

FREEWEB
TURKEY



2022

INTERNET CENSORSHIP

REPORT

MISA

ABOUT MLSA AND FREE WEB TURKEY

Founded in 2017, the main field of activity of the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) is to provide legal support to journalists and individuals facing trial in freedom of expression cases.

As MLSA, within the scope of the Free Web Turkey project, which we have been carrying out in the field of internet freedoms since 2020, we aim to guide websites, media organisations and all content producers in general who face censorship in digital media on how to cope with censorship, provide legal advice, provide them with the tools they need to protect themselves from censorship and provide them with a number of internet services that will make their work easier.

In addition, we bring together groups working in the field of digital freedoms and freedom of expression to organise panels and roundtable discussions to raise awareness against censorship, publish articles on these issues and conduct training for content producers.

Another aim of our project is to expand the network of communication and solidarity between institutions, which is one of the most essential things in combating digital censorship. In doing so, we aim to protect the freedom of expression enshrined in the law, the Constitution and international conventions and to ensure the effective exercise of this right.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Turkey has been going through a very challenging period due to the massive increase in human rights violations and the frequent use of practices restricting freedom of expression and press freedom. The number of journalists and media workers in prison is one of the most important indicators of this.

At the time of writing, 41 journalists and media workers are in prison for their professional activities, such as writing, reporting and/or social media posts¹ and hundreds of journalists, writers, bloggers and social media users are on trial for their news, posts, opinions and likes.

This pressure began to make its impact felt in the country with the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Since the mid-2000s, the AKP has transferred mainstream media outlets to companies close to it through the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF), resulting in the emergence of many media outlets bought by business people close to the government and explicitly publishing in support of government policies. According to the reports and statements of many organisations, journalists and researchers who examine and report on the repression of journalists and media outlets², 95 percent of the national media in Turkey is in the hands of the government.

In the aftermath of the coup attempt, extraordinary interventions were made against freedom of the press and freedom of expression, targeting not only journalists but also many online and offline media outlets and social media users.

During the state of emergency (SoE), which was declared on 21 July 2016 after the coup attempt and extended seven times with three-month extensions, a total of 178 media outlets, including 5 news agencies, 16 television channels, 24 radios, 63 newspapers and 20 magazines were shut down, 67 journalists were arrested, approximately 2,500 journalists were unemployed, and nearly 30 publishing houses were closed down.

As a result, journalists who are independent or refuse to take a stand on the side of the government have started to share their news to their readers mainly via the internet, especially social media platforms, instead of traditional media outlets.

Social media platforms have become a public space where social groups can unite to make their voices heard, and journalists can share their news and a vital vessel for news flow. However, in this situation where almost all of the existing media organisations are directly or indirectly under the control of the government, the internet, which is the only medium where different opinions can be shared, is also targeted by the government.

The prosecution of thousands of people for their posts on digital platforms, the restriction of access to as much content, the majority of which is news articles, and the removal of online content are indications that the government is wearing an armor of censorship against content that is against it or that does not conform to its ideology and the thoughts of its voters.

Free Web Turkey platform, founded in 2019 to contribute to the fight against censorship and to raise awareness in this report, documents the steps taken to suppress internet freedom in Turkey between 1st January and 31st December 2022 by scanning open sources and revealing data on how many domain names, news, social media posts, and social media accounts have been hit by this censorship.

¹ Journalists and Media Workers in Prison, <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/tr/cezaevindeki-gazeteci-ve-medya-calisanlari>, (Accessed: 22.09.2023)

² Some of them can be referenced as follows: Report on the December 2018 International Press Institute (IPI) Press Freedom Mission To Turkey, January 2019, p. 4, https://freeturkeyjournalists.ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Turkey-Mission-Report-Dec-2018_FINAL_PAGE-1-16-merged.pdf.

"Otoriterleşen Türkiye'nin Çölleşen Medyası" (The Desertification of Turkey's Authoritarian Media), Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Bilim Platformu Politika Notları (Republican People's Party Science Platform Policy Notes), March 2019, Issue: 37, <https://chp.org.tr/haberler/chp-bilim-platfomu-politika-notu-otoriterlesen-turkiyenin-collesen-medyasi>.

"24 Temmuz Basın Bayramı'nı Kutlamıyoruz" (We Do Not Celebrate July 24th Press Day), <https://tgs.org.tr/24-temmuz-basin-bayramini-kutlamiyoruz/>.

"İktidar baskısıyla basında işsizlik ve açılan dava sayısı rekor seviyeye ulaştı" (Unemployment in the Press and the Number of Lawsuits Soared due to Government Pressure), <https://www.tgc.org.tr/18-slides/2384-10-ocak-2020.html>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023).

SUMMARY

With the increasing number of access bans imposed on websites, news and social media posts in Turkey, internet censorship has taken an important place on the human rights debate in the country. In addition to the academic articles, reports and news published on this issue, discussions among journalists, academics, human rights defenders and citizens continue.

This report prepared by Free Web Turkey is a reflection of these discussions.

This report, which we have created with the data we obtained from a year of monitoring activities and open-source scanning, includes data on how many domain names, news, social media posts, and social media accounts were blocked in Turkey between 1 January - 31 December 2022.

During this period, there have been many incidents restricting and censoring internet users' freedom of expression, and this report provides a detailed analysis of the developments regarding internet freedoms in Turkey in 2022.

The blocked domain names, news, social media posts, and social media accounts, along with the reasons and authorities responsible for their blocking and the subject matter of the blocked content, are essential components of the report.

This report, which also includes regulations on internet freedoms in Turkey, tries to refresh our memory and remind us of the extent of censorship in the country by including prominent websites and news blocked in 2022.

The report concludes with recommendations on what can be done against internet censorship, including Turkey's position in transparency reports published by social media platforms and global studies on internet freedom.

This report, prepared by Free Web Turkey, aims to contribute to the existing debate on internet freedoms in Turkey by providing data and analyses on access restrictions in 2022.



A. REGULATIONS CONCERNING INTERNET FREEDOM

The first internet connection in Turkey was established on April 12, 1993³. However, internet usage began to proliferate in the country in the second half of the 1990s, similar to many other countries. Since the initial connection, the primary aim of internet censorship in Turkey has been to prevent "objectionable" political content and obscenity.⁴

The first regulation regarding the Internet was introduced through the Law on the Establishment and Broadcasting of Radios and Televisions, Law No. 4676, enacted in 2001, along with amendments to the Press Law, Income Tax Law, and Corporate Tax Law. With this law, two regulations related to the Internet were introduced into the Law on the Establishment and Broadcasting of Radios and Televisions, No. 3984, and the Press Law, No. 5680. These regulations also brought about interventions against internet freedoms. According to Özgür Uçkan, one of the leading advocates of internet freedom, although everyone tends to initiate internet censorship starting in 2007, the period of the rise of internet censorship was from 2001 to 2006. Many websites were blocked between 2000 and 2007. Numerous access-blocking decisions issued by authorized courts, mainly based on provisions in the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), as well as regulations such as the Civil Code and the Law on Intellectual and Artistic Works, were directly implemented by internet service providers.⁵

While there was no specific regulation for internet freedoms, censorship mechanisms began to operate through other relevant regulations. However, specific regulatory efforts related to the internet started in 2007, which many consider the beginning of internet censorship.

A.1. BASIC REGULATIONS AND AMENDMENTS REGARDING THE INTERNET MEDIUM

A.1.1 Law No. 5651

The first law concerning online publications was Law No. 5651 on the Regulation of Publications on the Internet and the Fight Against Crimes Committed through These Publications, which came into effect on May 23, 2007.

According to its rationale, Law No. 5651 emerged from the necessity to enact a special law that could enable effective and accurate structuring in combating crimes committed through the opportunities provided by the online environment in Turkey. The purpose and scope of the law are stated as determining the obligations and responsibilities of content providers, location providers, access providers, and public access providers, as well as regulating the principles and procedures related to measures taken against content that constitutes the material element of certain crimes committed in the online environment.

Through this regulation, internet service providers are required to maintain logs, record IP address information of computers connecting to their networks, MAC addresses, and similar data on a daily basis, and retain all files created within one year retrospectively.

Law No. 5651, which regulates the obligations of content, location, and access providers, also envisages measures such as blocking access and removing the content. Its most important features include defining the actors related to the internet, determining responsibilities, and regulating measures.

The competent authorities for taking measures regarding crimes committed via the Internet under Law No. 5651 are judicial authorities. However, the Access Providers Union (ESB) also has the authority to take administrative measures to block access to websites.

³ TÜBİTAK Bilim Genç (2018), "Internet in Turkey Turns 25" <https://bilimgenc.tubitak.gov.tr/makale/turkiyede-internet-25-yasinda>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023)

⁴ Akgül, M., & Kırıldıođ, M. (2015). "Internet Censorship in Turkey". *Internet Policy Review*, Volume 4, Issue 2, s. 12 <https://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/internet-censorship-turkey>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023)

⁵ "Turkey's Brief History of Internet Censorship... and Its Possible Future," <https://web.archive.org/web/20220119044059/https://ozguruckan.alternatifbilisim.org/kategori/politika/22241/turkiye-de-internet-sansurunun-kisa-tarihi-ve-mumkun-gelecegi.html>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023)

The circumstances in which access restrictions will be applied regarding crimes committed over the internet are specified in the first paragraph of Article 8 of Law No. 5651 as follows⁶:

a) Offenses listed on Law No. 5237 dated 26/9/2004, including;

- Incitement to suicide (Article 84)
- Sexual exploitation of children (Article 103, paragraph 1)
- Facilitating the use of drugs or stimulants (Article 190)
- Supplying hazardous substances to health (Article 194)
- Obscenity (Article 226)
- Prostitution (Article 227)
- Providing a place and means for gambling (Article 228)

b) Offenses related to crimes committed against Atatürk as specified in Law No. 5816.

c) Offenses listed in Law No. 7258 regarding the Regulation of Betting and Games of Chance in Football and Other Sports Competitions

ç) Offenses as stated in the first and second paragraphs of Article 27 of Law No. 2937 on State Intelligence Services and the National Intelligence Organization.

