of a local/national distinction in advertising eligibility creates inequality and exacerbates the economic vulnerability of local digital outlets.

Additionally, the stringent criteria set by the agency for both print and online journalism were among the most frequently mentioned issues. Therefore, while the reduction in traffic thresholds is a positive step, the current official announcement legislation remains one of the most significant barriers to media diversity in Turkey's already constrained media economy.

##### Disinformation Law Targets Independent Media

The new Press Law, which came into force in October 2022, introduced the controversial "disinformation" article, adding the offense of "publicly disseminating misleading information" to the Turkish Penal Code. This led to the law being widely referred to in public discourse as either the "censorship law" or the "disinformation law." Despite warnings from press professional organizations, the article has increasingly been used to suppress critical voices. Throughout 2024, it continued to function as a tool of censorship and pressure for journalists and human rights defenders. According to data compiled from open sources since the law's enactment, a total of 93 individuals, including 65 journalists, have been investigated. The topics that triggered the highest number of investigations were the earthquake and corruption. Of these cases, 17 resulted in acquittal, while 3 journalists received prison sentences<sup>\*</sup>

The specific topics and news reports subject to investigation since the enactment of the Disinformation Law clearly demonstrate that the law has targeted journalists and the public's right to access information

According to the 2024 Justice Monitoring Report by MLSA<sup>\*\*</sup> 10 journalists were tried throughout the year under Article 217/a of the Turkish Penal Code on charges of "spreading misleading information to the public." Journalists Ruşen Takva, Ahmet Kanbal, Tolga Şardan, Hasan Sivri, Ferit Arslan, Onur Öncü, Firat Bulut, and Rojda Oğuz stood trial due to their reporting on the February 6 earthquakes, judicial and electoral corruption, and crimes involving political party officials and state authorities. Tolga Şardan is currently on trial under the Disinformation Law, facing up to five years in prison over his article titled "The report MIT submitted to the Presidency."

<sup>\*</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/tr/halki-yaniltici-bilgiyi-yayma-sansur-yasasinin-golgesinde-ifade-ozgurlugu-raporu-yayinlandi>

<sup>\*\*</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/tr/mlsa-2024-adalet-gozlem-programi-raporu-dusunce-suc-tutuklama-ceza>



## Foreign Influence Bill Withdrawn

The most concerning development regarding the journalism profession this year was the “Foreign Influence Law Proposal,” which was brought to the parliamentary agenda in November. Initially presented in May as part of the 9th Judicial Package, the proposal was later withdrawn due to public backlash, only to be reintroduced to Parliament in November. It aims to add a new offense under Article 339/A to Chapter Seven of the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237, titled “Crimes Against State Secrets and Espionage,” under the heading “Committing Crimes Against the Security and Political Interests of the State.” However, the terms used in the proposal, such as “strategic interest,” “instruction,” and “domestic or foreign political interest of the state,” are highly open to interpretation and pose a direct threat to press and expression freedom. As highlighted by legal experts working on the matter, the law proposal also violates the principle of legality in crimes and punishments, including the principle of foreseeability, and is thus unconstitutional.

As seen in several other countries such as the United States, Russia, and Georgia, if the “foreign influence law” had passed in Parliament, it would have inevitably become a basis for arbitrary trials and detentions of journalists in a time when the line between state and politics is increasingly blurred.

The Media Solidarity Group, which includes the Journalists’ Association, tried to raise public awareness and organize reactions through various actions and events against the regulation. In a joint press statement, it was emphasized that this amendment creates pressure on all forms of journalistic activity. The statement warned that “this regulation, which contains serious ambiguity, will further restrict freedom of expression in Turkey and seriously violate the public’s right to access accurate information. Freedom of the press and expression are cornerstones of a democratic society. However, the proposed regulation aims to undermine this foundation and suppress society.”

Despite being removed from the 2024 judicial agenda due to reactions and protests by journalist associations, civil society organizations, and political parties, the Foreign Influence regulation remains a persistent threat.

## Constitutional Court Rulings

Although the Constitutional Court (AYM) did not rule on a high number of cases related to journalists’ rights in 2024, it issued significant violation rulings concerning arbitrary censorship stemming from the “violation of personal rights” and “national security” provisions of the Internet Law No. 5651. As of October 10, 2024, it annulled the provision on “violation of personal rights.” AYM also annulled a Presidential Decree provision related to activities conducted under the Presidency’s Directorate of Communications, which operated under the title of “combating manipulation and disinformation,” on the grounds that such activities “could lead to interference in press and expression freedom.” Additionally, the provision establishing the Department of Strategic Communication and Crisis Management within the Directorate of Communications for the purpose of combating manipulation and disinformation was also annulled. Continuing to receive new applications from numerous journalists, the Constitutional Court also condemned the Press Advertising Agency’s (BİK) arbitrary practice of cutting public ads, taking into consideration cases involving Evrensel, Cumhuriyet, BirGün, Sözcü, and Tunceli Emek. In cases such as Bizim FM, Sinan Aygül, and Sultan Eylem Keleş (with the announcement of the verdict deferred), the Court awarded a total compensation of 174,094 Turkish Lira

## European Court Rulings

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) awarded a total of 27,000 euros in compensation last year in response to the unlawful detention complaints filed by Ayşenur Parıldak and Ahmet Büken. In its ruling dated 8 October 2024, the ECtHR found that in four applications, the charge of insulting the president constituted a violation of freedom of expression. A violation of freedom of expression was also found in the case against nine individuals, including Sözcü newspaper and SZC TV owner Burak Akbay and several staff members, who were prosecuted over news content published in the paper.

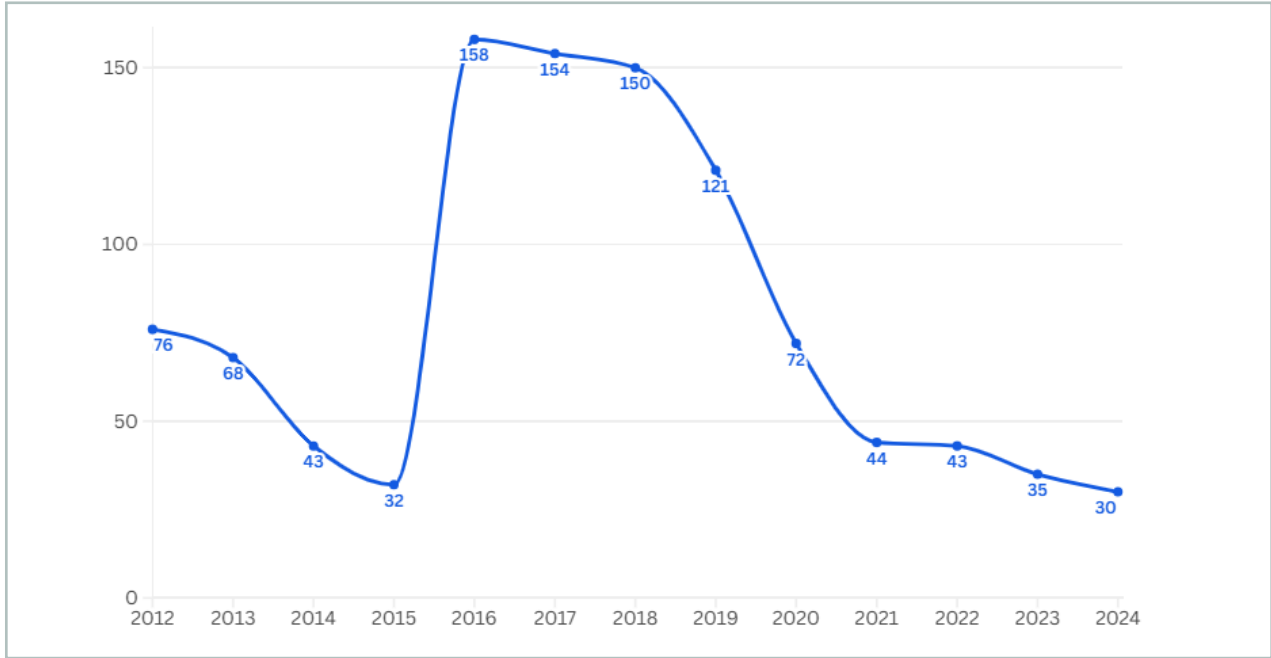
The Court also ruled that search and seizure orders issued at the request of RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) against two radio stations in Eskişehir violated freedom of the press and expression. It found that the compensation sought by Sözcü newspaper from journalist Rüstem Batum for his comments in 2015 on a news article about the paper also violated freedom of expression. Finally, it was recorded that 12 journalists were dismissed from their jobs last year.



## Press Trials

The following graph illustrates the number of journalists in prison as of the end of December 2024, based on records maintained since 2012, when the Journalists' Association began its media monitoring and reporting activities:

GRAPH 1: The Number of Journalists in Prison: 2012-2024



The graph's pronounced surge in 2016 reflects the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt. Although the number of imprisoned journalists began to decline from 2019 onward as sentences held over from the coup era were completed, it is important to note that the figure has never fallen below 30 in any given year. Therefore, the decrease depicted in the chart does not signify a normalization or a restoration of freedom.

In 2024, the two most prevalent charges brought against journalists were "insult" and "terrorist organization propaganda." Data from the Reporters Without Borders 2024 Index\* and the Expression Interrupted quarterly reports\* corroborate this trend. Over the past 12 months, a total of 20 journalists were prosecuted for insulting the President. However, insult charges extended beyond that single offense to include "insulting a public official for the performance of their duties," "denigrating the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey, or its institutions," "incitement to hatred and hostility," and "defamation."

Following charges of insult, defamation, and denigration, the next most prominent allegations were brought under the Anti-Terror Law and the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations.

- \* According to the Journalists' Association's Press for Freedom Project, at least 32 journalists were behind bars at the end of December.
- \* The Expression Interrupted Q3 2024 report found that 26 journalists were in prison by year's end.
- \* The MLSA 2024 Justice Monitoring Report recorded 21 journalists behind bars.
- \* Uluslararası Basın Enstitüsünün Türkiye'de Basın Özgürlüğü 2024 Yıllık Özetine göre 18 gazeteci histe Gazetecilerin en fazla karşılaştığı suçlama terörlle iltisak ve hakaret.
- \* The International Press Institute's 2024 Annual Summary on Press Freedom in Turkey reported 18 journalists in prison, with the most frequent charges being links to terrorism and insult..
- \* The Journalists' Union of Turkey's (JUT) May 2023–2024 Press Freedom Report indicated that 13 journalists were incarcerated due to their journalistic activities, of whom 4 faced "membership in an armed organization" charges and 3 faced "violation of the constitution" charges.

\* <https://rsf.org/en/2024-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-under-political-pressure>



A total of 112 journalists were detained in Turkey over the course of 2024, compared with 78 in 2022 and 85 in 2023. This alarming rise directly reflects the impact of ambiguous legal measures such as the Disinformation Law and the increasingly politicized judiciary's criminalization of journalism and the public's right to information. The approximately twofold increase in arrests compared to the previous year indicates that judicial processes have become an unlawful means of punishing journalists. More than one third (36.7 percent) of the 292 journalists surveyed in the Job Satisfaction Survey reported experiencing detention or prosecution due to their journalistic activities..

## Press Card Regulations

The new Press Card Regulation published on April 10, 2023, under the revised Press Law reflected the gains secured by the Journalists' Association and other professional organizations in lawsuits before the Council of State, removing provisions that would have allowed card revocation if a journalist "engages in conduct that harms the honor of the press profession" or "acts contrary to national security or public order or adopts such conduct as a habit." However, controversial clauses adopted by the Press Advertisement Agency's General Assembly permitting the Press Ethics Commission to revoke a card for violations of "Press Ethics Principles" and allowing public information officers to receive press cards remain in the regulation

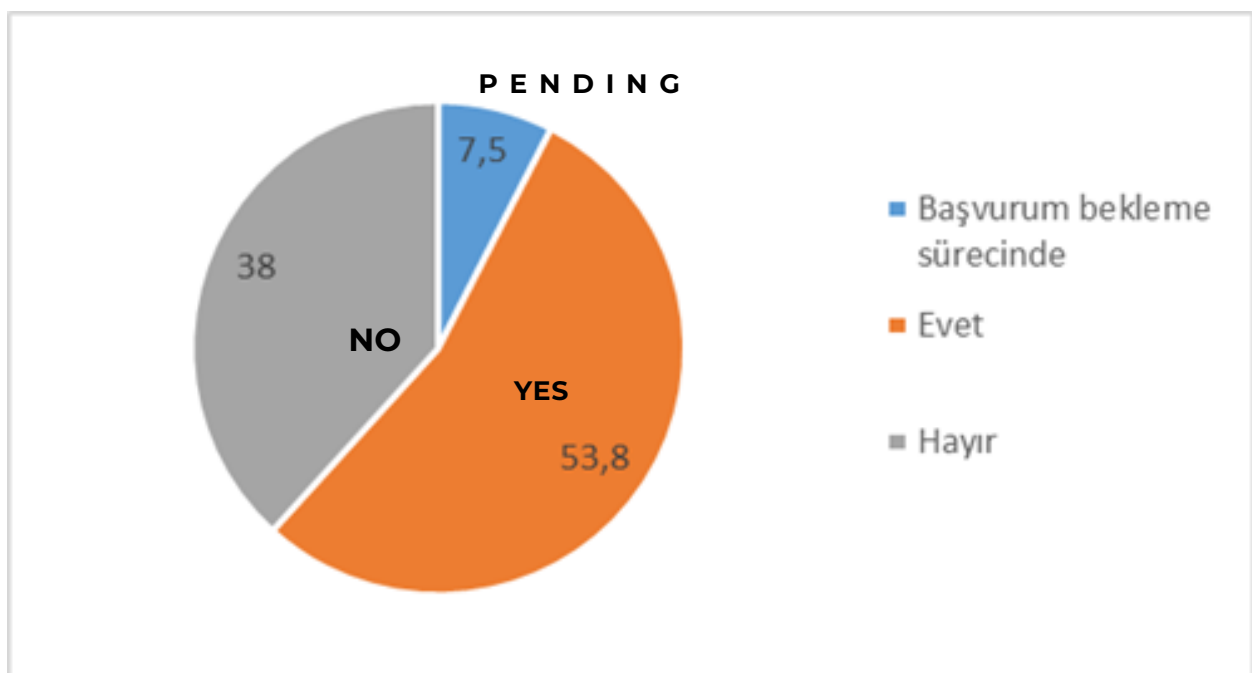
Similarly, the Journalists' Association and the Journalists' Union of Turkey challenged in 2023 before the Council of State the provisions barring a journalist whose card is revoked from obtaining a new card for one year, seeking suspension of enforcement and annulment.