These specified offenses are not specific to Law No. 5651, which is related to the Internet environment. They are catalogue crimes listed in Law No. 5237. Catalog crimes encompass a range of offence types that require more specific conditions for applying security measures. In cases where the content falls under one of the catalogue crimes committed over the internet, access to websites containing such content can be restricted as a precaution, and content that violates personal rights can be removed from the online environment.

In 2015, Law No. 6639, which Amends Certain Laws and Decree-Laws, added Article 8/A to Law No. 5651.⁷

With this article, in cases where access to content on the internet is requested to be removed and/or restricted due to reasons related to the protection of the right to life, the safety of individuals' lives and property, national security, public order, the prevention of crime, or the protection of general health, by the presidency or, in cases where there is urgency, by the relevant ministries related to the protection of national security, the prevention of crime, or the protection of general health, the President is authorised to make decisions regarding the removal and/or restriction of content on the internet.

In subsequent years, Law No. 5651 has been amended multiple times to allow for more surveillance and censorship opportunities for the state and institutions under the control of the government.

One of these changes was the Law on Law No. 6527 on Amendments to Certain Laws and Law No. 6552 on Amendments to the Labour Law and Certain Laws and Decree Laws and Restructuring of Certain Debts.

With these regulations, after the transition to the presidential system in 2018, the Telecommunications and Communication Presidency (TİB), which had been closed, made it possible for content to be blocked without any restriction or gradation at the order of the TİB president. However, the Constitutional Court (AYM) found that these changes granted the administration vast intervention possibilities and were contrary to the Constitution, and consequently, it invalidated the relevant article.⁸

⁶ Law on the Regulation of Publications Made on the Internet and the Fight Against Crimes Committed Through These Publications, <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.5651.pdf>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023)

⁷ "April 15, 2015, issue number 29327 of the Official Gazette," <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/04/20150415-1.htm>, (Accessed: 28.04.2023)

⁸ The Constitutional Court of Turkey (AYM) case with reference E. 2014/149 K. 2014/151 T, Decision Date: October 2, 2014, Official Gazette Date-Number: January 1, 2015 - 29223.

A.2. ADDITIONAL EFFORTS REGARDING THE REGULATION

OF INTERNET BROADCASTS

A.2.1 Omnibus Bill Aimed at Violation of Personality Rights

In December 2013, following corruption investigations, a new omnibus bill was designed to make changes to Law No. 5651. This draft was sent to the Turkish Grand National Assembly Planning and Budget Committee, which, in turn, combined 125 articles and 42 different laws and Decree-Laws, including amendments to Law No. 5651, into a single draft, which was presented to the Turkish Grand National Assembly on January 16, 2014. The draft was approved in February 2014, becoming Law No. 6518, and it introduced two new methods of access blocking to the legislation.⁹

With Law No. 6518 amending Law No. 5651, new provisions were added. Article 9 of Law No. 5651, titled "Removal of Content and Blocking Access," included the possibility of blocking access to content due to a "violation of personality rights," and Article 9/A allowed the blocking of content due to the "privacy of private life".¹⁰

Additionally, Article 6/A was added to the law, establishing the Access Providers Union (ESB). According to this article, access blocking decisions made by the judiciary due to "violation of personality rights" and "privacy of private life" must be sent to the ESB.

A.2.2. Law No. 7253 or the 'Social Media Law'

Another set of changes related to internet broadcasts came with the Law Amending the Law on the Regulation of Publications Made in the Internet Environment and the Fight Against Crimes Committed through These Publications, published in the Official Gazette on July 30, 2020. This law is commonly known as the "Social Media Law."

Under this law, online platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube were defined as "social network providers," and these companies, which have millions of users, were subject to a series of obligations and sanctions. One of the obligations required social network providers with daily access exceeding one million to have a representative in Turkey. Failure to comply with this requirement would lead to progressive penalties, advertising bans, and eventually bandwidth reduction sanctions. This situation posed the risk of making it impossible for social network providers to be accessible from Turkey.

Law No. 7253 also obliged social network providers to store their users' data in Turkey. Storing personal data in Turkey allows these data to be requested by judicial and administrative authorities. Additionally, social network providers were mandated to respond to applications related to content removal and access blocking within 48 hours. This obligation prioritises the right to be forgotten and similar rights.

This regulation, often called the "Censorship Law" by civil society organisations, professional associations, journalists, and human rights advocates, not only exacerbates existing censorship but also poses a potential threat to citizens by compromising data security.

⁹ February 19, 2014, Official Gazette No. 28918, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/02/20140219-1.htm>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹⁰ Here is internet censorship in 10 points, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/iste-10-maddede-internet-sansuru-38013>, (Date of Access: 28.04.2023)

A.3. RECENT CHANGES REGARDING THE INTERNET ENVIRONMENT

Despite the regulations governing internet broadcasting procedures and principles under Law No. 5651, additional efforts are regularly made.

On July 28, 2021, a forest fire broke out in the Manavgat district of Antalya, spreading to many cities across Turkey. 299 forest fires occurred in 53 provinces in the Mediterranean, Aegean, Marmara, Western Black Sea, and Southeastern Anatolia regions.¹¹ These fires received significant coverage not only in mainstream media but also in alternative media.

Media outlets, referred to as "alternative media," which operate through digital channels and provide a different perspective compared to media outlets close to the government, reported the events as they happened. This led to criticisms that the mainstream media was covering up the forest fires and the resulting tragedy in the region.¹² The reports and updates shared by artists, activists, and volunteers who went to the affected areas further fuelled these criticisms.

In response, Fahrettin Altun, the Head of Presidential Communications, made a statement on his social media account, claiming that the news produced by alternative media and on social media was false and disinformation. He alleged that these reports were being intentionally created for ideological purposes and that those responsible would be held accountable by the law.¹³

Subsequently, government officials announced they were working on a new bill in response to criticisms that certain media organisations close to them had not reported during the fires and allegations of disinformation on social media.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also addressed the issue of disinformation in reporting during the forest fires, stating that the government was working on a new bill. He mentioned they were considering the German model, the Press, the Internet, and Social Media Law as a reference for this new bill.¹⁴ Ali Özkaya, the Deputy Chair of the Constitution Committee, discussed potential penalties for those spreading fake news on social media, including imprisonment for one to five years, and for those who engage in defamation, up to two years of imprisonment and suspension from social media use.¹⁵

As a result, a new law regulating online publications, named "Law Amending Certain Laws and Regulations in the Press, Internet, and Some Laws," was enacted. This new law has sparked public debate, with the public referring to it as the "Censorship Law" and government officials describing it as the "Disinformation Control Law" due to its inclusion of new sanctions and measures aimed at the media and social media.

¹¹ The current situation of wildfires in Turkey: 267 out of 270 forest fires in 53 provinces are under control, <https://tr.euronews.com/2021/08/01/turkiye-de-yang-nlarda-son-durum-20-yerde-sondurme-cal-smalar-suruyor>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹² Introduction to journalism for celebrities: Tips for social media reporters, <https://journio.com.tr/unluler-icin-gazetecilik>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹³ Fahrettin Altun, Twitter, <https://twitter.com/fahrettinaltun/status/1421398444204335106?s=20>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹⁴ Social Media: What problems could arise with the new regulations?, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-58298974>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹⁵ "Turkey model" regulation for social media: Up to 5 years in prison and a ban on using social media are on the agenda, <https://www.indyturk.com/node/391336>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

A.4. THE DISINFORMATION CONTROL OR CENSORSHIP LAW

The "Law on the Amendment of the Press Law and Certain Laws", which was prepared by the People's Alliance representing the unity of the AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and submitted to parliament on October 13, 2022, entered into force on October 18, 2022, after being published in the Official Gazette.¹⁶

This 40-article Law No. 7418 contains essential regulations on the exercise of the right to information and the right to freedom of expression.

Although the bill was rejected and debated by the public in its entirety¹⁷, Article 29 was the one most frequently raised and raised concerns. This article, added to the Turkish Penal Code, defines a new offence of "publicly disseminating misleading information to the public" and envisages a prison sentence of one to three years for those who commit this offence. The article defines the persons who can be charged with this offence as follows:

"Whoever publicly disseminates untrue information concerning the internal and external security, public order and public health of the country with the sole intention of creating anxiety, fear or panic among the public, in a manner conducive to disrupting public peace."

The law does not include any definition of "disinformation" that would help to understand what is and is not.

Article 29 uses the term "disseminates" rather than "produces" or "puts into circulation" for those who circulate false information. This means that not only those who put forward a news story that judicial authorities have determined to be disinformation but also those who like and share it on social media platforms can face this charge.

The law stipulates that the penalty is increased by half if the perpetrator commits the crime by concealing their true identity or "within the framework of the activities of an organisation".

With the authority granted by the law, the Information Technologies Authority (BTK) and the Press Advertisement Agency (BİK) can, if they wish, request data on the messaging of any internet user from closed instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, etc.

Social network providers are obliged to report to the ICTA the number of active individual and corporate users in Turkey, the number and duration of voice calls, the number and duration of video calls and the number of instant messages.

The law obliges the relevant social network provider regarding the Turkish Penal Code's provisions on "publicly disseminating misleading information", "disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the state", "crimes against state secrets", "sexual abuse of children", "crimes against the constitutional order and its functioning" and "espionage" obliges its representative in Turkey to provide the judicial authorities with the information necessary to reach the perpetrators who created or disseminated the internet content, if requested by the prosecutor during the investigation phase and by the court where the trial is conducted during the prosecution phase.

¹⁶ October 18, 2022, Official Gazette Number 31987, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2022/10/20221018.pdf>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

¹⁷ What does Article 29 of the 'censorship law' mean? Retweet or comments may also be considered a crime!, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/sansur-yasasinin-29-maddesine-anlama-geliyor-retweet-ya-da-yorum-da-suc-sayilabilir-1948043>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

The law obliges social network providers to share this content and information about its creator with authorised law enforcement if they "learn of content that endangers the security of life and property of persons and if the delay is inconvenient" and imposes severe penalties on companies that refuse to provide this information or general information about accounts users deemed "criminal" under the law and do not sanction these accounts.

Among these, there are penalties of up to 30 million Turkish Liras or a reduction of bandwidth by 95 per cent. This reduction would effectively render the platform inaccessible in Turkey. Another sanction is that the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) will have the authority to impose fines on social media companies for up to 3 per cent of their global revenues.

With the new law, online news websites are now classified as "periodic publications" and fall under the scope of the Press Law. This means that individuals in editorial roles for online news websites can now apply for press credentials. Press card applications will be submitted to the Presidency's Communications Directorate.

However, in addition to the criteria for obtaining a press card, the conditions for its cancellation have also been redefined. According to the 16th article, if it is determined that a press cardholder has lost the necessary qualifications and their press card is revoked, they will be deprived of the press card for one year from the date of revocation. In cases where a press card is cancelled due to actions or behaviours that violate press ethics and principles, the individual will be deprived of the press card for five years.

Furthermore, news sites have been granted the right to receive official announcements from the Press Advertisement Institution (BİK).

The law mandates that news websites are obliged to publicly disclose their place of business, commercial name, email address, electronic notification address, contact information, and the name of their hosting provider. Additionally, it requires that the date of the initial publication of content and subsequent update dates must be displayed on the content in a way that remains unchanged with each access.

The law requires news websites to submit a declaration regarding their scope of activities and provide their electronic notification addresses. The law suggests that due to the increased workload of the judiciary, the declaration should be submitted to the Press Advertisement Institution (BİK) instead of public prosecutors. News websites that fail to fulfil the declaration obligation or correct any deficiencies within two weeks will not be granted the status of a "periodic publication."

Furthermore, online news websites are now obliged to retain the content they publish, ensuring its accuracy, integrity, and accessibility for a period of two years in response to a potential request from the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Non-compliance with this obligation may result in fines.

With this law, the Press Advertisement Institution (BİK), established to ensure the fair distribution of official announcements to newspapers, has been empowered to impose announcement suspension and financial penalties on both print newspapers and internet websites. This law grants BİK the authority to penalise publishers in a manner similar to the Radio and Television Supreme Council.

A.5. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT'S PILOT JUDGEMENT

ON ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

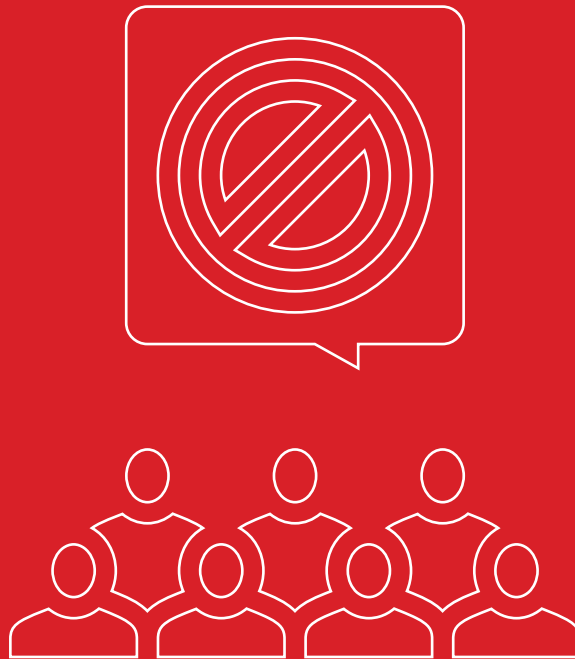
The Constitutional Court (AYM) announced its decision on nine access restriction appeals, including those from news sites such as BirGün, Diken, Gazete Duvar, soL, Artı Gerçek, TarımdanHaber, and Çığdem Toker, on January 7, 2022.¹⁸

The Constitutional Court consolidated the appeals and decided to apply the pilot decision procedure, finding that the violations originated from the law. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court ruled that Article 9 of Law No. 5651 on the Regulation of Internet Broadcasts, which concerns access restriction decisions, obstructed freedom of the press and expression and should be amended. The decision, made unanimously, also outlined the new regulation's criteria.

These criteria include access restriction being the last resort or the last measure that could be taken, ensuring safeguards to prevent arbitrary applications and not reaching the level of eliminating freedom of expression. The procedure for access restrictions should have legal clarity, the limits of intervention by public authorities should be defined, alternative sanctions should be identified, there should be the right to appeal and review decisions, and a balance should be maintained in the decisions. These criteria were among the recommendations made by the Constitutional Court.

While forwarding the decision to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) for the necessary legislative adjustments, the Constitutional Court granted one year for the TBMM to enact the required legal changes. During this period, the Constitutional Court stated it would not consider past or future appeals on the same issue. The court also emphasised that if a new regulation is not enacted, all appeals would result in a violation of rights.

Despite the Constitutional Court's decision, no regulatory changes were made in 2022.



¹⁸ Violation of Freedom of Expression and Press Freedom Due to Blocking Access to a Series of News Articles on Internet News Websites (Pilot Decision), <https://www.anayasa.gov.tr/tr/haberler/bireysel-basvuru-basin-duyurulari/internet-haber-sitelerindeki-bir-dizi-habere-erisimin-engellenmesi-nedeniyle-ifade-ve-basin-ozgurlukleri-ile-etkili-basvuru-hakkinin-ihlal-edilmesi-pilot-karar>, (Accessed Date: April 28, 2023)

A.6. AUTHORITY FOR ACCESS RESTRICTION IN TURKEY

Access restriction decisions in Turkey can be issued or requested by various judicial bodies and administrative institutions, including Criminal Judgeship of Peace, courts, and prosecutor's offices, under various laws, regulations, and rules. Criminal Judgeship of Peace often issue access restriction decisions according to Law No. 5651 on the Regulation of Internet Broadcasts, particularly under Articles 8, 8/A, 9, and 9/A. Prosecutor's offices can also make access restriction decisions during the investigation stage under Article 8.

In addition to the judiciary, public prosecutors are granted the authority to restrict access under Article 4(3) of Law No. 5846 on Intellectual and Artistic Works to address copyright violations.

Different administrative institutions have been granted the authority for access restriction through various laws, regulations, and rules. Based on Law No. 5651, over 20 institutions in Turkey have the authority to issue access restrictions or request them for internet content.

These institutions are as follows:

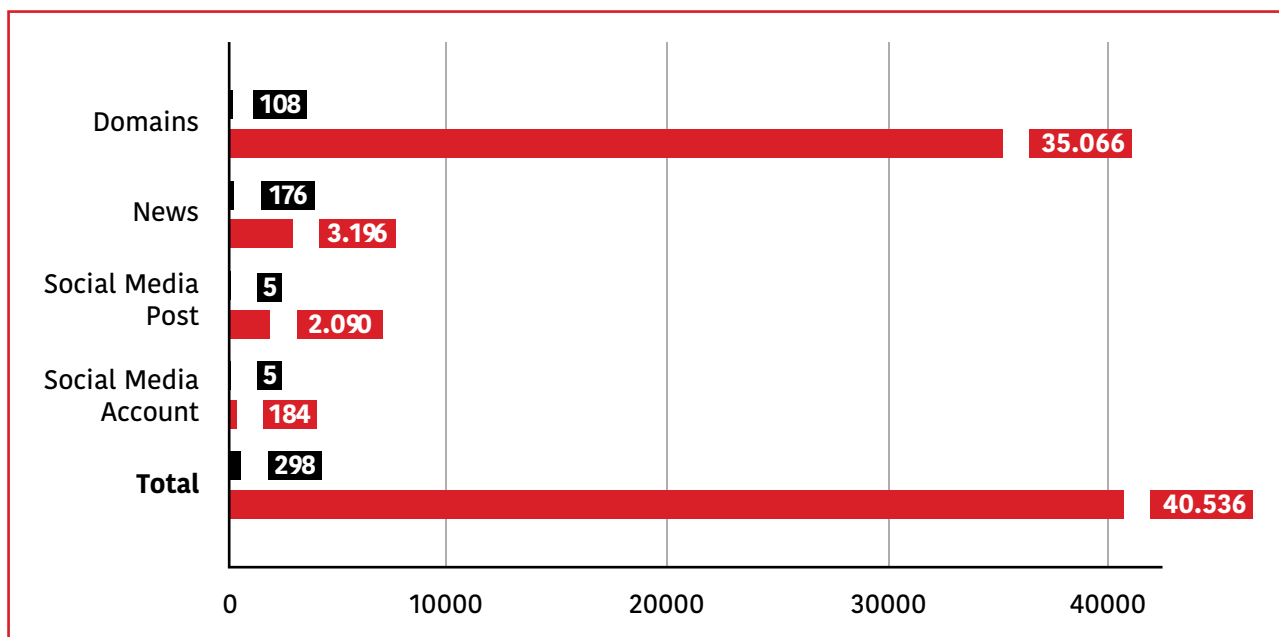
- The Presidency and relevant ministries
- The Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) until its closure
- The President of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) after its closure
- The Union of Access Providers (ESB)
- The Ministry of Health and the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency (TİTCK)
- The Capital Markets Board (SPK)
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Authority
- The National Lottery Administration General Directorate and the Games of Chance Department
- The Turkish Jockey Club (TJK)
- The Spor Toto Organization Presidency
- The Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Board of Religious Affairs
- The Presidency of Religious Affairs and the Committee for the Examination and Recitation of the Quran
- The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK)
- The Supreme Election Board (YSK)
- The Ministry of Trade and the General Directorate for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance
- The Ministry of Treasury and Finance
- All authorised bodies under the Product Safety and Technical Regulations Law
- Provincial industry and technology directors under the Ministry of Industry and Technology
- Governorates and the Ministry of Interior
- The Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK)
- The Turkish Football Federation (TFF)
- Entities under the Child Protection Law
- The Advertisement Board

B. FINDINGS OF THE FREE WEB TURKEY PLATFORM

According to an open-source survey conducted by the Free Web Turkey Platform, in the 12-month period between January 1 and December 31, 2022, at least 40,536 URLs, including domain names, news, social media posts and social media accounts, were blocked by court orders.