In 2024, the Press Card Regulation was amended to limit creditable periods for free press cards to a maximum of 24 months when calculating eligibility for a permanent press card and to prohibit press card issuance to those not working in news within Anadolu Agency (AA) and Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT).

Three Press Card Commission meetings held on March 5, June 5, and November 5, 2024, produced 2.839 task-based press cards, 745 permanent press cards, 6 free press cards, and 2 honorary press cards. At the start of 2025, 22.929 press cards were in circulation, of which 7.684 were permanent; at the start of 2024, there were 20.860 cards, including 7.076 permanent cards.

The M4D Project's Job Satisfaction Survey reveals that 53.8% of journalists surveyed hold a press card, 38% do not, and 7.5% report their press card application is pending.

GRAPH 2: Press Card Ownership





This figure is significant and should not be underestimated. In recent years, the Presidency's Directorate of Communications has adopted a non-transparent and selective approach in processing press card applications. This has led to many journalists either receiving rejections or experiencing prolonged delays with no official response. This practice is increasingly being interpreted as a new form of political and administrative pressure on journalists. The issue of pending press card applications remains one of the key challenges shaping Turkey's contemporary media environment.

## **b. Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK and Press Advertisement Agency (BİK)**

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the Press Advertising Agency (BİK) are public institutions established to regulate, supervise, and support television and print media in Turkey. However, throughout 2024, the practices of these two institutions have frequently been a subject of debate within the media sector and have been particularly criticized in terms of freedom of expression and economic sustainability..

Following the Constitutional Court's pilot decision, BİK can no longer directly impose official advertisement bans based on the Press Ethics Principles. Nevertheless, the weight of the criteria regarding eligibility to publish official advertisements under the current legislation has created significant economic pressure, especially on local media outlets. This situation has led to continued criticism of the Press Advertising Agency's role in the sector. Indeed, during the Situation Assessment Meetings held within the scope of the M4D Project, local journalists identified BİK's practices as one of the main areas of concern.

RTÜK, on the other hand, has come to public attention particularly through the imposition of high fines and broadcast suspension decisions against television channels that adopt a critical editorial line. These practices are debated within the public and media circles in terms of the Council's scope of authority and responsibilities and are at times evaluated as being incompatible with press freedom.

The way both institutions implement existing legislation, as well as their approaches that go beyond their current mandates, have drawn criticism in terms of media pluralism and independence.

### **RTÜK**

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has used Article 8, Paragraph 1 of the Law on the Establishment and Broadcasting Services of Radio and Television to justify punitive measures against independent broadcasters that air content critical of the ruling government. The article places responsibility on broadcasters through provisions related to impartiality, the rule of law, national and moral values, separatism, discrimination, incitement to hatred and hostility, insults and slander beyond the limits of criticism, unjust gain, human dignity, and the privacy of private life.

However, despite opposition from three members elected from the CHP and DEM Party quotas, decisions are made by members of the Supreme Council elected from the AK Party and MHP quotas. Due to this imbalance, the decisions taken by the institution, particularly the sanctions imposed, can be influenced by political motivations

Although RTÜK claims to act within the framework of the law, paragraph 1 of Article 8, which is the basis for sanction decisions that pose a threat to press freedom, imposes responsibilities not only on broadcasters but also on RTÜK members through its 23 subclauses. While clauses such as "no partisan broadcasting in favor of political parties," "no one can be declared guilty without a court decision," and "no broadcasts that may influence the judicial process or impartiality" theoretically aim to support pluralistic, democratic, and egalitarian practice, in reality, the implementation of these clauses often reflects the personal judgments of government bureaucrats.

For example, RTÜK does not sanction television channels that openly support coalition parties in power, broadcast biased content, accuse opposition politicians using defamatory language, disseminate baseless slander, incite targeting and threats, and spread disinformation in favor of the political administration..

Previously making headlines with controversial statements about judicial processes and independent media outlets, RTÜK Chair Ebubekir Şahin's targeting and heavy insults toward journalist Fatih Altaylı in September 2024 serves as a summary of the current state of the institution. Likewise, the Council's political



and, according to some analyses, “partisan” stance is clearly reflected in the imbalance seen in sanction charts. RTÜK member İlhan Taşcı highlighted this political double standard by sharing the 2024 RTÜK “Shake-up” Report which revealed a 14-fold difference in the amount of monetary fines issued to pro-government versus opposition media outlets in 2024.

One of the most controversial sanctions by the Supreme Council in 2024 was the cancellation of Açık Radyo’s terrestrial broadcast license. Due to penalties imposed over a radio program referencing the “Armenian genocide,” Açık Radyo faced the termination of its terrestrial broadcast following an adverse ruling by Ankara’s 21st Administrative Court on October 16. Supported through actions and statements by professional associations and civil society organizations, the station decided to transition to internet broadcasting as of November 11.

### TV License Imposition on YouTube

Following a statement in 2024 by RTÜK President Ebubekir Şahin asserting that “All regular broadcasts, including those on the internet, fall under RTÜK’s oversight,” the authority announced that it would require YouTube journalists to obtain broadcasting licenses. Journalists publishing content on YouTube reacted strongly to the decision, describing it as a censorship attempt. RTÜK’s first move came as it gave Cumhuriyet newspaper’s YouTube channel a 72-hour deadline to apply for a license.

Erol Önderoğlu, RSF’s Turkey representative, commented on the matter: “This measure has nothing to do with a need for regulation, as it clearly aims to shape broadcasting practices. Once this process is complete, we fear that the future of international media outlets will become highly vulnerable, depending on the state of diplomatic relations with the countries involved.”

On December 27, 2024, RTÜK requested that Cumhuriyet newspaper apply for a license on the grounds that its YouTube channel was broadcasting online without official authorization. The authority warned that access to the channel would be blocked if the application was not submitted within 72 hours. The decision marked the first time a YouTube account in Turkey had been formally subjected to a licensing requirement

Veysel Ok, Co-Director of MLSA and a lawyer, criticized the protracted legal process:

“Five years ago, as MLSA, we filed a lawsuit with the Council of State seeking the annulment of the regulation that RTÜK imposed on both international and local media outlets. Although the file is complete, the Council of State has yet to deliver a verdict. Just last week, RTÜK imposed a licensing requirement on Cumhuriyet’s YouTube channel. This appears to be the first step in a far-reaching censorship mechanism that could impact countless journalists, bloggers, and online news providers. A decision by the Council of State to eliminate censorship through licensing is vital. We expect the Council to issue a ruling that upholds freedom of expression in accordance with the Constitution. We have submitted a supplementary petition to prompt a decision and hope that a ruling will be delivered soon.”

The regulation mandates that internet broadcasters obtain licenses and grants RTÜK and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) broad discretionary powers. The basis for determining license fees—ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 TRY—has also sparked debate. These fees are seen as deterrent, particularly for independent media outlets. In its appeal, MLSA emphasized that the regulation contains vague provisions and opens the door to arbitrary enforcement. Nonetheless, RTÜK and BTK defended the regulation and requested that the lawsuit be dismissed.

### YouTube Becomes Escape Route

The Oxford-Reuters 2024 report also highlighted the growing difficulties faced by journalists in Turkey’s mainstream media, noting that increasing censorship is pushing more journalists towards internet platforms. The report emphasized the issue as follows:

:

“The long-standing climate of media censorship in Turkey is also affecting freedom of debate and conversations on social media and video platforms. Over the past decade, many journalists have gained popularity on platforms like YouTube with little interference or oversight from the government. However, a number of recent legislative changes such as the Disinformation Law are now creating significant uncertainty and risk for journalists, rights advocates, and ordinary citizens. This year’s Digital News Report finds that a majority of those who share news online believe they need to be careful when discussing politics on digital platforms.”



## Article 8 of RTÜK's Regulations

In 2024, the highest penalties of the year were imposed on NOW TV, with a fine of 8 million TL for a lobster news report and a 10 million TL fine for criticism of the government in a news bulletin.

Between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, a total of 35 penalties were issued by the Supreme Board of RTÜK, based on Article 8 of Law No. 6112. Among these penalties, one was imposed on Kanal D for the TV series Arka Sokaklar (Back Streets), in addition to penalties for news bulletins and news-agenda programs. The crime occurred in an episode of the crime drama, where the series violated the principle that "it cannot be contrary to the national and moral values of society, general morality, and the principle of family protection," which led to an administrative fine of 10,051,734 TL. Additionally, as an administrative measure, two broadcasting suspension penalties were imposed.

Among the remaining 34 penalties, 21 involve criticism of political figures such as Devlet Bahçeli and Mehmet Uçum, corruption news related to the ruling party and government, and political criticisms. Two penalties were imposed for expressions related to "Kurdistan" and "Armenian genocide," resulting in both fines and broadcasting suspensions. Eleven penalties were issued for violations of the broadcast ban on a terrorist attack targeting TUSAŞ.

RTÜK member İlhan Taşçı, in his 2024 penalty report shared on social media under the title "2024 Shake-up Report" presented the double standard between pro-government and independent media organizations with figures. According to Taşçı's post:

- \* "44 penalties were imposed on opposition channels, while only 4 were imposed on pro-government channels."
- \* "Opposition channels received 10 times more penalties than pro-government channels."
- \* "63 million 50 thousand TL in fines were imposed on the opposition; 450 thousand TL on pro-government channels."
- \* "In 2024, there were 6 warnings, 4 removals from the catalog, 5 program suspensions, 5 temporary broadcasting suspensions, and 7 license cancellations."

A total of 42 penalties were imposed, with 10 on Now (Fox) TV, 9 on Tele 1, 9 on Flash Haber, 6 on SZC TV, 5 on Halk TV, and 3 on Açık Radyo. In total, broadcasters were required to pay 63 million 50 thousand TL as a result of these decisions made by RTÜK.

RTÜK completed the year 2024 by breaking records in monetary penalties. While the number of sanctions decreased, the penalty amounts increased. Now TV, SZC TV, Tele 1, Halk TV, and Flash Haber were imposed with 30 separate sanctions and a total fine of 43.5 million TL, while mainstream media outlets received record fines due to daytime program broadcasts and coverage related to the TUSAŞ attack. The fines for daytime programs on Show TV, ATV, Star TV, Beyaz TV, TV8, and Kanal D amounted to 81.7 million TL. Furthermore, Star TV, Now TV, Show TV, and Kanal D were fined 41.2 million TL for scenes of violence and violations of national and moral values in their TV series.

In addition, a fine of approximately 16 million TL was imposed on 13 channels for violating the broadcasting ban related to TUSAŞ.

TABLE 1: Significant Administrative Fines from January to December 2024

YAYINCI	2024 YILI PARA CEZASI SAYISI
NOW TV	8 Ceza, 38.423.876 TL
HALK TV	4 Ceza, 1.831.332 TL
TELE 1	7 Ceza, 700.898 TL
SÖZCÜ TV	2 Ceza, 1.100.651 TL
FLASH HABER	5 Ceza, 529.178 TL
CNN TÜRK	1 Ceza, 1.034.635,00 TL
KANAL D	2 Ceza, 20.103.468 TL
BEYAZ TV	1 Ceza, 361.195 TL
SHOW TV	1 Ceza, 11.883.211 TL
TGRT HABER	1 Ceza, 213.294 TL
ATV	1 Ceza, 18.020.801,00 TL
STAR TV	1 Ceza, 5.962.893,00 TL



## c. TRT during Election Period

TRT drew attention in the 2024 local elections by broadcasting biased coverage in favor of the ruling coalition. Continuing its approach from the 2023 general elections, TRT allocated 78 times more airtime to the ruling party, AK Party, and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, than to CHP and Özgür Özel. The public institution, which is funded by citizens' taxes and should remain neutral, not only favored AKP but also MHP, providing them with much more airtime than to CHP and İYİ Party during this election period.

RTÜK members Tuncay Keser and İlhan Taşcı filed a complaint to the Upper Board, accusing TRT of biased coverage during the election period regarding the candidates of the ruling and opposition parties and called for action. The petition stated: "Upon reviewing the 40-day broadcast records, the airtime of the ruling party and the main opposition party leaders has been calculated. During the 40-day broadcast period, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and AK Party had a total of 1.945 minutes of airtime, while the main opposition party leader, Özgür Özel, and CHP had only 25 minutes."

In the 24-hour broadcast analysis on February 6, 2024, marking the anniversary of the devastating earthquake that affected 11 provinces in Turkey, TRT Haber allocated 6 hours and 42 minutes to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and AK Party, 38 minutes to Devlet Bahçeli and MHP, and 1 minute 53 seconds to Meral Akşener and İYİ Party. However, despite being in the affected region and making public statements, CHP leader Özgür Özel and CHP were not featured on screen at all.