B.1. DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF RESTRICTIONS



■ Number of Affected URLs ■ Number of Reviewed Decisions

In this report, blockings are categorised under four different categories: "Domain name", "News", "Social media post", and "Social media account".

Accordingly, it was determined that access to at least 35,066 domain names, 3,196 news articles, 2,090 social media posts and 184 social media accounts were blocked in 2022.

B.2. THE PRIMARY DISTRIBUTION OF DOMAIN NAME RESTRICTIONS

Type of Restriction	Number of Reviewed Decisions	Number of Affected URLs
Adult, gambling, fraud, financial, terrorism	47	35.000
Opposition websites	51	53
Other	10	13
TOTAL	108	35.066

In 2022, the highest number of access restrictions, amounting to 35,066, was imposed on domain names, and this number was reached through 108 court decisions.

Out of these 35,066 domain names, 35,000 are related to websites that are claimed to publish content related to "Adult, gambling, fraud, financial, terrorism" themes. Following closely are 53 domain names belonging to "Opposition websites."

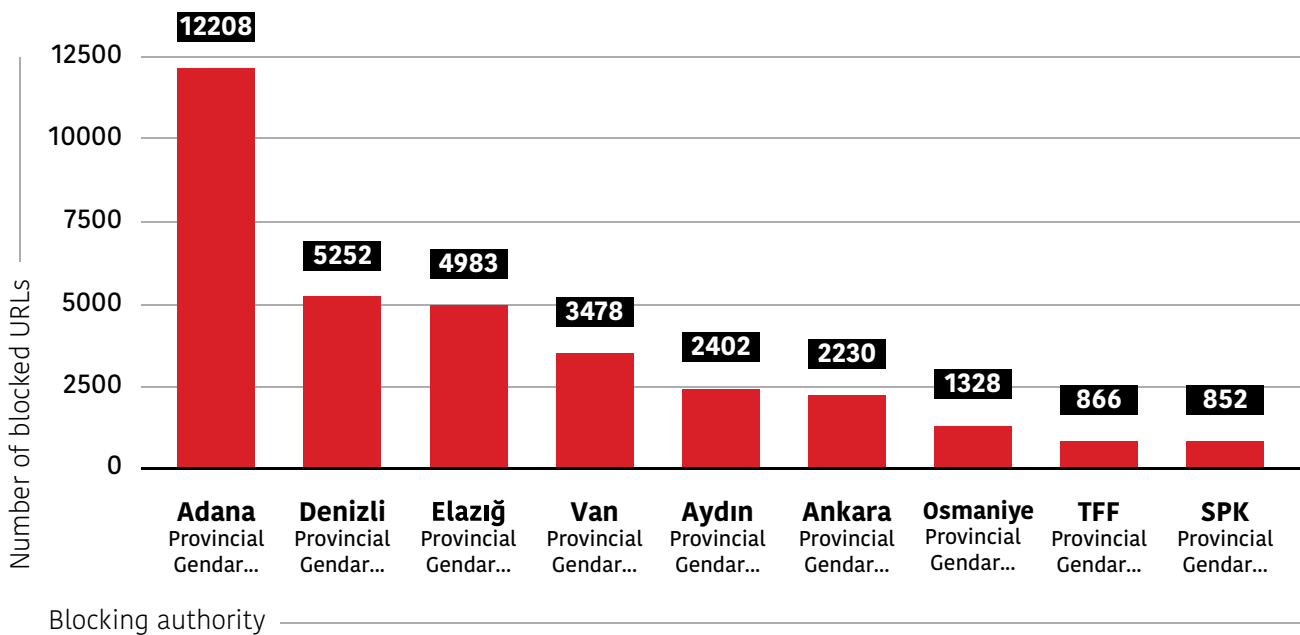
The term "Opposition websites" refers to the websites of newspapers that adopt a publishing policy opposite to the government's ideology, such as Etkin Haber Ajansı (ETHA), Mezopotamya Ajansı, Kızıl Bayrak, Jin News, Siyasi Haber, Umut Gazetesi, Komün Dergi, Gazete Yolculuk, Özgür Gelecek, PİRHA, Yeni Demokrasi, and Kaldıraç Dergisi.

At least 53 domain names belonging to opposition websites were restricted from access through 51 different decisions, indicating that some websites were restricted multiple times. Among opposition websites, ETHA had the highest number of domain names blocked. In 2022, ETHA began publishing through the etha28.com domain name but ended the year by posting through the etha49.com address. As a result, access was restricted to a total of 21 domain names of the agency in 2022.

In the "Other" category, at least 13 URLs were restricted from access, which was achieved through 10 decisions. This category includes the social media platform Tumblr, the Manga culture site Mangago, the content distribution network Bunny CDN, the news organisation Deutsche Welle, the digital research project Radio Garden, and Havrita.

B.3. THE DISTRIBUTION OF BLOCKED DOMAIN NAMES BASED ON

THE AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESTRICTIONS



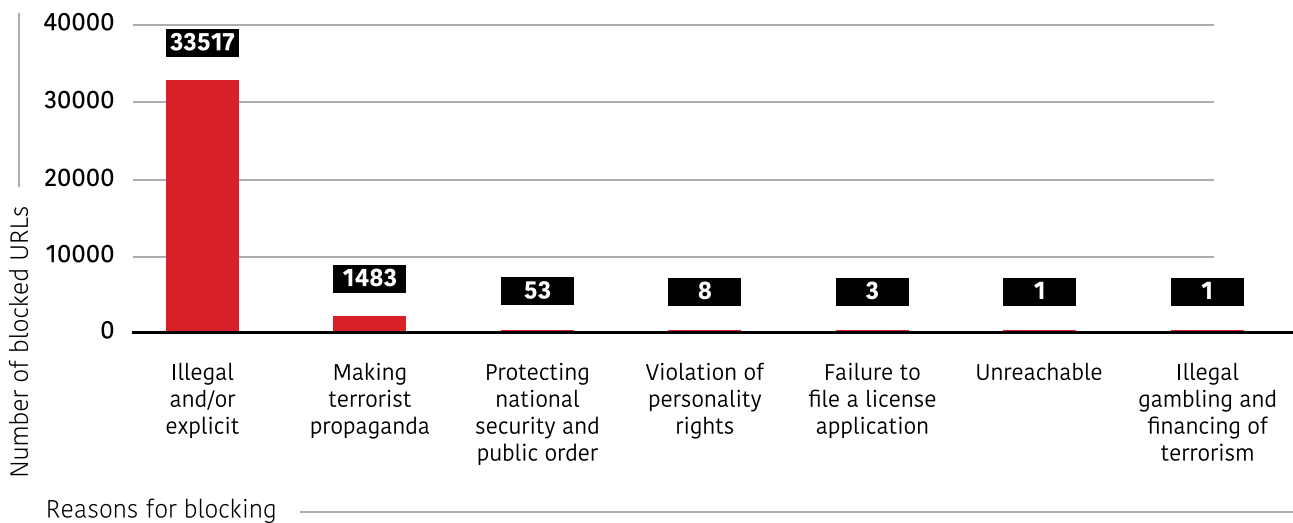
When the distribution of the authorities blocking the most URLs in the domain name category is analysed, Adana Provincial Gendarmerie Command ranks first with 12,208, followed by Denizli Provincial Gendarmerie Command with 5,252 and Elazığ Provincial Gendarmerie Command with 4,983.

All URLs blocked by Provincial Gendarmerie Commands belong to websites allegedly publishing "adult, betting, fraud, financial, terror" themed content.

While the provincial gendarmerie commands occupy the first seven places, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) ranked eighth with 866 URLs, and the Capital Markets Board (SPK) ranked ninth with 852 URLs.

It was determined that the domains blocked by the TFF belonged to sites broadcasting pirated matches, while those blocked by the SPK belonged to sites conducting unauthorised forex transactions.