The 2024 Digital Journalism Report from the Oxford University Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism also highlights TRT's biased broadcasting as a significant factor contributing to the decline of press freedom in Turkey.

The Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) banned advertising on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on July 19, 2023, due to the platform's failure to designate and notify a representative. In Turkey, administrative fines ranging from 10.000 TL to 100.000 TL can be imposed on those violating the advertising ban. The Expression Freedom Association assessed the decision, stating: "The advertising ban on X raises concerns about the potential violation of freedom of expression, as it could lead to the granting of privileges to certain groups. Despite the ban, advertisements run by some candidates during the election process undermine the principles of fairness and equality. The advantage gained by those who defy this ban leads to a serious violation of freedom of expression, exacerbating inequality and arbitrary practices during the election period."

## d. Human Rights Violations: Censorship, Violence, Targeting, Threats, Discrimination

The year 2024 has been recorded as a year in which journalists were directly targeted and threatened by political party leaders and members. Additionally, as seen in the case of Özlem Gürses, house arrest and travel bans for journalists and human rights defenders have become routine. According to the 2024 BIA Media Monitoring Report prepared by Reporters Without Borders representative Erol Önderoğlu\* at least 25 journalists and 5 media outlets were attacked, at least 82 media representatives were threatened, at least 10 journalists were arrested, and at least 57 journalists were detained during the past year.

In 2024, most of the threats against journalists came from MHP-affiliated politicians or groups close to the party. Among those following the Sinan Ateş murder were 82 journalists who were threatened in various ways. According to the findings in the Media Monitoring Report, at least 10 journalists were arrested throughout the year. 57 journalists and YouTube journalists were detained, some under police violence, and most often with judicial control measures such as a foreign travel ban, mandatory signing, or house arrest, leading to their release.

Throughout the year, at least 36 journalists including Gözde Bedeloğlu, Naci Sapan, Can Ataklı, Erkan Çapraz, Furkan Karabay, etc. were convicted of crimes such as "insulting a public official," "insulting the president," "targeting officials fighting terrorism," "terrorist propaganda," and "membership in a terrorist organization." The total sentences handed down amounted to 97 years, 9 months, and 2 days in prison, as well as a judicial fine of 67.040 TL. During the same period, 53 journalists including Elif Akgül, Haluk Kalafat, Canan Rojin Akın, Barış Pehlivan, Ali Duran Topuz, Görkem Kınacı, etc. were acquitted as a result of criminal cases brought against them.

\*<https://bianet.org/haber/2024te-iktidar-gazeteciye-kan-kusturdu-303909>



In the past year, at least three journalists (Uğur Koç, Levent Gültekin, and Hayko Bağdat) were convicted of the crime of “insulting the president” and 17 journalists are still on trial, facing a sentence of 4 years and 8 months in prison. Article 299 of the Turkish Penal Code, titled “Insulting the President” has led to the prosecution of over 250 journalists during President Erdoğan’s 10-year tenure, with at least 77 of them (some with postponed sentences) being sentenced to prison or fines.

Cengiz Cengiz Erdinç received an 11-month judicial control sentence in December 2023 under the disinformation law due to a social media post about an MIT judicial report.

In November 2024, Tuğçe Yılmaz, a Bianet reporter, was detained on suspicion of “membership in a terrorist organization” during a police raid in Eskişehir, but was released under judicial control.

Furkan Karabay, a reporter for the 10Haber website, was detained on charges of “targeting officials involved in counterterrorism,” “insulting a public official,” and “publicly disseminating misleading information.” He was later arrested based on the first charge, but was released on November 18th with a foreign travel ban after the Istanbul 17th Criminal Court’s decision.

According to the Press Freedom Violation report\* by CHP Eskişehir MP Utku Çakırözer, journalists were brought before the court 720 times based on their news, articles, and social media posts. At least 35 journalists were investigated or charged, and 14 were arrested. 18 journalists entered the new year either detained or convicted in prison. Journalists were also sentenced to fines and compensation payments for their news and posts.

A criminal complaint was filed against journalist Murat Ağirel’s book titled Havala, which addresses drug trafficking and money laundering in Turkey, and the book was requested to be confiscated. Foreign drug lords imprisoned in Turkey filed lawsuits requesting compensation and the seizure of journalist Timur Soykan’s book Baron İstilası. An access ban was imposed on an article by Fırat Can of Yeni Yaşam newspaper, and the newspaper was ordered to be seized. It was also revealed that news and photos from BirGün newspaper were cut and confiscated in Erzincan Prison. Both BirGün and Evrensel newspapers were banned in Marmara Prison, claiming they were “prohibited.”

## Compensation Fines

Journalist İsmail Saymaz was sentenced to pay compensation over his criticism of the Türken Foundation established in the U.S. by the pro-government Ensar and TÜRGEV foundations. Similarly, Evrensel columnist Özcan Yaman was fined following a complaint from President Erdoğan’s son over his article “The Difference Between a Photographer and a Photojournalist”. Journalist Dilan Eren was also sentenced to pay compensation after Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy filed a complaint regarding one of her articles.

Cihah Bilgin, a reporter for the Haseke-based Hawar News Agency (ANHA), and freelance journalist Nazım Daştan who contributed to the Fırat News Agency, were killed in a drone strike in northern Syria. During a protest in Istanbul’s Şişli Square condemning the killings, 14 individuals including 10 journalists were violently detained by police. Nine of them were subsequently arrested.

## Journalists Under Target

MHP threatened 154 individuals, including journalists, academics, and politicians, over their comments on the Sinan Ateş case. The party stated that “members of separatist, liberal, Marxist, and FETÖ-linked structures are systematically and consistently slandering MHP in alliance with various global powers through content, news, and articles that align with their political tendencies.”

The 63 journalists targeted by MHP: Murat Muratoğlu, Akif Beki, Ali Kemal Erdem, Altan Sancar, Asuman Aranca, Atakan Sönmez, Ayşen Şahin, Bahadır Özgür, Barış Pehlivan, Caner Taşpınar, Çiğdem Toker, Deniz Zeyrek, Dinçer Gökçe, Nedim Türkmen, Elfin Tataroğlu, Elif Doğan Şentürk, Doğan Şentürk, Ersin Eroğlu, Fatih Ergin, Fatih Polat, Fırat Fıstık, Fikret Bila, Hakan Çelenk, Hilmi Hacaloğlu, Hüsnü Mahalli, İbrahim Kahveci, İnanç Uysal, İslam Özkan, İsmail Saymaz, Kemal Göktaş, Masum Gök, Mehmet Bal, Mehmet Tezkan, Merdan Yanardağ, Miyase İlknur, Murat Ağirel, Murat Karan, Murat Yetkin, Nevşin Mengü, Nevzat Çiçek, Nurcan Gökdemir, Orhan Uğuroğlu, Özlem Akarsu Çelik, Emre Kongar, Sertaç Eş, Seyhan Avşar, Taha Akyol, Timur Soykan, Uğur Dündar, Yaşar Aydın, Yavuz Oğhan, Yavuz Selim Demirağ, Yıldız Yazıcıoğlu, Zübeyde Sarı, Mustafa Balbay, Mustafa Kurdaş, Hilal Köylü, Orhan Bursalı, Umut Taştan, Alican Uludağ, Namık Koçak, Özlem Gürses, Yalçın Doğan.

\*<https://www.evrensel.net/haber/539422/chpli-cakirozerin-2024-basin-ozgurlugu-raporu-baski-sansur-tehdit-zindan>



## Türkgün Newspaper Targets Four Journalists

Kadir Yıldız of Türkgün newspaper threatened journalists Barış Terkoğlu, Murat Ağirel, Timur Soykan, and Barış Pehlivan over their reporting and commentary on the Sinan Ateş case. In his article, Yıldız wrote: “How much longer will these individuals, who devote a significant portion of their time to hostility against MHP, continue to dance a tango over the murder? Do these tabloid-obsessed names prefer to maintain their reign through Halk TV’s smear campaigns, engage in made-to-order marriages, or live a communal life?”

## Grey Wolves Target Journalists with Threats

Deputy Chairman of the Grey Wolves Burak Kılıç who is mentioned in the indictment concerning the killing of Sinan Ateş, targeted journalists Timur Soykan, İsmail Saymaz, Barış Terkoğlu, Erk Acarer, and Alican Uludağ in a social media post.

In the post, where he also included the journalists’ photos, Kılıç wrote: “We are not fountain pens filled by EU and US funds’ ink, we are pencils made from lead. And one day, the lead will prevail..” Following backlash, Kılıç deleted the post.

Although Kılıç is not listed as a suspect in the indictment regarding Ateş’s death, he is referred to as a “suspect” in sections where his statements are included. He had sent the location of Ateş’s residence to Tolgahan Demirbaş and stated that they wanted to hang a banner in front of Ateş’s home.

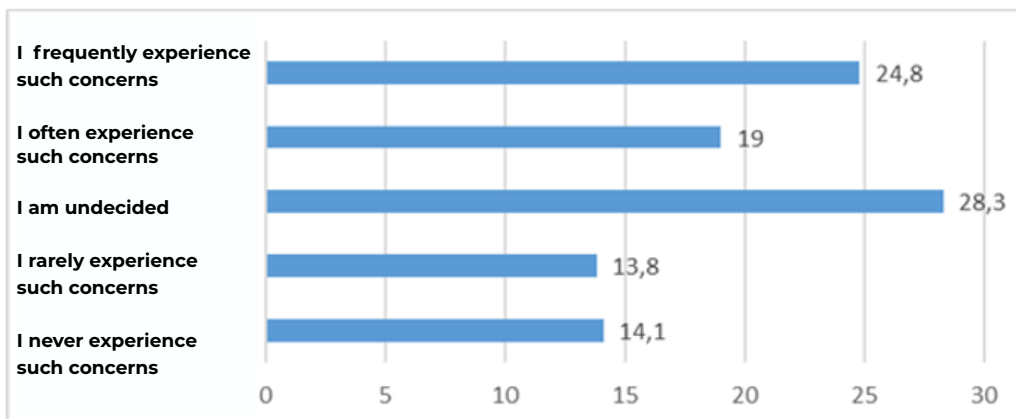
## Özlem Gürses Faces Online Backlash and House Arrest

Journalist Özlem Gürses faced online backlash and was later placed under house arrest after comments made in a video published on her YouTube channel, OZ. Referring to the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), she stated: “As you can see, the ISIS-like structure, that is, the TSK-SMO formation has made small gains in areas populated by Kurds.” The remark led to her being targeted on social media, followed by her detention.

Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader Özgür Özel responded to her arrest, saying: “The judiciary, politicized by the government, continues to intimidate journalists with detentions. Özlem Gürses was publicly attacked over a sentence that was clearly misinterpreted in the heat of a live broadcast. She was then abruptly detained on the orders of the Chief Prosecutor recently appointed to Istanbul, despite being willing to appear for questioning. This unlawful act must end immediately. Let both the judiciary and the press do their jobs freely.”

Do such pressures hinder journalists from doing their work? In other words, are they afraid of being prosecuted for the stories they report? According to the M4D Job Satisfaction Survey, the answer from participating journalists was “yes.”

GRAPH 3: : “How often do you experience concerns of criminalization or prosecution for your reporting?”





Dr. Çağrı Kaderoğlu Bulut, who conducted the study, evaluated the findings as follows: "The high proportion of those who experience concerns of criminalization or prosecution for their reporting constitutes a part of the bleak picture of press and freedom of expression in Turkey. In addition to all the challenges and concerns related to working conditions, freedom of expression, censorship, and self-censorship, journalists also carry the burden of fear of being prosecuted or criminalized. This situation is significant in that it highlights the weight of pressure journalists are under, while also revealing the extent to which the barriers to independent journalism have intensified."

## e. 2024 Internet Access Restrictions

### Access to Media Platforms and News Sites

M4D reports aggregate internet censorship data from developments in open sources, the Freedom of Expression Association's (İFÖD) EngelliWeb website and reports, and studies by international freedom of expression organizations.

During 2024, access was blocked to platforms including Discord, Roblox, Instagram, and WattPad; 27 VPN services; and various domain names of news portals such as Mezopotamya Agency, Medyaradar, Airport Haber, Silivrinin Sesi, Jin News, Umut Gazetesi, and Etkin Haber Agency.

Between January and June 2024, at least **156.033** domain names or subdomains were blocked.

### Distribution of News Subjected to Access Restrictions

According to data from the Freedom of Expression Association, the largest number of access restrictions targeted news on ruling party members and corruption by state officials. During this period, these restrictions increased compared to previous years, becoming one of the most overt forms of censorship digital media has been facing. After news on ruling party members and state officials' corruption, the next most restricted content focused on corporate practices harming public interest and on violence against women and children.