B.4. THE REASONS FOR BLOCKING THE DOMAIN NAMES

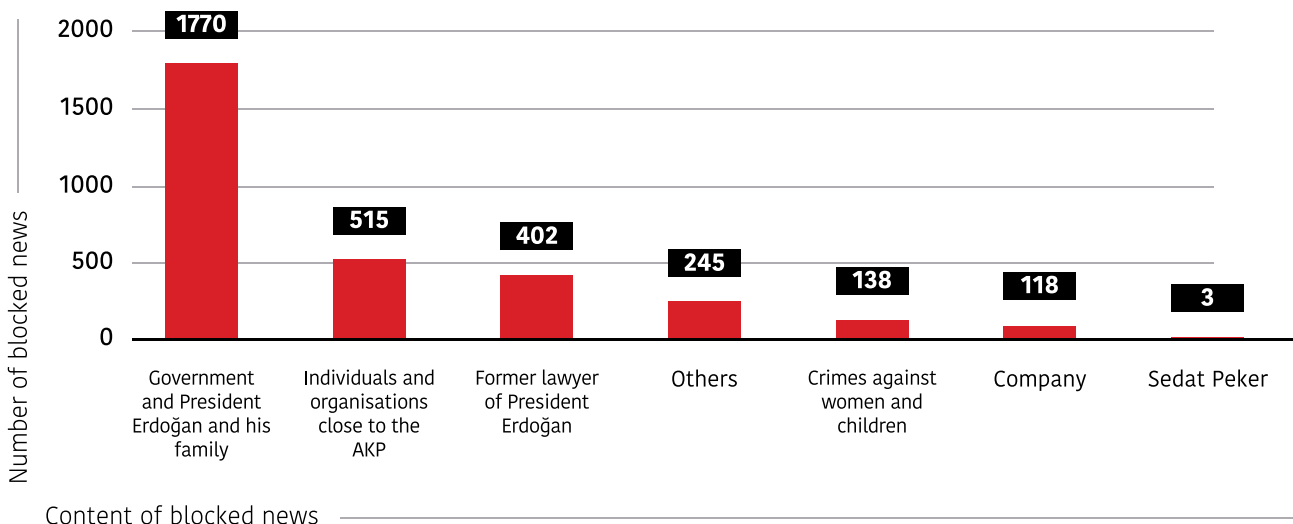


When looking at the reasons for blocking domain names, it is observed that the primary reason is "sharing illegal and/or obscene content."

Following that, "making terrorist propaganda" comes in second place, and third place is "protecting national security and public order."

All domain names that have been blocked for "protecting national security and public order" belong to the category of "Oppositional Websites," which includes newspapers with a publication stance that is diametrically opposed to the government's ideology.

B.5. THE PRIMARY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS BLOCKADES



A breakdown of the content of at least 3,196 blocked news items reveals that the most frequently blocked news items, numbering 1,770, were about the government and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his family.

Here are some of the news articles belonging to the category "Government with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his family":

yeşilgazete

CHP'li Seveda Erdan Kılıç: Bilal Erdoğan'ın arkadaşı İzmir'de doğa katliamı yapacak

CHP İzmir Milletvekili Seveda Erdan Kılıç, İzmir'in ormanlarını 2060 yılına kadar talan etme izni verilen şirketin ortaklarından Raif İnan, Bilal Erdoğan'ın Kartal İnan Hatip Lisesi'nden arkadaşıdır' ifadelerini kullandı.

MEHMET GAZELİK 13 Ocak 2020



ABC GAZETESİ

Dudak uçuklattı... İşte AKP döneminde İBB'den 'Saray sanatçılarına' ve 'Bozdağ filme' aktılan milyon liralık

13 Ocak 2020 15:39

Yeniçağ yazarı gazeteci Murat Ağirel, AKP döneminde İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin şirketlerinden Kültür A.Ş.'nin konser ihalelerinde, başta...



İLERİ

Bilal Erdoğan'ın arkadaşlarına verilen ihalelerle ilgili haberlere getirilen erişim engeli ile ilgili haberlere erişim engeli

İstanbul Anadolu 7. Sulh Ceza Hakimliği, Bilal Erdoğan'ın arkadaşı Aykut Emrah Polat ve Fatih Başçı'nın aldığı ihalelerle ilgili haberlere getirilen erişim engeli haberlerine erişim engeli kararı verdi.

GÜNDEM /



Çevre Ajansı eliyle KIYILARA TALAN

Tüm Türkiye kıyıların kaza-yaın mape, planlarda ihale ve Çep Kanunu kapsamındaki alanları işleme yetkisi Emine Erdoğan himayesinde kurulan Çevre Ajansına verilecek. Ajansa hiçbir denetim mekanizması tabii olmadığı ihaleler için ÇYO Kurulu Kurulu, Uygulama Meclisi, yerel Meclis Güney, yerel Meclis Kurulu, Ajansa eliyle talan edilecektir. s.32

ÇÖP TENEL, TEK VATAN, MICHIGAN / Murat Samir'in yazısı s.2'de



BİR GÜN

Bakanlık, kıyılarda ihale yetkisini Çevre Ajansı Başkanlığı'na verdi

BirGün Gazetesi yazarı ve gazeteci Bahadır Özgür, Çevre Kanunu'nda yapılan değişiklik ile tüm Türkiye kıyılarını kapsayan mape ve şamandıra ihale verme yetkisinin Emine Erdoğan himayesinde kurulan Çevre Ajansı Başkanlığı'na verildiğini duyurdu.

27 Ocak 2022 07:58



MILLİGAZETE

16 Eki 2022 - 10:43 - Gündem 16 Eki 2022 - 11:58

Erdoğan'dan danışmanına büyük kıyak: Oğlu bakan yardımcısı oldu

Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın danışmanı Maksut Serim'in oğlu Yasin Ekrem Serim, Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısı yapıldı.



SOL

Erdoğan'ın danışmanının oğluna Dışişleri Bakanlığı'nda terfi

AKP'li Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın danışmanı olarak görev yürüten Maksut Serim'in oğlu Yasin Ekrem Serim, Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısı yapıldı.

HABER MERKEZİ 16.10.2022

AKP'li Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediye (İBB) Başkanlığı döneminde bu yana 'yol arkadaşı' olan, yıllarca başbakanlık örtülü ödeneğini teslim ettiği Maksut Serim'in oğlu Yasin Ekrem Serim, Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısı oldu.



SOZCÜ

Danışmanın oğluna hızlı terfi!

Yıllarca Başbakanlık örtülü ödeneğinin teslim edildiği Erdoğan'ın danışmanı Maksut Serim'in oğlu Yasin Ekrem Serim, Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısı yapıldı.

BAŞAK KAYA
Yayınlanma: 05:30 - 16 Ekim 2022
Güncellenme: 02:39 - 16 Ekim 2022



They are followed by news articles about irregularities involving individuals and organisations close to the AKP, numbering 517. Some of the articles in the "Individuals and Organizations Close to the AKP" category include:

YENİCAĞ

Korkunç iddialar. Aziz Yıldırım'ın yeğenini kim kaçırmak istedi? Sedat Peker'in tweetlerinde geçen Süreyya Yalçın kim

Sedat Peker, Fenerbahçe Spor Kulübü'nün eski başkanı Aziz Yıldırım'ın kuzeni Süreyya Yalçın hakkında birbirinden ilginç iddialar ortaya attı.

15 Ağustos 2022, Pazartesi 03:16



Korkunç iddialar
Aziz Yıldırım'ın yeğenini kim kaçırmak istedi
SEDAT PEKER'İN TWEETLERİNDE GEÇEN SÜREYYA YALÇIN KİM

bianet



MEDYA SAHİPLİĞİ VE İKTİDAR

Peker'in iddialarında adı geçen "Türk Medya" ve Yeşiladağlar

bianet EİA Medya grubunun sahipleri arasında Yeşiladağlar ve İktidar arasındaki özel ilişkileri mercek altına almıştı. Her yıl düzenlenen "2016 Medya Sahipliği Ödümü" projesi sırasında Peker'in sosyal medyada dolaşan iddialarının gerisindeki olgulara yeniden bakıyoruz.

İstanbul - İHA Haber Merkezi
15 Ağustos 2022, Pazartesi 03:16

T24

Sedat Peker'den yeni iddialar: Bu çok enteresan bir hikaye; gazeteciler araştırırsın

"Hikaye çok fantastik değil mi? Doğru mudur değil midir bilmem. Gazeteciler araştırırsın"

15 Ağustos 2022 22:34



Organize suç örgütü liderliğinden hüküm giyen Sedat Peker, "Deli Canı" hesabından 25 tweet paylaştı. Türk Medya grubunun sahibi Hasan Yeşiladağ ve kardeşleri Metin, Zeki ve Ali Yeşiladağ hakkında geçtiğimiz gün 75 tweet atan Peker, Hasan Yeşiladağın

artigercek

Bakanlık arazisine yalı projesi, Cübbeli'nin yakınına verildi



Yayınlanma: 19 Mart 2022 22:27 | Güncellenme: 19 Mart 2022 22:28

Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı'na bağlı İller Bankası arazisinde yalı projesi inşaatı Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca'nın damadının ağabeyi Muhittin Palazoğlu'na ait Vesen Yapı inşa ediyor.

Mahkemenin imar planlarını iptal ettiği Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı'na bağlı İller Bankası'nın Tuzla'daki arazisinde yalı projesi inşaatı başladı. Ön satış başlayan projeyi, Cübbeli Ahmet olarak

TELE 1

Bakanlık arazisindeki yalı projesi Cübbeli'nin dönürüne gitti

19 Mart 2022 Cumhuriyet



Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı'na bağlı İller Bankası arazisinde yalı projesi, Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca olarak bilinen Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü'nün damadının ağabeyi Muhittin Palazoğlu'na ait Vesen Yapıya verildi.

SOZCU

Cübbeli'nin dönürü Palazoğlu ailesinden bakanlık arazisine yalı projesi!