Throughout 2024, the number of access-restriction decisions for news items by category was as follows:

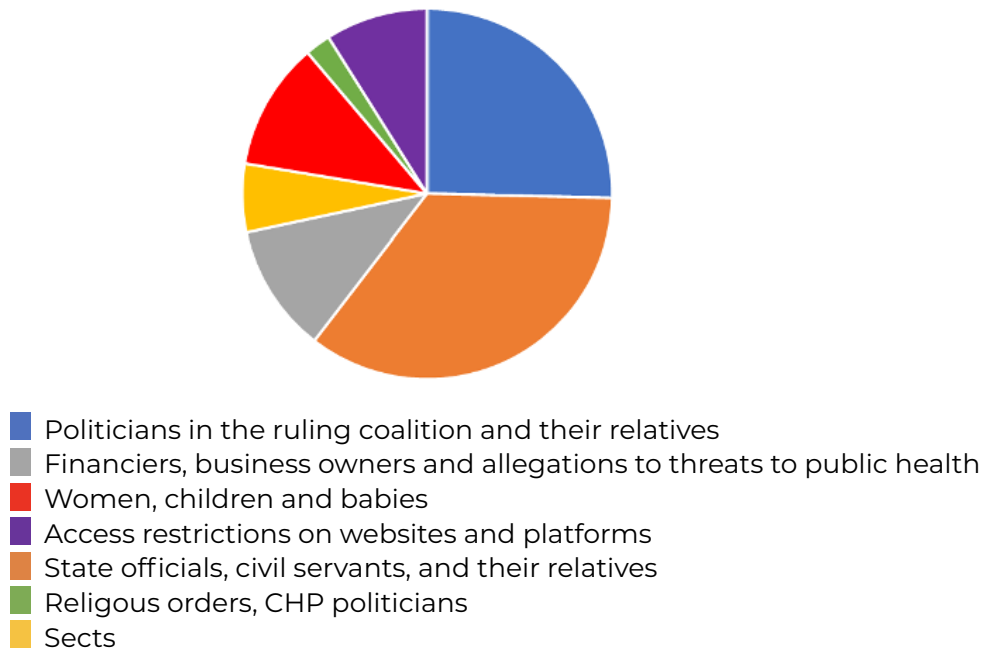
- \* News on AKP and MHP MPs, mayors, politicians, and their relatives: at least 34
- \* News on crimes, corruption allegations, and government actions involving state officials (president, advisors, university rectors, provincial directors, school principals, police chiefs, judges, etc.) and their relatives: at least 47
- \* News on allegations of crimes by financiers, business owners, and threats to public health: at least 15
- \* News on religious orders, affiliated structures, and individuals: at least 8
- \* News on violence, abuse, and harassment against women, children, and infants: at least 15
- \* News on CHP politicians: at least 3

Access restrictions were not limited to websites. In October 2024, 177 social media accounts on X (formerly Twitter) including those of journalists Cemre Birand, Amberin Zaman, and Can Dündar were restricted. The Ministry of Interior asserted that these measures were part of efforts to combat FETÖ, but the inclusion of numerous opposition journalists' accounts provoked significant backlash.

Access restrictions on social media platforms persisted throughout 2024. In October, following the terrorist attack on Turkish Aerospace Industries (TUSAŞ), users experienced access issues with Instagram, Facebook, and X, while the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) issued no statement. International cybersecurity monitor NetBlocks.org, however, published live data confirming that YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and X were inaccessible from Turkey during the attack. The government's silence on these restrictions coincided with a news blackout on the incident. On another occasion when public safety was at risk, authorities again curtailed both journalistic activity and communication channels.



GRAPH 4: News Topics Impacted by Access Restrictions in 2024





## 3- THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MEDIA

### a. Transparent Financial Policy, Editorial Principles, and Accountability

While media ownership in Turkey continues to be a direct area of intervention for the government, the non-transparent financial relations of the industry's largest holdings also marked the year 2024.

The holdings dominating the industry continue their activities outside the media field. There is still no transparency in the financial relations of Turkuvaz, Demirören, Doğu, and İhlas regarding their media sector investments with public institutions. This situation continues to be a determining indicator in terms of government control over the media. On the other hand, in 2024, the sales processes of media outlets such as Ciner Media and Flash Haber have revealed that both media ownership and media asset transfers remain far from transparent and are politically linked. Similarly, many newly established TV channels also raise suspicions and questions regarding their financial relations.

The media remains a field determined by the relations between business, media, and government. Some data from Doğu Holding, İhlas Holding, and Hürriyet Newspaper Publishing and Printing Inc. affiliated with Demirören are publicly available. These can be accessed through the "investor relations" web pages where they are required to publish independent auditor reports and annual consolidated financial statements. However, these data do not meet the standards of transparent financial policy and accountability regarding their investments in the media sector

### b. Media Ownership

2024 Media Pluralism Monitor Report identifies that basic protection in Turkish media is at high risk with a score of 75%. According to the report, while access to traditional media and the internet is available, the slow internet speed places the country at a medium risk level of 63%. However, the protection of freedom of expression and the right to access information is classified as high risk, with scores of 83% and 88%, respectively. Key risk indicators in the assessment include the continued imprisonment of journalists in 2023, the disproportionate imposition of fines, and persistent access restrictions. The report also finds journalism as a profession, including its standards and job security, to be at high risk (69%) due to low-paid and insecure work, and the prevalence of censorship and self-censorship.

The independence and effectiveness of official regulatory bodies in media oversight are also considered to be at high risk, as authorities exert increasing pressure on media supervision. The report identifies market pluralism in Turkey's media landscape as high risk (74%), based on indicators of transparency in media ownership, plurality among media providers, and diversity within digital markets. Editorial independence in the face of ownership and commercial influence is reported to be at an even higher risk than the previous year, with a 9-point increase. The entrenched structure of media ownership and market monopolization remains unchanged. Inadequate data and responses during the May 2023 general elections and the aftermath of the February 6 earthquake are cited as further contributors to the heightened risks surrounding media sustainability and independence.

Key developments in media ownership in 2024:

#### Nefes Newspaper Launched

Sözcü newspaper's former editor-in-chief Metin Yılmaz launched a new media outlet titled Nefes Gazetesi, operating under Duru Media Group. Officially going live on December 19, the outlet brought together a team largely composed of former Sözcü staff, including Yılmaz and Deniz Zeyrek. The newsroom was further strengthened by the addition of prominent journalists such as Soner Yalçın, Nevşin Mengü, Nuray Babacan, and Ümit Zileli.

#### Flash Haber TV Changes Hands Twice

On November 25, 2024, Halk TV owner Cafer Mahiroğlu announced that Flash Haber had joined Halk TV network, stating, "Another channel has joined Halk TV family." However, just a month later, Mahiroğlu



revealed that the agreement had been nullified due to government pressure, and that Flash TV neither transferred its shares nor returned the payment. Providing details of the process, Mahirođlu said, “When the Chair of Flash Haber Board was contacted by phone and asked why their lawyers did not respond to our written notice, he said he had been in meetings in Ankara for two days and had faced various threats and pressures. He cited claims so implausible that no institution of the Republic of Turkey would ever stoop to them, and has since refused to transfer the shares.”

While the sale of Flash Haber to Mahirođlu and Halk TV ultimately did not go through, in January 2025 it was announced that the channel had been sold to Erhan Kork, the owner of Bank Pozitif. Following the acquisition, nearly the entire staff was dismissed. Journalist and former news anchor Can Ataklı stated that he was not allowed to deliver a farewell speech and claimed the channel was effectively seized, arguing that the government was tightening its grip on the media landscape.

Ođuzhan Műezzino, known for his close ties to the government, was appointed as the channel's editor-in-chief while another pro-government figure Ersoy Dede was brought on as the main news anchor. In 2015, Műezzino had been named Digital Media Coordinator of Bugűn newspaper after it was seized due to alleged links to FETÖ. He oversaw the paper's controversial change in ownership and mass layoffs. Ersoy Dede, who announced he would be presenting news on the channel starting in February, has remained off air since 2022 due to his close relationship with Sezgin Baran Korkmaz who is currently on trial for money laundering. Dede previously anchored the prime-time news on TRT 1.

Another development tied to the channel's transfer involves Bank Pozitif, the company that acquired Flash Haber. Originally established as a subsidiary of Israeli financial group Bank Hapoalim, the bank was sold to Erhan Kork in 2023. The outlet Sol Haber reported the sale, claiming it was “an operation to obscure Israel's direct ownership” of the institution.

## Ciner Group Exits Media Industry

The owner of Habertűrk TV, SHOW TV, HT Spor, and Bloomberg HT, Ciner Group, transferred all of its shares in these channels to Can Group. Known primarily for its presence in the education sector, including institutions like Bilgi University and Dođa Schools, Can Group's acquisition effectively marked Turgay Ciner's full exit from the Turkish media scene. While the company did not provide a clear explanation for the decision, the move sparked comparisons to Dođan Group's earlier handover of its media outlets to Demirűren.

## Ekol TV Launched

Ekol TV, which at the time was in its establishment phase under lawyer Ersan Ően's leadership, was transferred to businessperson Műbariz Mansimov Gurbanođlu's Palmali company before it began broadcasting. Regarding the channel that started broadcasting on April 29, 2024, Mansimov had stated, “I want to make my voice heard”. Previously detained for a year over alleged FETÖ ties and released after serving a five-year sentence, Mansimov is known for his connections to both state and mafia figures. According to organized-crime leader Sedat Peker, Mehmet Ađar “seized” Mansimov's Yalıkavak Marina, resulting in the Azerbaijani shipowner's imprisonment. Mansimov then stated, “Everything Sedat Peker says is true.” The channel attracted attention when retired Gendarmerie General Commander Arif Őetin and Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor Akın Gűrlek who both were targeted by the opposition for their government ties, visited the channel and posed for a photo together.

## CNBC-e Makes Return to Broadcasting

On November 6, 2015, the CNBC-e channel, which was part of the DođuŐ Group, ceased its broadcasting. However, it resumed its broadcasting on June 10, 2024. Half of the channel's programming is dedicated to economic news, and its content is also supported by international broadcasts from its overseas bureaus. In Turkey, the channel is owned by İlbak Holding, which is controlled by Mustafa İlbak, known for his proximity to the ruling government. ũrkiye'de, iktidara yakınlığı ile bilinen Mustafa İlbak'ın sahibi olduđu İlbak Holdingin bűnyesinde yer alıyor.

## “Lack of Transparency in Media Capital Damages Journalism”

President of the Journalists' Association, Nazmi Bilgin, commented on the frequent media ownership changes and initiatives observed throughout 2024, saying, “We've been closely following, with concern, the recent changes in the ownership of some media groups that have sparked public debate.” Bilgin stressed that media capital in Turkey continues to operate in grey areas and lacks transparency, which



he argued harms both journalism and democracy. He also called for complete transparency regarding financial relationships in the media.

## No Legal Barriers to Monopoly in Media

The 2024 Media Pluralism Monitor Report, in its findings related to Turkey, highlights that in 2019 RTÜK expanded its authority to include online radio, TV, and private media service providers. However, it points out that RTÜK has not used its licensing powers in a way that would prevent monopolization in the online news media market. On the contrary, the report draws attention to RTÜK’s role in the censorship of online platforms, while noting that traditional media giants such as Demirören, Kalyon/Turkuvaz, Doğu Group, and BEME Media continue to dominate the digital space.\*

## c. Circulations

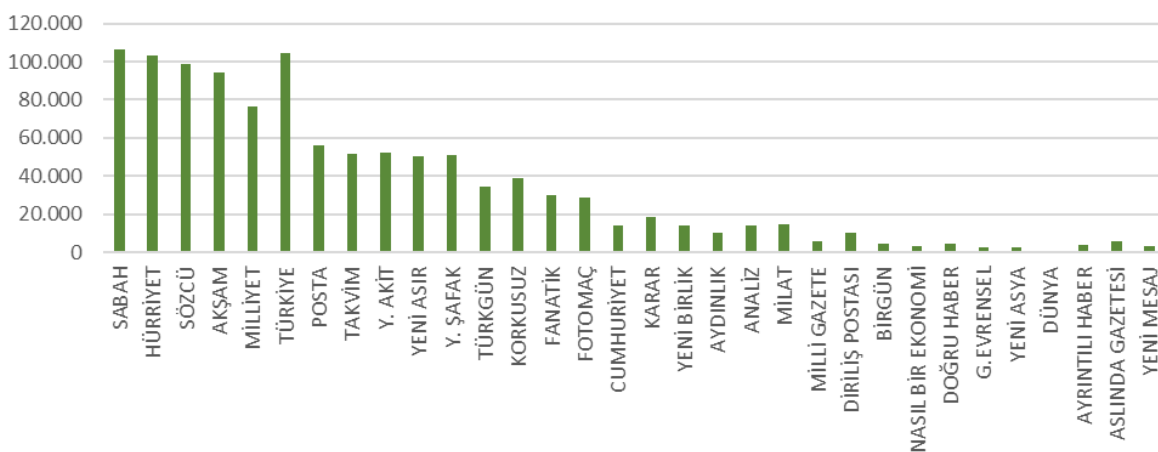
Printed newspapers in Turkey continue to experience a decline in circulation. Key data sources for circulation figures including the Written Press Statistics released annually by the Turkish Statistical Institute and the Press Advertisement Institution’s statistics on written press employees and newspapers receiving official advertisements, are included in the M4D reports during publication periods.

The M4D Project, in collaboration with media monitoring companies, publishes circulation data in its reports. However, discussions with industry officials and journalists reveal a shared concern that the official circulation figures do not accurately reflect the reality.

The primary revenue sources for newspapers are advertisements, official announcements, and sales to subscribers and vendors. Sales data is tracked by distribution companies. Official announcements are distributed based on publication scale and total sales figures. The Press Advertisement Agency (BİK) last revealed the distribution of official ads to newspapers in the 2020 activity report presented at the General Assembly. Official advertisement distribution fees have not been disclosed for the past four years, and lawmakers seeking information through parliamentary questions are not provided with responses, citing “commercial confidentiality.”

An interesting statistic this year was that Türkiye newspaper ranked among the top two best-selling newspapers from February to November 2024 in Turkey. The newspaper itself celebrated this achievement written all over its pages, but it raised questions among journalists. Faruk Bildirici, in an article for BirGün, addressed the issue stating: “Türkiye newspaper is once again in the top spot. However, these circulation figures are not reliable. Türkiye newspaper claims to have disclosed its sales figures, yet at the same time complains about ‘inflated circulations’ of some others. Moreover, the circulation figures are not verified by independent sources, nor are they openly published by institutions. The actual sales numbers could be much lower than these reported figures.” highlighting the transparency issue surrounding newspaper circulations.

GRAPH 5 : Average Circulation in 2024: 12-Month Overview



\* <https://cmpf.eu.eu/media-pluralism-monitor-2024/>



TABLE 2 :2024 Daily Average Sales of Widely Circulated Newspapers

	Paper	Annual Average Circulation
1-	SABAH	106.58
2-	HÜRRİYET	103.408
3-	SÖZCÜ	98.73
4-	AKŞAM	94.263
5-	MİLLİYET	76.407
6-	TÜRKİYE	104.287
7-	POSTA	56.225
8-	TAKVİM	51.469
9-	Y. AKİT	52.299
10-	YENİ ASIR	50.383
11-	Y. ŞAFAK	50.84
12-	TÜRKGÜN	34.523
13-	KORKUSUZ	38.787
14-	FANATİK	29.719
15-	FOTOMAÇ	28.38
16-	CUMHURİYET	14.282
17-	KARAR	18.321
18-	YENİ BİRLİK	14.139
19-	AYDINLIK	10.024
20-	ANALİZ	14.033
21-	MİLAT	14.402
22-	MİLLİ GAZETE	5.462
23-	DİRİLİŞ POSTASI	10.384
24-	BİRGÜN	4.330
25-	NASIL BİR EKONOMİ	3.018
26-	DOĞRU HABER	4.334
27-	G.EVRENSEL	2.776
28-	YENİ ASYA	2.738
29-	DÜNYA	614
30-	AYRINTILI HABER	3.965
31-	ASLINDA GAZETESİ	5.803
32-	YENİ MESAJ	3.371

With the tariff change that became official on January 1, 2024, the advertisement fees for newspapers with a daily average circulation above and below 50.000 were aligned with those of websites ranked within the top 5 categories. For newspapers with a daily circulation above 50.000, the advertisement fee (per column/centimeter) is set at 170 lira, while for those below 50.000, it is 140 lira. However, this adjustment in fees did not resolve the ongoing issues related to official advertisements.

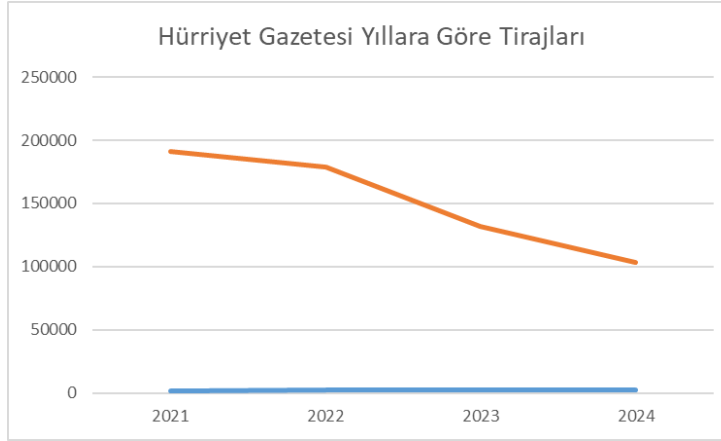
As part of the M4D Project, the Status Evaluation Meetings, held with the participation of local journalists from different cities, point to one of the main issues facing local press, the inequity in advertisement distribution by the Press Advertisement Agency and problems within the agency's regulations.

In almost every meeting, journalists frequently raised complaints about the reduction in the number of official advertisements, the low fees, the standards for securing advertisements being tailored to national media, and the high thresholds set for websites to receive ads. The fact that official advertisements have become virtually the sole source of income for local media is forcing newspapers to close or merge. This consolidation method simultaneously intensifies pressure and control mechanisms on the local press.

In the 2023 Media Monitoring Report, we highlighted the state of print newspapers in Turkey by comparing Hürriyet's average circulation and financial statements over the years. In last year's report, Hürriyet's average daily circulation was recorded at 132.000 for 2023, 179.000 in the 2022 report, and 191.000 in the 2021 report. In 2024, Hürriyet's average daily circulation has declined to 103.000.



GRAPH 6 : Hürriyet Newspaper's Average Circulation Over the Years



## d. Rating Shares

According to Oxford University's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's 2024 Digital News Report, the share of people in Turkey who prefer online sources for news dropped five points year-on-year to 70%. Those turning to social media fell even more sharply, declining from 54% to 45%. Television remained the choice of 56%, while print readership edged down just two points to 19%. 44% of respondents said they share news via social media, e-mail, or messaging apps, and the report notes that most people feel uneasy even about sharing news.

The report also warns that measures like the Disinformation Law create risks and uncertainty not only for journalists and activists but for ordinary citizens, and it highlights that journalists who fled traditional-media censorship for YouTube now face fresh restrictions under these regulations.

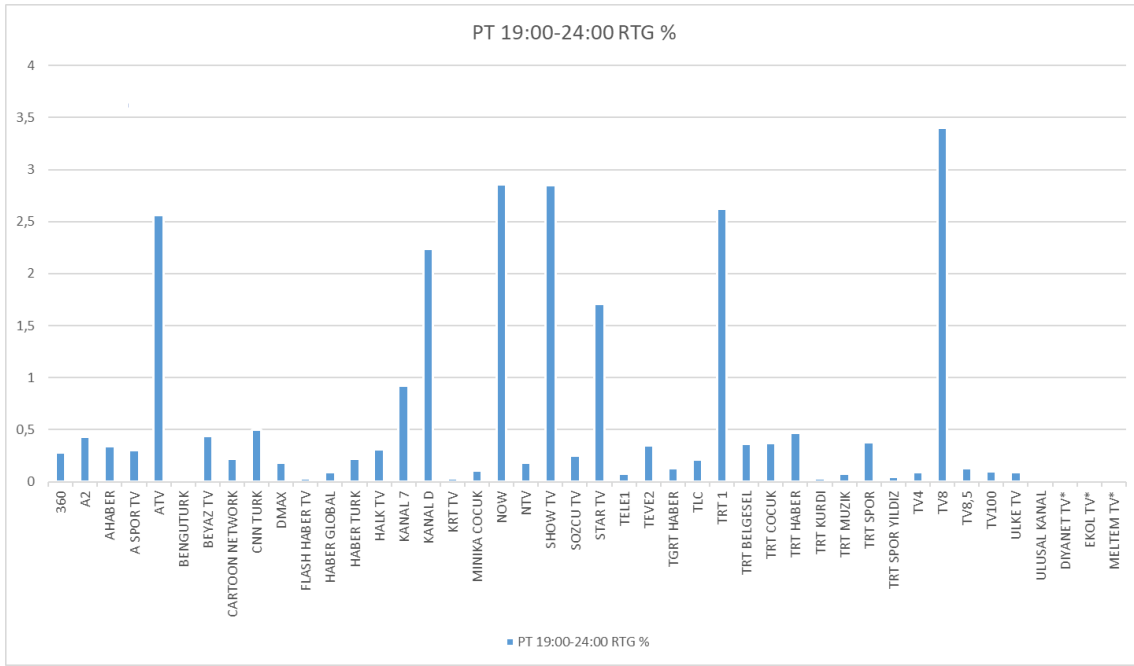
The report underlines that public trust in the media remained unchanged at 35 % year-on-year, notes that trust in outlets critical of the government has increased, and highlights that TRT, despite its status as a state institution, experienced a three-point drop in trust due to its pro-government broadcasting stance.

TABLE 3 : 2024 Average Rating Shares Between 19:00 and 24:00 Across All Viewers

Rank	Channel	RTG %
1	360	0,28
2	A2	0,43
3	AHABER	0,34
4	A SPOR TV	0,3
5	ATV	2,56
6	BENGUTURK	0
7	BEYAZ TV	0,44
8	CARTOON NETWORK	0,22
9	CNN TURK	0,5
10	DMAX	0,18
11	FLASH HABER TV	0,03
12	HABER GLOBAL	0,09
13	HABER TURK	0,22
14	HALK TV	0,31
15	KANAL 7	0,92
16	KANAL D	2,24
17	KRT TV	0,03
18	MINIKA COCUK	0,11
19	NOW	2,86
20	NTV	0,18
21	SHOW TV	2,85
22	SOZCU TV	0,25
23	STAR TV	1,71
24	TELE1	0,08
25	TEVE2	0,35
26	TGRT HABER	0,13
27	TLC	0,21
28	TRT 1	2,62
29	TRT BELGESEL	0,36
30	TRT COCUK	0,37
31	TRT HABER	0,47
32	TRT KURDI	0,03
33	TRT MUZIK	0,08
34	TRT SPOR	0,38
35	TRT SPOR YILDIZ	0,05
36	TV4	0,09
37	TV8	3,4
38	TV8,5	0,13
39	TV100	0,1
40	ULKE TV	0,09
41	ULUSAL KANAL	0,01
42	DIYANET TV*	0,02
43	EKOL TV*	0,02
44	MELTEM TV*	0



GRAPH 7 : 2024 Prime Time Average Rating Shares



## Prime Time Rating Shares

In 2024, under its new name NOW TV topped prime-time ratings between 19:00 and 24:00 with a 2.86 share. It was narrowly followed by SHOW TV at 2.85, while ATV, last year's leader, slipped to 2.56 losing a full point compared with the previous year. KANAL D ranked fourth at 2.42.

All news channels without exception experienced significant rating declines compared with 2023. TRT Haber, A Haber, NTV, Habertürk and CNN Türk each fell by 0.1 points on average, while CNN Türk remained the most watched at a 0.5 rating. Halk TV, which alongside NOW TV faced record RTÜK fines for its oppositional stance, recorded a prime-time share decrease from 0.39 to 0.31 in 2023, placing it below A Haber. This downturn reflects the audience's waning trust in television as a news source.

The drop in news channel ratings can be partly attributed to the local elections held on the 31st of March. Whereas 2023, a general election year, boosted news-channel viewership compared with 2022, 2024's local polls failed to generate comparable interest or equivalent television-news audience figures.

## e. Condition of Press Workers

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security's January 2025 Monthly E-Bulletin of Labour Statistics, employment in the Press, Broadcasting and Journalism sector rose by 779 year-on-year to 97,454 workers. Union membership in the sector also climbed from 11,717 to 12,248. Even though the unionization rate increased to 12.5 %, Press, Broadcasting and Journalism remains the least-unionized industry\*.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security's January 2025 bulletin, number of TGS members fell from 2.067 to 1.975, while Medya-İş saw a notable rise from 6.599 to 7.277 members. Over the same period, DİSK Basın-İş more than doubled its ranks, growing from 397 to 1.004 members. Lider Medya-Sen with just two members, emerged as the newest union in the sector. By the end of 2024, Türk-İş Basın İş's membership stood at 2.400.\*\*

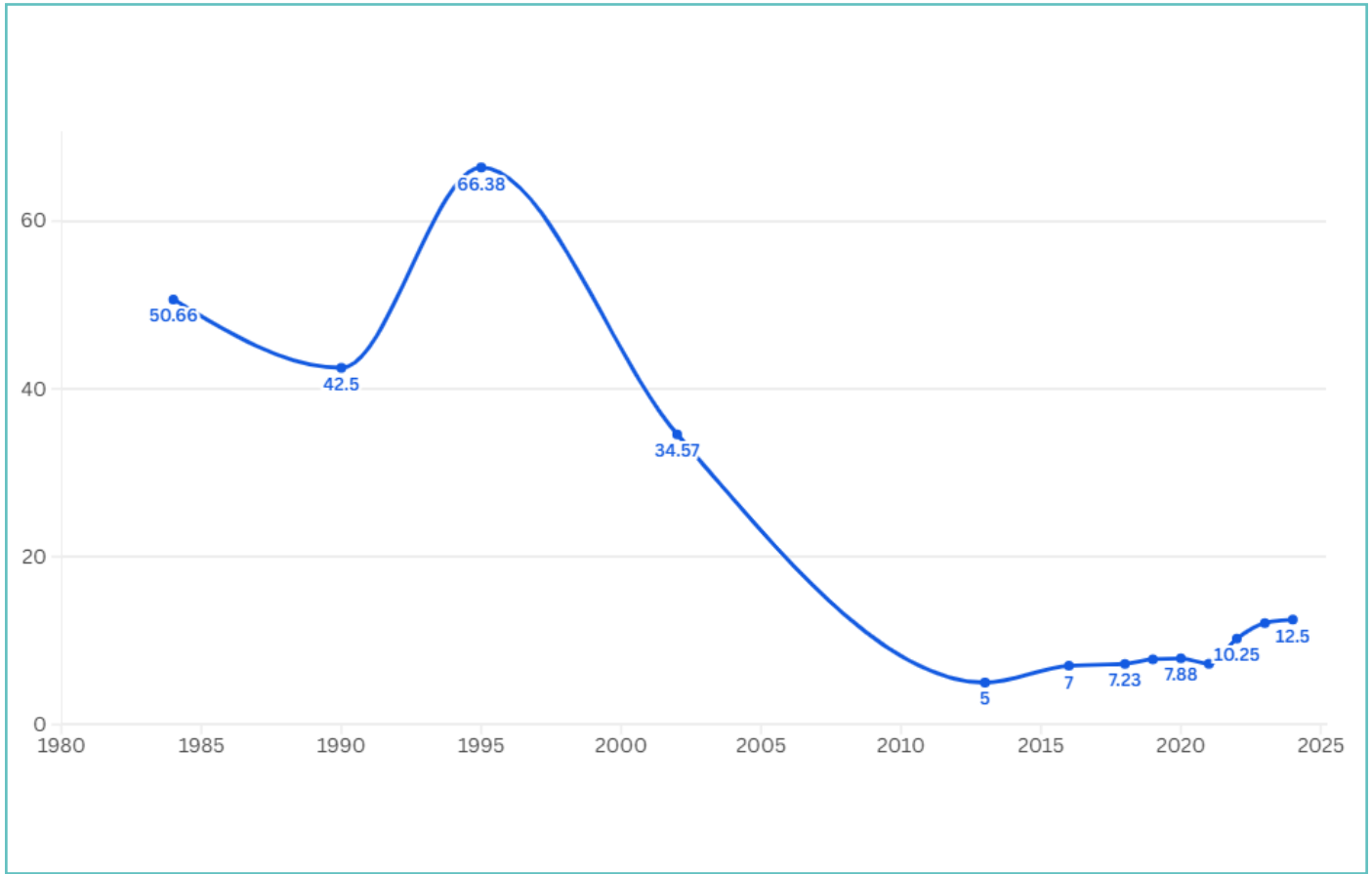
According to the latest figures, four unions Medya-İş, Basın-İş, DİSK Basın-İş and TGS have each surpassed the 1% threshold required to secure collective-bargaining rights. The fact that DİSK Basın-İş has cleared this barrier for the first time in many years is being hailed as a major milestone. Yet journalism remains the least-unionized sector of all, cementing job insecurity across the profession. In the M4D Project's Professional Satisfaction Survey, when asked to choose between job security and higher pay, 54.1% of journalists chose job security, while 32.1% opted for higher wages. Both preferences reflect not only future anxiety but also the impact of low union density in the industry.