Tuzla'da mahkemenin imar planlarını iptal ettiği denize sıfır, ağaçlarla kaplı Çevre ve Şehircilik Bakanlığı'na bağlı İller Bankası arazisinde yalı projesi inşaatı başladı. Ön satış başlayan projeyi Cübbeli Ahmet Hoca'nın damadının ağabeyi Muhittin Palazoğlu'na ait Vesen Yapı inşa ediyor. Şirketin eski ortakları arasında Cübbeli'nin damadı Esat Palazoğlu da bulunuyor.

ÖZLEM GÖVEMÜ
Yayınlanma: 15:38 - 19 Mart 2022
Güncellenme: 15:53 - 19 Mart 2022



BİR GÜN

İhale cemiyeti!

İlim Yayma Cemiyeti'nin Başkanı Yusuf Tülün'ün çocukları da ihale zengini. Tülün'ün çocukları, büyük kısmı AKP'li ilçe belediyelerinden olmak üzere kamudan son 12 yılda 57 milyon TL değerinde 43 ayrı ihale aldı.

SİMGE 14.07.2022 06:30



İstanbul 22'nde İlim Yayma Cemiyeti'nin ziyareti sırasında (Fotoğraf: İlim Yayma Cemiyeti)

İsmail ARI

TELE 1

Kamudan besleniyorlar! İlim Yayma Cemiyeti Başkanı'nın çocukları ihale zengini

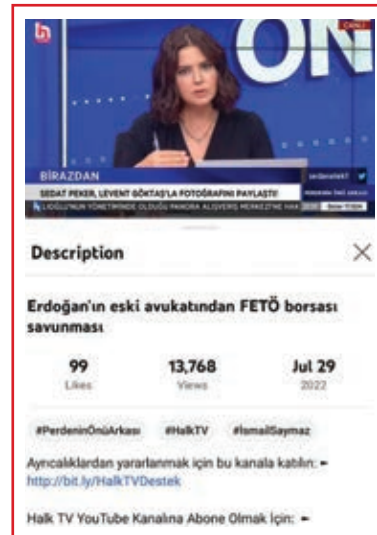
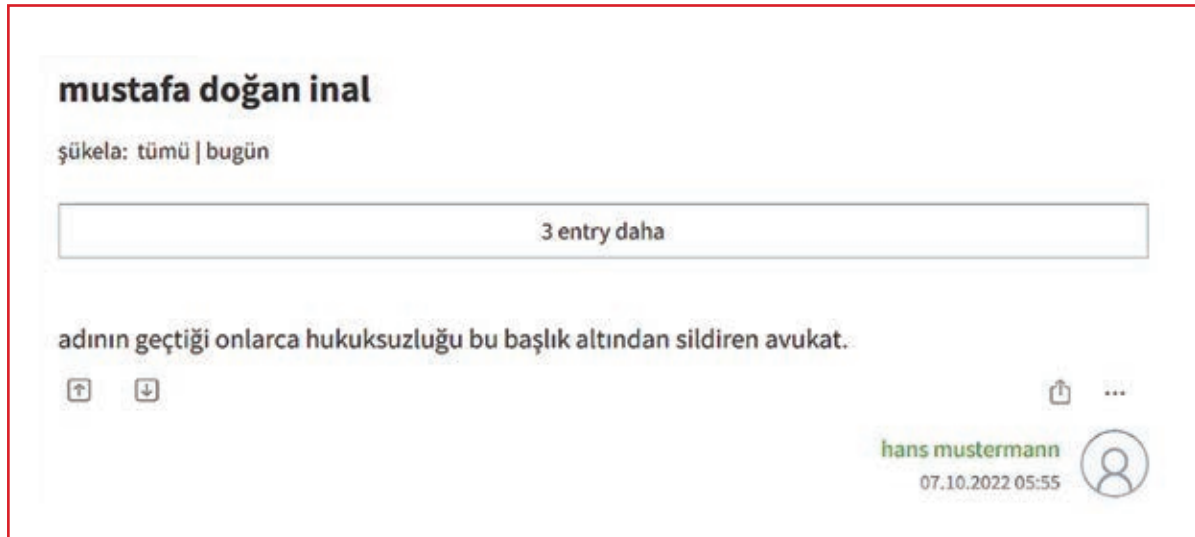
14 Temmuz 2022 Cumhuriyet



İlim Yayma Cemiyeti'nin Başkanı Yusuf Tülün'ün çocuklarının kamudan son 12 yılda 57 milyon TL değerinde 43 ayrı ihale aldığı ortaya çıktı.

İktidara yakınlığıyla tanınan İlim Yayma Cemiyeti'nin başkanı Yusuf Tülün'ün çocuklarının AKP'li belediyelerden milyonlarca lira ihale aldığı ortaya çıktı.

Afterwards, there were 402 news articles regarding President Erdoğan's former lawyer. In this category, you can find content related to Mustafa Doğan İnal, who used to be President Erdoğan's lawyer. All the content in this category has been blocked upon İnal's request.



In the "Other" category with 248 news articles, some of the news articles include:

BİR GÜN
12 Ocak 2022 13:34

Ailesini ve cemaati eleştirerek intihar eden Enes Kara'nın babası yurdu övdü

Ailesinin zoruyla cemaat yurdunda kaldığını anlattığı bir video paylaşarak yaşamına son veren Enes Kara'nın babası, "Kaldığı yer güzel insanların kaldığı yer. Talebelerin kaldığı yer. Orada kalmasını tavsiye ettim. Devlet yurdunda başvuru yapmadık. Durumumuz iyi. Manevi olarak ahiretine tıydası olsun istedim" şeklinde konuştu.



Cumhuriyet

Enes Kara, tarikat yurdunda intihara sürüklendi

20 yaşındaki Enes Kara, ailesinin zoruyla kaldığı cemaat yurdundaki baskı sonucu intihar etti. Ardından bıraktığı video kaydı ile yaşadıklarını anlattı. Türkiye bir gencini daha kaybetti. Kara, tıp fakültesi öğrencisiydi.

Sefa Uyar 12 Ocak 2022 Çarşamba, 04:00



Sözcük

Aile baskısıyla cemaat yurdunda kalan tıp öğrencisi Enes Kara canına kıydı

Fırat Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi 3. sınıf öğrencisi Enes Kara, ailesinin zoruyla kaldığı cemaat yurdunda yaşadıklarını anlattığı bir video çektiikten sonra yaşamına son verdi. Kara, çektiği videoda "İçinde bulunduğum durumdan tüm yaşama hevesimi, sevincimi kaybettim" dedi.

EVREN DEMİRDAĞ
Yayınlandı: 11 Ocak 2022
Güncellenme: 11 Ocak 2022



Cumhuriyet

Selçuk Ural: Hakan uyarılarıma rağmen sahte rapor aldı



Sanatçı Selçuk Ural, oğlu Hakan Ural'ın askerlik için sahte rapor almasına ilişkin, "Hakan'ı askerlik için uyarmama rağmen sahte rapor aldı sonra da 4 ay hapis cezası çıktı. Hakan'a hapis cezası çıkınca Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın yanına gittim. Hakan'ın hapis hanesinde başına bir iş gelmemesi için yanına almasını rica ettim" dedi.



akit

Selçuk Ural'dan oğlu Hakan Ural hakkında insanlık dışı sözler!

Selçuk Ural, Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'a olan sevgisi sebebi ile muhalefetin hedefe koyduğu oğlu Hakan Ural hakkında okuyanları utandıran açıklamalarda bulundu.

2022-07-18 18:45:00



Senin ahlaklılığından oğlun mu sorumlu?
SELÇUK URAL'DAN HAKAN URAL İÇİN İNSANLIK DIŞI SÖZLER!

In the "Crimes Against Women and Children" category with 138 news articles, some of the news articles include:



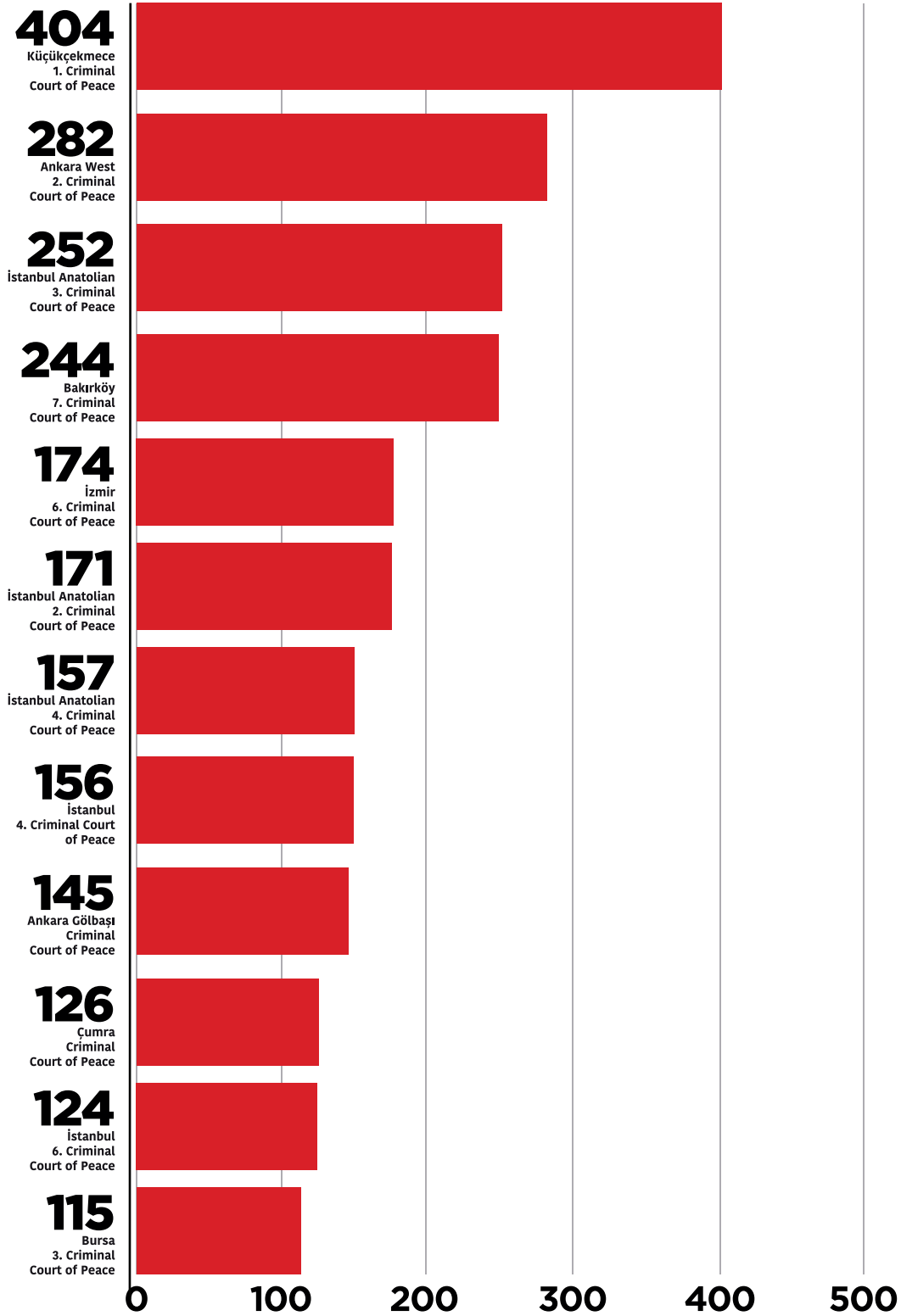
“

Note that many individuals and companies mentioned in the "Company" and "Individuals and Organisations Close to the AKP" categories have close ties with the government and are involved in partnerships with the state. Therefore, it is possible to categorise the news articles tagged under these categories as "Government with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his family."

”

B.6. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF BLOCKED URLs IN THE NEWS

CATEGORY BY THE BLOCKING AUTHORITIES



When we examine the distribution of the authorities that blocked the highest number of URLs in the "News" category, it is observed that the Küçükçekmece 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace is in the first place with 404 blocked URLs, followed by the Ankara West 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace with 282 blocked URLs, and the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace with 252 blocked URLs.

B.7. GROUNDS FOR BLOCKING NEWS ARTICLES

When looking at the reasons for blocking news articles, it is observed that "violation of personal rights" is in the first place.

Of the 3,196 news articles blocked in 2022, 3,191 were blocked on the grounds of "violation of personal rights", three were blocked on the grounds of "protection of national security and public order", and two were blocked on the grounds of "statute of limitations and the fact that the news article no longer met the criteria of 'truth and accuracy' at that time" Some of the news articles blocked on the grounds of "violation of personal rights" are as follows:

Cumhuriyet
Hürriyet'i basan Boynukalın: Yine yapsa, yine giderim

Hürriyet'e saldırıda başı çeken AKP Gençlik Kolları Başkanı Abdullah Gül, "Hürriyet yine yapsa, yine giderim" dedi.
cumhuriyet.com.tr 05.11.2016
AKP Gençlik Kolları Başkanı Abdullah Gül, Hürriyet'i basan Boynukalın hakkında suç duyurusunda bulundu.

Hürriyet
AK Parti milletvekili, saldırganlara böyle hitap etti: 1 Kasım'dan sonra defolup gidecekler!

Hürriyet'e alle geor dilerimem için saldırıta bir isin, yaldırıldık zehitlerit dilerit geldi. AK Parti Gençlik Kolları Başkanı ve İstanbul Milletvekili Abdullah Gül, Hürriyet'e saldırılar grubu başkanı Mehmet Şimşek, "1 Kasım'dan sonra defolup gidecekler" dedi.
Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın dün yaptığı açıklamalarının hürriyet.com.tr'de verilene ilişkin tepki bakanlarıyla Hürriyet'in bölüne gelene bir grup, güvenlik kullucısına saldırarak birtirlerini yaptı. 200 kişilik bir gruptan yaklaşık 20 kişi, birtirlerden içeri girilme birtirerek Hürriyet'te ana giriş kapısını kapı ve sirtirleri parçladı. Binlerce kişi de girmek için giriş yaptı.

Sozcuk
CHP'den Boynukalın hakkında suç duyurusu
CHP'li Adıgüzel, AKP'li vekil Abdullah Gül hakkında suç duyurusunda bulundu.
Yayınlanma: 16:10 - 08 Eylül 2016


oda
Pelikancılardan deprem provokatörüne destek
AKP içinde ayrı bir grup olan Pelikan yapılmaması içinde yer alan Sabah gazetesi yazarı Hilal Kaçkalan'ın Bedri Gençec'i destek geldi.
21.01.2020 14:16
Türkiye genelinde Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi (YTÜ) Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, İnanç ve Toplum Bilimleri Bölümü'nde görevli Prof. Dr. Bedri Gençec'i'nin, Elazığ depreminin ardından sosyal medya üzerinden aldığı çocuk evliliklerini teşvik etmesine ilişkin paylaşımları konuşuyor.
Gençec'i yaptığı paylaşımlarda "Allah'ın helal kıldığı yaşta evlilik tecavüz sayılır, mulla yaradan bizzatı, gayrimullaha dikunmayalım. Az kaldı" dedi. Gençec'i profesör, Twitter üzerinden yaptığı paylaşımları, çeten teklifleri üzerine kalırmak zorunda kaldı.

evrensel
Daha önce istismarı meşrulaştıran profesör bu kez İstanbul Sözleşmesi'ni hedef aldı
Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Toplum Bilimleri Bölümünde görevli Prof. Dr. Bedri Gençec'i İstanbul Sözleşmesi'ni hedef aldı.
Kadınlık olmadan insan insan olmadan alle alle olmadan millet millet olmadan insanlık olmaz.
Dünyayla birlikte eğitilme insanın, eğitim, medeniyet, insanlığın en büyük kazanımıdır. İnsanlığı korumak için İstanbul Sözleşmesi'ni meşrulaştırıyor.

ABC HABERLERİ
Gerici profesör skandal açıklamasını savundu, kendisini eleştirenlere hakaret ettil

MAKSADLI BELLİ
28 Ocak 2020 18:45
Elazığ depreminin ardından yaptığı paylaşımlarda büyük tepki çeken Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi'ne gerici profesörü Bedri Gençec'i, çocuk istismarı

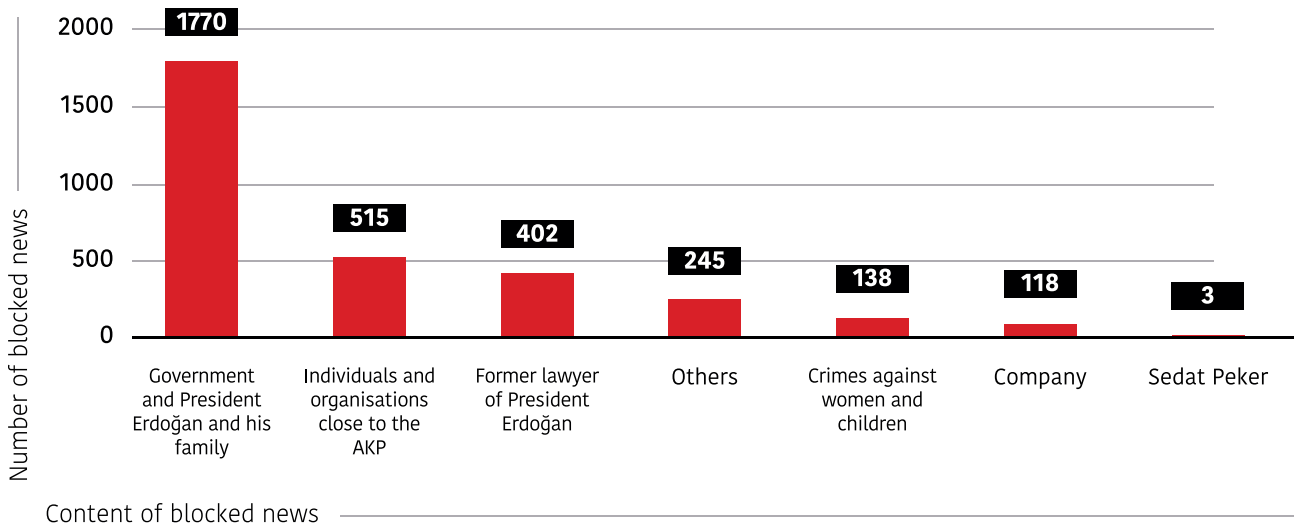
BirGün
Cenaze nakil aracında 144 kilo esrar bulundu, Yeni Şafak baltayı taşa vurdu
Adana'da İBB'nin şehirlerarası hizmet veren cenaze nakil aracında 144,5 kilo esrar bulundu. Aracın, AKP'li belediye yönetimi döneminde yapılan ihaleyi kazanan Albayrak ailesinin damadı Adem Altınsoy'un Platform Turizm Taşımacılık Şirketi'ne ait olduğu ortaya çıktı. İBB'nin açıklamasına göre, cenaze aracının çalışanları da aynı şirketin elemanı. Albayrak ailesinin gazetesi Yeni Şafak, gerçeğin ortaya çıkmasından sonra "İBB aracında uyuşturucu ele geçirildi" şeklindeki paylaşımını sildi ve haberin başlığı ile içeriğini, aracın kime ait olduğunu

Cumhuriyet
İktidara yakın gazeteden uyuşturucu provokasyonu: İBB'nin dediler bakın kimin çıktı!


haber7
Esrar perdesi aralandı: Uyuşturucu bulunan cenaze aracı 'yandaş'a ait
Esrar perdesi aralandı
Uyuşturucu çıkan cenaze aracı 'yandaş'a ait'
Yayınlanma: 16 Ekim 2022 12:42

B.8. THE PRIMARY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ARTICLES BLOCKED DUE TO

THE VIOLATION OF PERSONAL RIGHTS



Looking at the primary distribution of the news blocked due to violation of personal rights, it is seen that with 1,770 news items, the majority concerned the government and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his family.