\*<https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/Media/0uedstzl/çalışma-hayati-istatistikleri-aylık-e-bülteni-ocak-2025.pdf>

\*\* <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/Media/ggnfwrww/ocak-2025-1%C5%9Fkolu-istatisti%C4%9Fi.pdf>



GRAPH 8: Unionization Rates by Industry Over the Years (Percentage)



The dramatic decline in unionisation in the journalism sector over the past 30 years highlights that one of the profession's greatest challenges is a lack of organisation. Low union density not only impacts journalists' economic conditions but also leaves them vulnerable to political pressure, mobbing and many other forms of workplace intimidation.

Although the weakening of unions since the 1990s mirrors trends across all sectors, the sharp fall in organising within the press, broadcasting and journalism field reflects a host of dynamics—from structural changes in the industry to anti union rhetoric and campaigns by employers—while the fragmented and polarised state of the media does more harm than good to collective action. In an era when journalism is increasingly shaped by political motives, securing trade union organisation has become even more difficult. At the same time, professional solidarity, job security and workplace organising are essential to underpin a free press.

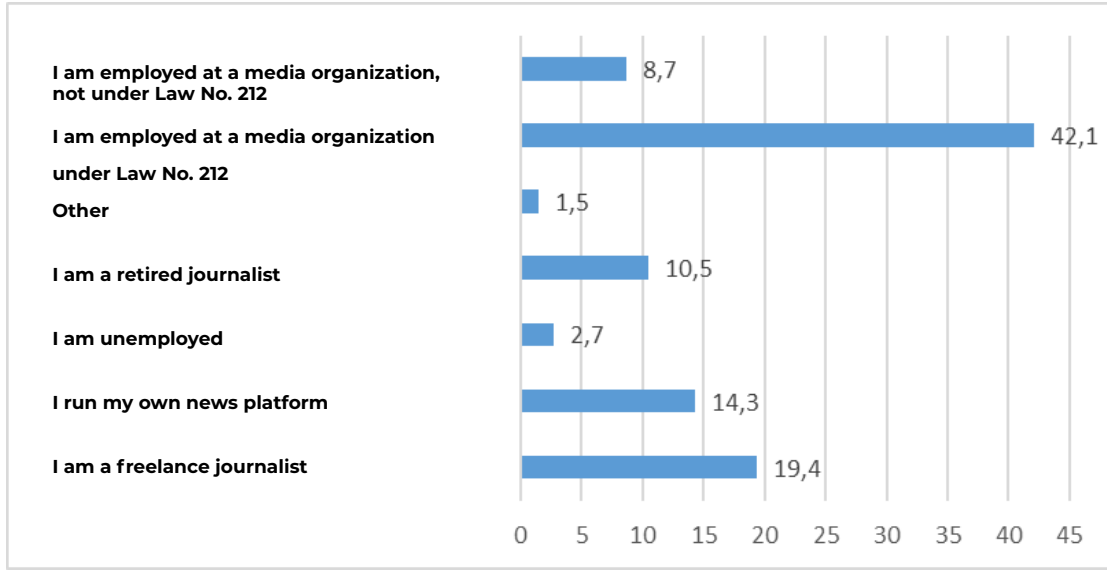
## Forms of Employment

One of the key elements of working conditions is the form of employment. In the field of journalism, the two most common forms are paid employment and freelance journalism. 42.1% of journalists work at a media organization under Law No. 5953, known as the Press Labour Law)\*, also referred to as "212". Another 8.7% are employed by media organizations but not covered by this law. These two categories together represent journalists in paid employment — a total of 50.8% of respondents. Around one in five journalists (19.4%) work as freelancers. This is followed by 14.3% who run their own news platforms. Retired journalists account for 10.5%, while the unemployment rate among journalists stands at 2.7%.

\*Basın İş Kanunu, 5953 sayılı kanun olarak 1952'de çıkarılmış, 1961 Anayasası'nda bu kanun 212 sayılı düzenleme ile dönüştürülmüştür. Kısaca "212" olarak anılan bu kanun gazetecilere oldukça ileri haklar, güvenceler ve hem mesleki hem ekonomik açıdan birçok olumlu düzenleme getirmiştir. Gazetecilik alanında "212'li olmak" Basın İş Kanunu kapsamında çalışmak ve gazeteciler nezdinde "kadrolu" olmak anlamına gelmekte ve gazeteci sayılmak için önemli bir eşik olarak addedilmektedir. Dolayısıyla yalnız ekonomik değil, mesleki, sosyal ve sembolik anlamları da bulunmaktadır. 2000'lerde kanunda yapılan kimi değişikliklerle yasanın gazetecilere tanıdığı ileri haklar önemli ölçüde budanmıştır.



GRAFİK 9 : Journalists' Forms of Employment



## Wages, Working Hours and Job Security in Journalism

Long working hours stand out as a striking and concerning aspect of working conditions in journalism. This issue is particularly critical as it signals a significant reduction in the time journalists have to sustain themselves physically, socially, personally, and professionally.

When working hours are assessed by gender and age, no meaningful differences are found among journalists. Similarly, factors such as years in the profession, job position, the type of media outlet, or the institutional structure of the organization do not lead to significant variation in working hours. As a result, the length of working hours emerges as a horizontal issue that cuts across all segments of the profession.

Following long working hours, another key dimension of working conditions is monthly income, which offers important insight into the professional and social standing of journalists. An analysis of income distribution in the field reveals a “pyramid-like” model. At the top, a small number of journalists earn higher salaries as they move up the professional and institutional hierarchy, while at the bottom, a larger number of journalists earn lower wages as they occupy lower-tier positions.

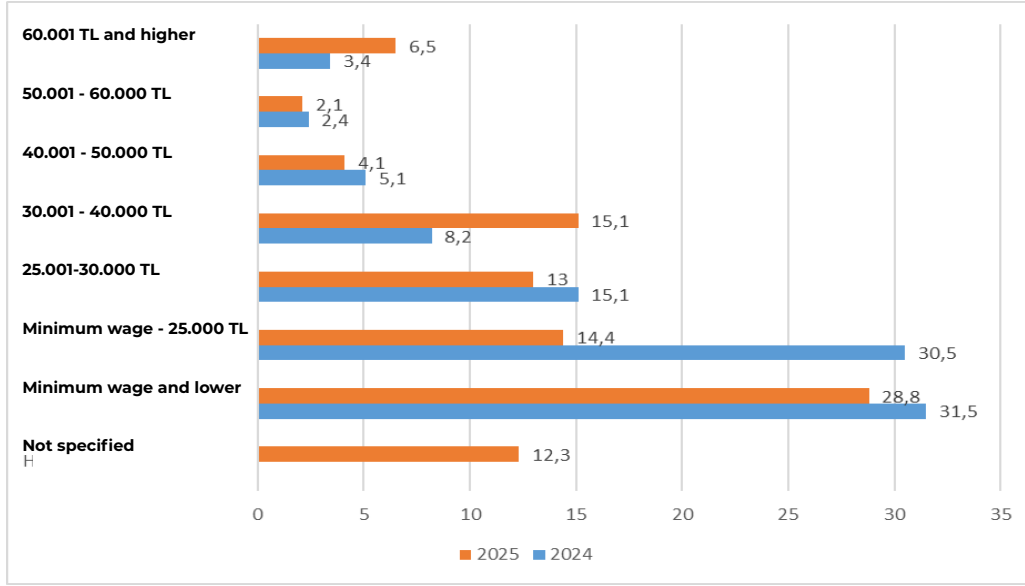
When this relatively structured situation is compounded by the country's economic crisis, inflation, and the ongoing erosion of purchasing power, a grim picture emerges regarding journalists' salaries. To observe this drastic decline, journalists were asked about their 2024 salaries and their newly adjusted wages for 2025.

According to the responses, while 77.1% of journalists in 2024 earned up to 30.000 TL (three out of every four journalists), this figure dropped to 56.2% in 2025. The share of journalists earning between 30.000 and 60.000 TL rose from 15.7% in 2024 to 21.3% in 2025. Despite this nominal increase, in a period when official inflation figures continue to hover above 40%, more than half of all journalists still earn no more than 30.000 TL, and only one in five earn between 30.000 and 60.000 TL, reflects a deeply troubling reality. Considering that, as of March 2025, the hunger threshold stands at 23.615 TL and the poverty threshold at 76.922 TL\*, the picture becomes even more dire.

\*Bkz. TÜRK-İş Mart 2025 Açlık ve Yoksulluk Sınırı Araştırması, <https://www.turkis.org.tr/turk-is-mart-2025-aclik-ve-yoksulluk-siniri/>



GRAFİK 10 : Journalists' Wages



In a socially significant profession like journalism, the existence of such low wages presents serious challenges not only in terms of journalists being able to make a living, but also in terms of their ability to develop themselves and access the financial means to participate in social and cultural activities. This situation can be said to exert a constraining effect on journalists' professional and social capacities.

In parallel, journalists' statements regarding their salaries and livelihood practices are equally striking. A total of 77.1% of journalists disagreed with the statement "I can easily make a living with the salary I earn." In other words, three out of every four journalists report that they are unable to comfortably sustain themselves with their current income. Only 8.7% said their salary was sufficient to cover their living expenses. These findings suggest that journalists in Turkey believe they are not being paid enough to make ends meet or to be fairly compensated for their work. It is reasonable to infer that this contributes to burnout and a growing sense of disillusionment with the profession.

## Journalists in the News Production Process and Accessing Information

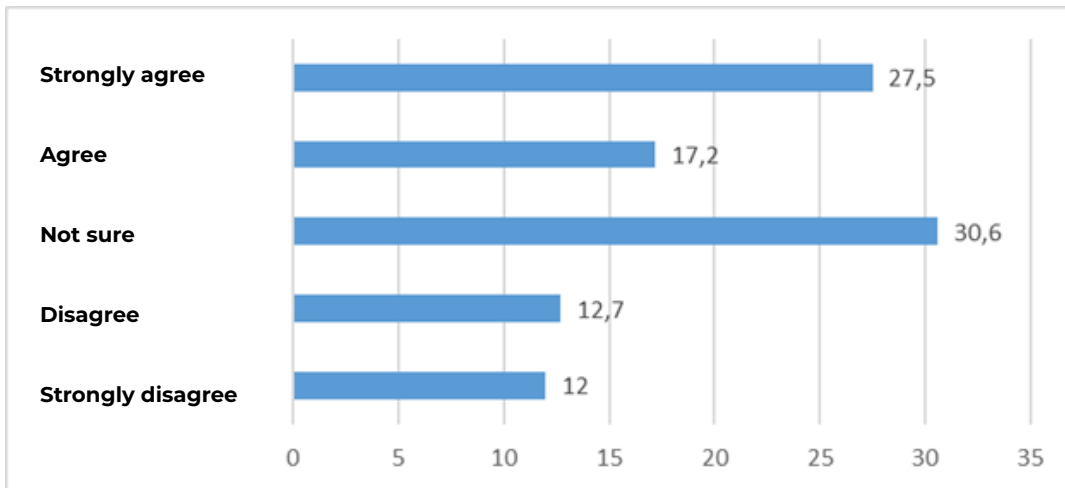
Findings related to the news production process are crucial in demonstrating the boundaries of freedom of expression. In this context, issues such as censorship, self-censorship, threats, attacks, prosecution, and gender-based discrimination will be discussed. The news production process, as the core of journalism, is significant because it is where professional values and qualities come into play, and where journalists' experiences and challenges are concretized.

## Practices of Censorship and Self-Censorship

One of the most significant findings regarding the news production process is whether news activities are subjected to censorship. Nearly half of the journalists surveyed (44.7%) stated that they strongly agree or agree that their news activities are censored. This indicates that the media in Turkey is currently facing a particularly challenging period with regard to censorship.



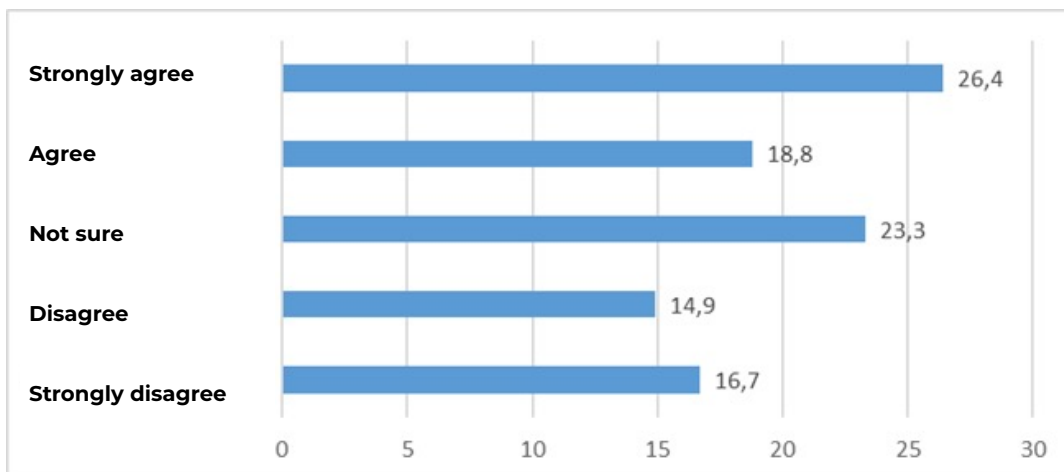
GRAPH 11 : “My journalistic activities have been subjected to censorship at times.”.



The widespread nature of censorship not only reveals the deep pressure the media faces, but also brings the risk of censorship becoming normalized over time. Therefore, it is of great importance to further investigate how censorship is applied to journalists through both institutional and informal channels, and who the actors are that operate these mechanisms.

Another key issue in the news production process, as important as censorship, is self-censorship. Self-censorship can be defined as journalists refraining from publishing certain news stories or censoring certain elements of a story due to concerns that it may not be published or may face criticism. In authoritarian political climates, self-censorship emerges as a widespread and serious problem, almost as significant as censorship itself. Nearly half of the journalists surveyed (45.2%) stated that they “have refrained from publishing a story due to concerns it would not be published or would be criticized.” About one-third (31.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

GRAPH 12 :“There have been times when I refrained from reporting due to concerns about being censored or criticized.”





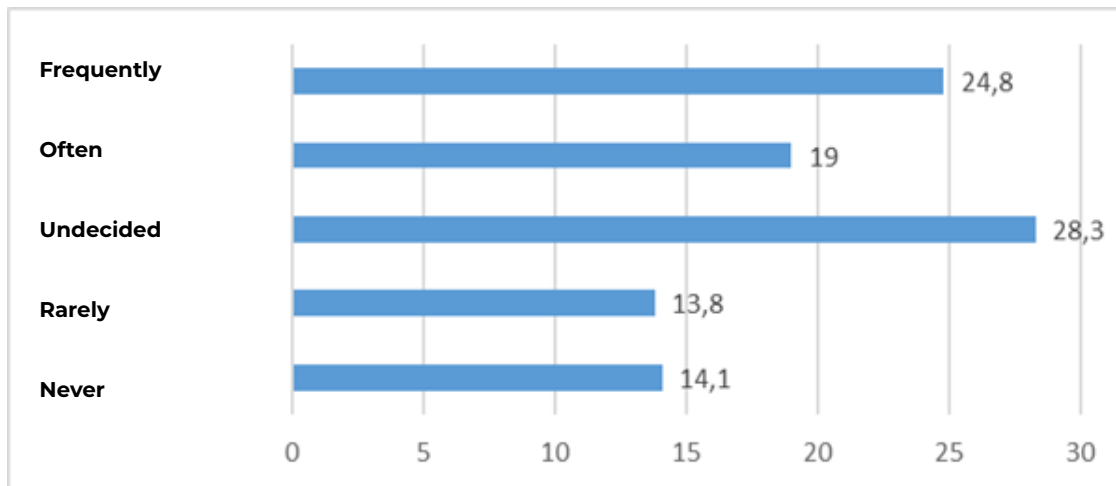
Approximately one-quarter of journalists (23.3%) express uncertainty on this matter. The high level of indecision regarding self-censorship is quite striking. It can be inferred that having to resort to self-censorship is a highly exhausting and challenging process for journalists, both professionally and personally. The responses from those who expressed uncertainty can also be considered with this observation in mind.

There is no significant difference among journalists in terms of gender, age, position in the media, working style, type of media outlet, or the scope of the media outlet regarding self-censorship. Journalists exhibit similar trends and tendencies on the issue of self-censorship.

## Practices of Threats, Criminalization, Detention, and Prosecution

A notable finding regarding the news production process is journalists' concerns about being criminalized or prosecuted due to their work. When asked, "How often do you experience the concern of being criminalized or prosecuted due to your news stories?" nearly half of the journalists surveyed (43.8%) responded that they experience this concern often or frequently. More than one-quarter (28.3%) expressed uncertainty on this issue, while 27.9% stated that they do not experience such concerns.

GRAPH 13: "How often do you experience concerns of criminalization or prosecution for your reporting?"



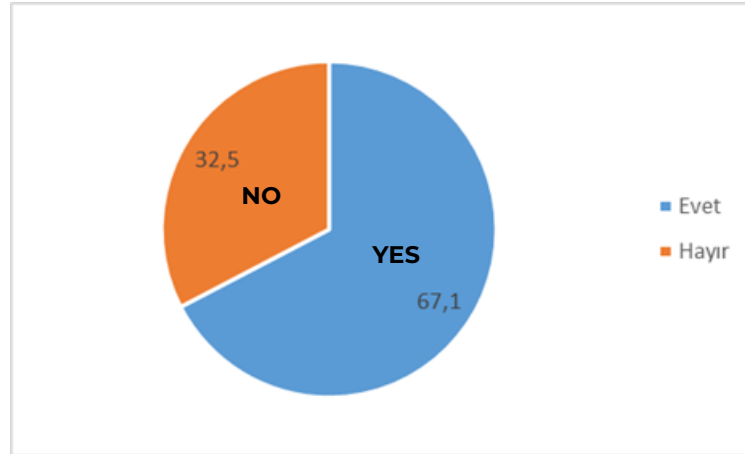
The widespread concern among journalists about being criminalized or prosecuted reflects a part of the bleak picture of press and freedom of expression in Turkey. In addition to the various challenges and anxieties journalists face regarding their working conditions, freedom of expression, censorship, and self-censorship processes, they also bear the fear of being criminalized or prosecuted. This situation is important in two ways: on one hand, it underscores the heavy burden on journalists, and on the other, it reveals the extent to which obstacles to free news production have become entrenched.

There are no significant differences among journalists in terms of categories such as gender, age, or employment type, and the fear of prosecution appears as a common concern. In a media environment where practices like being targeted by the government, unjustly criminalized, prosecuted, or arrested are becoming more prevalent, the presence of this concern is unfortunately not surprising.

In addition to the concern of being prosecuted due to journalistic activities, receiving direct threats has also emerged as an important finding. Two out of three journalists (67.1%) reported having received threats as a result of their journalistic activities.



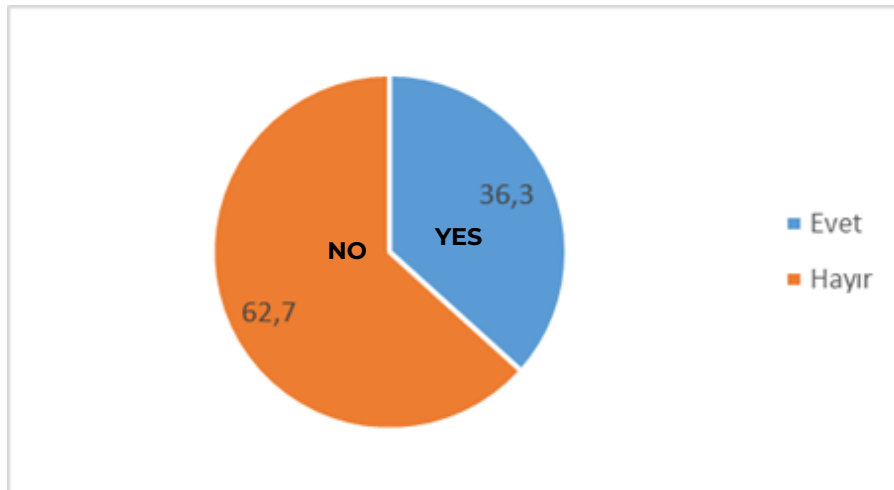
GRAPH 14: "I have faced threats as a consequence of my journalism at certain times."



It can be argued that threatening journalists due to their activities has become a much more routine practice with the increasingly authoritarian political climate. The magnitude of these figures is striking, as it shows that attempts to pressure and intimidate journalists have become an intrinsic part of the news production process. On the other hand, this situation reveals the variety of pressures that journalists must either resist or submit to.

A parallel finding is the presence of processes such as being detained or prosecuted due to journalistic activities. More than one-third of the journalists surveyed (36.3%) reported having been detained or prosecuted because of their journalistic work. This further complicates the overall picture of journalism in Turkey.

GRAPH 15: "I have faced detention or legal prosecution as a result of my journalistic activities."



## Experiences of Gender-Based Discrimination

An element particularly relevant to female journalists in the news production process is gender-based discrimination. The proportion of female journalists who reported experiencing some form of discrimination due to their gender while continuing their journalistic activities is 73.7% (Graph 22). This relatively high figure is significant as it demonstrates the widespread nature of gender-based discrimination in the Turkish media environment. Within this percentage, 39.8% of female journalists stated that they occasionally faced such discriminatory practices, while 16.5% reported experiencing discrimination frequently.



## 4 - DISINFORMATION AND INFORMATION MONOPOLY

The Disinformation Law, which came into force in 2023, continues to serve as a method of penalizing journalists and reinforcing the government's monopoly on information in 2024. Since the law was enacted, a total of 65 journalists have been investigated, and just last year, 10 journalists were sued under the law. As seen in the judicial process involving journalist Cengiz Erdiç, journalists' social media posts alone have become the subject of legal action, while penalties such as judicial control and house arrest imposed under the law have clearly become an attempt to criminalize journalism.

The Disinformation Law, like similar examples in many countries, is not the only method used by authoritarian regimes to create a monopoly on information. With its focus on disinformation, the law aligns with one of the primary global threats today, as disinformation is one of the most significant threats both in Turkey and worldwide. Political control over the media is one of the key factors contributing to the spread of disinformation.

According to the World Economic Forum's 2025 Global Risks Report, disinformation and misinformation are among the top short-term risks globally. The fact that these threats lead to a loss of trust and fuel societal polarization makes them critical global issues. In the report, long-term risks highlight technological threats, including the negative impacts of artificial intelligence, alongside disinformation. Disinformation is considered as serious a threat as regional military conflicts and the climate crisis.

Disinformation is a significant threat not only for Turkey but also for various countries worldwide, from the United States to India, and it remains one of the primary methods used by authoritarian regimes to create societal polarization. Especially regulations targeting the monopoly of information and communication, like the disinformation law, transform disinformation from a mere form of information pollution into a more serious issue. In the 2023 elections, fabricated images targeting opposition presidential candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu went unpunished, while a journalist can be deprived of their freedom due to a social media post.

The transformation of disinformation into a tool of control, surveillance, and polarization is not new. During the 2016 U.S. elections, the sharing of user data between Facebook and Cambridge Analytica for voter manipulation was widely discussed. By 2024, the X (formerly Twitter) platform became another venue where disinformation intensified and became systematic. After billionaire Elon Musk acquired the platform, his influence over the platform to support candidates in the 2024 elections in Germany and the U.S., including his use of disinformation and algorithm manipulation, sparked global debate. Prominent international media organizations, such as The Guardian, announced that they were pulling out of the platform in response.

However, X transforming into a tool for disinformation and information monopoly is not solely limited to Elon Musk's personal agenda. In Turkey, the government increasingly resorts to methods such as blocking access to accounts and posts it deems unfavorable, especially targeting journalists and human rights defenders.

Additionally, the rise of source-less and anonymous reporting on verified accounts (blue check) on X is another significant threat within the scope of disinformation. In Turkey, this "blue check journalism," now commonly seen, involves creating numerous anonymous news accounts that reach millions with eye-catching posts, without providing any sources or adhering to basic journalism principles like 5W1H. These accounts often use misleading messages and images with uncertain dates and locations to either attract clicks or push political agendas, further fueling societal polarization. X's new algorithm, which focuses on attention span and multimedia usage, amplifies this type of disinformation-spreading blue check journalism.

In its article\* ;on blue checkmark account journalism, the International Journalist Network noted that today, anyone can obtain a blue checkmark by paying \$8, and since this policy change, the spread of misinformation has increased. As a striking example of the disinformation created by the blue check policy on the platform, it highlighted that during the Sudanese civil war, the blue checkmark was removed from

\*<https://ijnet.org/en/story/xs-check-mark-policy-fueling-disinformation>



the account of one of the country's military leaders, Muhammad Dagalo, and given to a fake account, with the posts from this fake account being viewed by 1.7 million people.

In 2024, X introduced the Community Notes feature as a way to tackle misinformation, but the system's structure makes it far from foolproof. Built entirely on user activity, Community Notes allows users with higher scores to add context to posts, while those with lower scores can rate these notes. With no independent fact-checking body overseeing the process, the system falls short as a reliable tool against misinformation—in fact, it opens the door for politically motivated notes and evaluations

A major step back in the global fight against misinformation came when Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg dismantled the fact-checking systems on Facebook and Instagram. Following Donald Trump's election in the U.S., this move was widely interpreted by international media as a political maneuver aimed at staying in the government's good graces. The decision significantly weakened content moderation and misinformation control across Meta platforms. Meta has since announced plans to implement a Community Notes-style system, similar to X's—a move that experts warn could enable coordinated misinformation campaigns. In Turkey, Meta's local fact-checking partners, including Teyit and Doğruluk Payı, were directly affected. Teyit, facing financial strain, had to lay off a large portion of its staff and now risks shutting down entirely.

It is clear that digital giants like Google, Meta, and X, by aligning with new political trends in the U.S. and weakening their efforts to combat misinformation on their platforms, are adopting practices that reinforce information monopolies and pollution—posing significant risks for the future of both digital spaces and the media at large. Just as Google's opaque algorithm changes have economically undermined independent media outlets, the growing presence and visibility of misinformation channels on Meta and X disrupt the processes of news production and access to accurate information, while further emboldening and enabling actors who use misinformation as a political tool.



## 5- ACTIVITIES OF ASSOCIATIONS, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

### The Activities of Associations, Political Parties, and CSOs in 2024

Efforts to mitigate the regional and professional impact of the previous year's earthquake continued throughout 2024. Press professional organizations remained active in monitoring press trials, organizing national and international meetings, conveying press freedom issues to political parties, and issuing public statements to counter pressures and censorship practices such as RTÜK fines and the Foreign Influence Agent Law, while also conducting public awareness activities.

As part of these efforts, the Journalists' Association launched a youth journalism support initiative in Malatya during the first month of the year. Young journalists from Malatya and Adıyaman, two of the earthquake's hardest-hit areas, were provided with professional training, as well as in-kind and technical support. In February, on the anniversary of the earthquake, the Mobile Press House traveled to Adıyaman to deliver free services to local journalists and media outlets still operating out of tents. The visit also included training sessions focused on internet broadcasting, video news production, and revenue generation, providing valuable insights to journalists in Adıyaman. In addition, power supplies, computers, and reporting equipment were delivered to the Malatya and Adıyaman Journalists' Associations.

With local elections taking place just one month after the earthquake anniversary, the Association integrated both agendas into its fieldwork. The Mobile Press House covered the election process in the earthquake-affected regions, offered equipment support to local journalists for covering election day and its outcomes, and was stationed in Hatay to monitor local election results.

A regional training was held in Gaziantep with the participation of experienced journalists such as Can Ertuna, Özlem Akarsu Çelik, Erhan Karadağ, Arif Kurt, Kenan Şener, Ünsal Ünlü, and Zeynep Güranlı as presenters. In May, the third edition of the "Media on the Fault Line" report, which examined the impact of the February 6 earthquake on press freedom in Turkey, was published.

Within the scope of the M4D Project, the Journalists' Association organized the "Transformation and Pursuits in Journalism" Conference. The event, held on April 26–27, brought together national press professional organizations to discuss current issues and the future of journalism. One of the conference's guest speakers, Palestinian journalist Hasan Tahravi, spoke about the situation faced by civilians in Gaza and the attacks on the press. \*

In addition, the Media Monitoring Report and the Job Satisfaction Survey Report for 2023 were published, evaluating the professional challenges journalists faced as well as the state of press freedom and democracy in Turkey. The survey results were incorporated into the Monitoring Report.

In September, as part of the 9th Village Project, the Media Conference was held with the participation of representatives from press professional organizations, unions and working groups, academics, legal experts, and senior journalists. During the workshop conducted within the scope of the conference, the "Journalism Rights and Freedoms Declaration" was drafted \*\*

Led by the International Press Institute, a Joint Press Freedom Mission meeting was held in Turkey with the participation of international press organizations. \*\*\*

Dr. Çağrı Kaderoğlu Bulut's Media Problems and Impact Analysis Report was published, offering insights into how interviews, conferences, and training activities contribute to the current media landscape.

The Journalism Rights and Freedoms Declaration, a collaborative effort by professional associations, working groups, and academics in law and communications, was also released. \*\*\*\*

The Press Council, DİSK/Basın-İş, the Association of Diplomacy Correspondents, the Contemporary

\*<https://www.24saatgazetesi.com/gazeteciligin-donusumu-ve-arayislar-konferansinin-ilk-gunu-tamamlandi>

\*\*<https://gc-tr.org/medya-konferansi-2024-gazeteciligin-donusumu-ve-arayislar-konferans-bildirgesi/>

\*\*\*<https://freeturkeyjournalists.ipi.media/tr/turkiye-ipi-onculugundeki-uluslararası-basın-özgurlugu-misyonu-12-14-ekimde-duzenleniyor/>

\*\*\*\*<https://gc-tr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/GazetecilikHyODeklarasyonu.pdf>



Journalists Association, the Journalists' Association, the Association of Economics Journalists, Haber-Sen, the İzmir Journalists Association, the Media and Law Studies Association, and the Turkish Journalists Union jointly issued a statement of objection to the Foreign Influence Law being discussed in the parliament, declaring that the law is "a direct assault on press and freedom of expression."

## Key Reports on Press and Freedom of Expression in 2024

1. Council of Europe March 31, 2024 Local Elections Report  
<https://rm.coe.int/local-elections-in-turkiye-31-march-2024-co-rapporteurs-david-eray-swi/1680b1c01c>
2. Oxford Reuters Institute 2024 Digital Media Report  
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024>
3. Oxford Reuters Institute 2025 Journalism, Media, and Technology Trends and Predictions Report  
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2025>
4. Article 19 2024 Global Freedom of Expression Report  
<https://www.globalexpressionreport.org>
5. Women's Press Freedom 2024 First Quarter Report  
<https://www.womeninjournalism.org/reports-all/q1-2024>
6. Media Freedom Rapid Response 2024 January-June Media Monitoring Report  
<https://www.ecpmf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/MR-2024-Final-Draft-Pages.pdf>
7. European Commission 2024 Turkey Report  
[https://www.ab.gov.tr/siteimages/birimler/kpb/2024\\_trkiye\\_report\\_tr.pdf](https://www.ab.gov.tr/siteimages/birimler/kpb/2024_trkiye_report_tr.pdf)
8. Turkish Journalists Association 2023-2024 Press Freedom Report  
<https://tgs.org.tr/tgs-basin-ozgurlugu-raporu-2023-2024/>
9. World Economic Forum 2025 Global Risks Report  
[https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risks\\_Report\\_2025.pdf](https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_Report_2025.pdf)
10. Freedom House 2024 Freedom in the World Report  
[https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW\\_2024\\_DigitalBooklet.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW_2024_DigitalBooklet.pdf)
11. Amnesty International 2023/2024 State of Human Rights Worldwide  
<https://cdn.sanity.io/files/ysiap3nf/production/59436d60d42e87e02d6eb5971ddc6b7dd532f489.pdf>
12. Utku Çakırözer 2024 Press Freedom Report  
[https://ankahaber.net/haber/detay/chpli\\_cakirozer\\_2024\\_basin\\_ozgurlugu\\_raporunu\\_acikladi\\_74\\_gazeteci\\_gozaltina\\_alindi\\_14\\_gazeteci\\_tutuklandi\\_214413](https://ankahaber.net/haber/detay/chpli_cakirozer_2024_basin_ozgurlugu_raporunu_acikladi_74_gazeteci_gozaltina_alindi_14_gazeteci_tutuklandi_214413)
13. BIA Media Monitoring Report 2024 Summary  
<https://static.bianet.org/2025/01/bia-medya-gozlem-2024.pdf>
14. MLSA 2024 Justice Monitoring Program Report  
<https://www.mlsaturkey.com/tr/mlsa-2024-adalet-gozlem-programi-raporu-dusunce-suc-tutuklama-ceza>
15. Journalism Rights and Freedoms Declaration  
<https://gc-tr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/GazetecilikHvODeklarasyonu.pdf>



## 6- CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT

---

The year 2024 has been marked as a turning point for media freedom in Turkey, characterized by the introduction of new tools of pressure, the deepening of structural problems, and the vital importance of professional solidarity. Legal pressure mechanisms shaped by legislation, economic interventions reinforced by administrative decisions, and discriminatory practices targeting the labor rights of media workers have institutionally weakened the journalism profession.

Throughout the year, regulations that were enacted or brought to the agenda, particularly the “disinformation law” and the subsequent “foreign influence” designation, have not only increased criminal penalties through vague language but also turned into a deterrent tool that undermines journalists’ motivation to report. These measures have criminalized critical journalism while significantly obstructing the public’s right to access information.

The disproportionate penalties imposed on critical broadcasts by regulatory bodies—particularly RTÜK—which are constitutionally mandated to act independently, as well as access bans and bandwidth throttling that severely restrict access to digital platforms, have further deepened structural inequalities in the media landscape. The dependence of local media outlets on public advertising revenues has made it nearly impossible for them to maintain a critical distance from government policies. This has become one of the primary threats to media pluralism in Turkey.

Field observations and qualitative data analyses reveal that journalists’ physical and digital safety cannot be guaranteed, with many journalists being detained or prosecuted. The press card system is increasingly applied in an arbitrary and exclusionary manner. The results of the 2024 Professional Satisfaction Survey indicate that job insecurity and financial concerns directly affect more than 80% of journalists. This not only undermines individual well-being but also poses a serious threat to upholding ethical standards in news production.

Nevertheless, as clearly demonstrated in the report, the growing collaboration among professional associations, media coalitions, and international actors is helping to expose the threats faced by journalists and is contributing to the long-term construction of a culture of solidarity. Joint declarations, reciprocal training and capacity-building programs, digital security workshops, and monitoring activities have served as visible pillars of this resistance.

Ultimately, the protection of freedom of expression and press freedom in Turkey is no longer solely the responsibility of journalists or media organizations. This has become a shared struggle for all those who seek a democratic social order. An effective media policy must be reshaped on the basis of independence, transparency, and equality; the rights of media workers must be legally guaranteed; and the fight against both censorship and self-censorship must be pursued with determination.

Otherwise, the public’s right to access information and the mechanisms of democratic oversight will be irreversibly damaged, and the media will transform into a tool that speaks for those in power rather than on behalf of the people. The most powerful response to this threat will be a stronger line of solidarity between journalists’ ethical responsibility and the public’s moral awakening.

### Suggestions

The sustainable protection of press and freedom of expression in Turkey cannot be achieved solely by exposing existing pressures, but also through solution-oriented structural proposals. The recommendations outlined below are designed to respond to the multi-layered crisis facing the media sector, strengthen the culture of solidarity, and enhance the effectiveness of support mechanisms provided by international actors such as the European Union.



## 1. Legal Reform and the Establishment of Judicial Independence

- \* Ambiguous and arbitrary legal provisions such as Article 217/A of the Turkish Penal Code (Disinformation Law) and the proposed “Foreign Influence” regulation must be repealed or removed from the agenda, and a new legal framework that safeguards freedom of expression must be established.
- \* Anti-terror legislation must be rewritten in a way that does not criminalize journalism; articles such as TPC 299 and Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Law should be abolished.
- \* Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) must be implemented immediately and in full, and lower courts must end their resistance to Constitutional Court rulings.

## 2. Transformation of Media Ownership and Economic Structure

- \* Media ownership structures must be diversified to prevent monopolization and ensure pluralism. Transparent and independent regulatory mechanisms should be introduced to oversee media concentration and promote fair competition.
- \* Public advertising resources must be distributed based on objective and transparent criteria. Allocation mechanisms should not be used as tools of political pressure or reward.
- \* Sustainable financing models, including independent funds and tax incentives, should be developed to support local and independent media outlets.
- \* The strengthening of institutional structures should be included as a key component in financial support packages

## 3. Strengthening Solidarity and Collective Resilience Mechanisms

- \* Platforms such as the Media Solidarity Group should be provided with structural and long-term funding to strengthen their roles in coordination, advocacy, and resource sharing across the independent media ecosystem.
- \* Shared access to legal support, technical infrastructure, training materials, and digital security tools should be ensured, with a particular emphasis on prioritizing local media as key beneficiaries of these systems.
- \* Intergenerational knowledge exchange should be fostered through mentorship programs between senior journalists and early-career professionals, with a focus on ethical journalism and newsroom resilience

## 4. Transforming International Support Mechanisms

- \* Funding programs should shift from short-term project support to structural and sustainable financing models, with simplified application processes that enable access for smaller, local actors.
- \* The EU and other donors should adopt a more active partnership role—not only providing financial support, but also amplifying the visibility of journalists, offering diplomatic protection, and standing behind demands for media reform.
- \* Rapid response and solidarity mechanisms must be established to address urgent legal and physical threats against journalists effectively and without delay

## 5. Media Literacy and Public Awareness

- \* Combating disinformation must go beyond punitive measures and be rooted in comprehensive media literacy campaigns. Efforts should focus on enhancing critical thinking skills across society and reinforcing journalism’s public role in addressing misinformation.

These suggestions are not solely about protecting journalists—they are directly linked to evidence-based decision-making, democratic accountability, and the future of our societies. Combating disinformation must go beyond punitive measures and be rooted in comprehensive media literacy campaigns. Efforts should focus on enhancing critical thinking skills across society and reinforcing journalism’s public role in addressing misinformation.



### **Journalists Association**

Media for Democracy / Democracy for Media Project  
Üsküp Caddesi No:35 Çankaya/Ankara



+90 312 468 12 09



[www.media4democracy.org](http://www.media4democracy.org)  
[www.gc-tr.org](http://www.gc-tr.org)  
[www.24saatgazetesi.com](http://www.24saatgazetesi.com)



[facebook.com/media4democracy](https://facebook.com/media4democracy)  
[twitter.com/democracy4media](https://twitter.com/democracy4media)  
[instagram.com/media4democracy](https://instagram.com/media4democracy)  
[youtube.com/media4democracy](https://youtube.com/media4democracy)



[Click here to access the reports published within the scope of the M4D Project](#)