This was followed by news about people or organisations close to the AKP with 515 news items, while news about President Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan in ranked third with 402 news items.

B.9. BLOCKING OF BLOCKED NEWS ARTICLES: THE CASE OF BILAL ERDOĞAN

In 2022, numerous access-blocking decisions were made for news articles or posts that announced the blocking of access.

However, one news article stood out in particular. It concerned Bilal Erdogan, son of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and a tender won by one of Bilal's high school friends.

The incident, the news, and the subsequent blocking of access occurred chronologically as follows:

In 2020, the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) held an auction for the Atasehir Modern Project, which was won by Aykut Emrah Polat, a friend of Bilal Erdogan from Kartal Anadolu Imam Hatip High School, for 280 million Turkish Lira.

Relevant news articles were blocked from access by a decision from the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated August 11, 2020, after the subject received significant newspaper coverage.

Subsequently, the newspapers reported on the blocking of the mentioned news.

This time, the news articles reporting on the blocking of the original news were themselves blocked from access by a decision from the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Judgeship Peace dated September 2, 2020.

After this, news articles were published about the blocking of the original articles.

In response, these news articles were also blocked from access by a decision from the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated December 31, 2020.

Newspapers covered this as well, and as expected:

News articles about the blocking of the original news, the blocking of the news articles reporting on the blocking of the original news, and the blocking of the news articles reporting on the blocking of the news articles reporting on the blocking of the original news were all blocked from access by a decision from the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated respectively September 20, 2020, December, 31, 2020 and September 24, 2021

BILAL ERDOĞAN CASE

Date the news was published: August 7, 2020

NEWS	BLOCK	BLOCK BLOCK	BLOCK BLOCK BLOCK	BLOCK BLOCK BLOCK BLOCK
The auction for the Atagehir Modern Project organized by the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) was won by Aykut Emrah Polat, a friend of Bilal Erdoğan from the Imam Hatip High School, for 280 million Turkish Liras.	News related to the auction of the Atagehir Modern Project organised by the TMSF (Savings Deposit Insurance Fund), in which Bilal Erdoğan's friend from the Imam Hatip High School, Aykut Emrah Polat, won for 280 million Turkish Liras, was blocked by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Court of Peace on August 11, 2020 .	News related to the blocking of access for the news related to the auction of the Atagehir Modern Project organised by TMSF, in which Bilal Erdoğan's friend from the Imam Hatip High School, Aykut Emrah Polat, won for 280 million Turkish Liras, by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Court of Peace on August 11, 2020, was blocked by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on September 2, 2020 .	News related to the blocking of access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on September 2, 2020 for the news related to the blocking of access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Court of Peace on August 11, 2020 for the news related to the auction of the Atagehir Modern Project organised by TMSF, in which Bilal Erdoğan's friend from the Imam Hatip High School, Aykut Emrah Polat, won for 280 million Turkish Liras, was blocked by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on December 31, 2020 .	News related to the blocking of access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on December 31, 2020 for the news related to the blocking of access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on September 2, 2020 for the news related to the blocking of access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Court of Peace on August 11, 2020 for the news related to the auction of the Atagehir Modern Project organised by TMSF, in which Bilal Erdoğan's friend from the Imam Hatip High School, Aykut Emrah Polat, won for 280 million Turkish Liras, by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on September 2, 2020, was blocked by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 7th Criminal Court of Peace on September 24, 2021 .

FREEWEB.TURKEY

B.10. PROMINENT ACCESS BLOCKS BY MONTH

Looking at the news articles blocked by month in 2022 to demonstrate which topics faced restrictions the data shows that articles discussing situations related to the government and individuals or organisations close to the government were prominent.

Excluding the news articles blocked by SPK and provincial gendarmeries on the grounds of "adult content, gambling, fraud, financial websites, terrorism," the following are some of the news articles for which access was restricted by month:

JANUARY

News articles related to statements made by Fatma Salman, who served as an Ağrı MP for two terms with the AKP, saying, "Fatma will sacrifice herself for the Prime Minister and the AKP. I will continue as a humble servant to my party, my cause, and my Prime Minister," were blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated January 5, upon Salman's request.

News and content regarding Konya's Yunak district AKP Mayor Ali Konak being seen consuming alcohol while driving were blocked from access by the decision of Akşehir Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated January 8.

Social media posts related to the suicide of Enes Kara, a 20-year-old student at Elazığ Firat University Medical Faculty, due to pressures he faced at the religious dormitory where he stayed, were blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated January 11, upon the request of the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Security.



Columns and news articles where journalists Barış Terkoğlu and Barış Pehlivan raised allegations of FETÖ connections for Şuayp Alpay, Alpaslan Kavaklıoğlu, and Muhsin Dere, deputy undersecretaries of the Minister of National Defense, were blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated February 15.

News articles related to allegations that Şuayip Birinci, the deputy of the Minister of Health, received dual salaries and held positions both as a Deputy Minister and as a member of the TÜRSAT Board of Directors, were blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace dated February 22.

Cumhuriyet

Barış Pehlivan
baris.pehivan@cumhuriyet.com.tr
Son Yazısı / Tüm Yazıları

Veyis Ateş'in ters düştüğü kişi

15 Haziran 2021 Salı

Aradım, açmadı. Mesaj attım, dönmedi. Konuşabilseydim soracaktım: Sağlık Bakanlığı'na neyin karşılığında, ne sattınız?

Habertürk spikeri **Veyis Ateş**'i yanıt vermemeyen.

Cumhuriyet

Sağlık Bakan Yardımcısı Şuayip Birinci'nin de çift maaşlı olduğu ortaya çıktı: Toplam maaşı 44 bin 775 TL!

AKP'li Sağlık Bakan Yardımcısı Şuayip Birinci'nin de ikinci maaşı ortaya çıktı. Birinci, Bakan Yardımcılığı'nın yanı sıra TÜRSAT Yönetim Kurulu üyeliğinden de maaş alıyor. Buna göre, Birinci'nin iki yerden aldığı toplam maaş ise 44 bin 775 bin TL!

cumhuriyet.com.tr 18 Ağustos 2021 Çarşamba, 23:22

Cumhuriyet

Türk bürokratların Windsor Kalesi görüşmesinden Londra mahkemelerine

Sağlık Bakanlığı bürokratlarının, 2014'te müteahhitlerle birlikte İngiltere'deki Windsor Kalesi'nde yaptığı "Hazine garantili" şehir hastaneleri görüşmesi, İngiliz devletinin resmi sitesindeki haberle ortaya çıktı.

Sarp Sağlık 17 Aralık 2021 Cuma, 04:00

Cumhuriyet

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Son Yazısı / Tüm Yazıları

Telefondaki örgüt lideri

03 Şubat 2022 Perşembe

Sahnede mutluluktan uçuyor gibiydi. Yüzünde güller açıyordu. "Diplomatik temsilcilerimizin olmadığı yerlerde bayrağımızı dalgalandırıyorlar" dedi. Şükranlarını sundu ve devam etti: "Hocafendi'nin deryasından çok sevdiğim küçük bir damla söylemek istiyorum. Akıldmda tutamadım, heyecandan... O yüzden telefondan okuyacağım:

Cumhuriyet

Barış Terkoğlu
Son Yazısı / Tüm Yazıları

Alışmak, görmekten daha kolay geliyor

10 Şubat 2022 Perşembe

Başka bir ülkede olsa kuşkusuz çok şey değişirdi. Ama alışık mı, yoksa umursamıyor muyuz biliyorum. Görmemiş gibi yaptığımız kesin.

Aslında iki haftadır gazetemizde okuyorsunuz. Hikâyeyi **Barış Pehlivan** başlattı.

Cumhuriyet

Barış Pehlivan
baris.pehivan@cumhuriyet.com.tr
Son Yazısı / Tüm Yazıları

'Onlar oldu şerefli, biz olduk şerefsiz'

01 Şubat 2022 Salı

Masamda bir kâğıt... Altında iki polislin imzası... Üstünde şu:

"Elaziğ 2. Ağır Ceza Mahkemesi'nin 15.12.2021 tarih ve 2021/276 esas sayılı müzakereleri ekinde sanık M.L.'nin yazılı beyanında; 'Şuayp Alpay' şeklinde beyanda bulunduğu şahsın kamuoyunca bilinen ve açık kaynaktan yapılan araştırmalarda Millî Savunma Bakan Yardımcısı olduğu tespit edilmiştir."



The news article titled "Criminal Complaint against the Gaziantep Governorship: Corruption and Bribery Network Exposed", published in Cumhuriyet newspaper on March 15, 2022, reporting a criminal complaint filed for bribery and irregularities against six individuals, including Gaziantep Governor Davut Gül and then Deputy Governor Hüseyin Yılmaz, was blocked from access by Istanbul Anadolu 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace.



News articles related to the Presidency Administrative Affairs Director Metin Kıratlı, mentioned in videos released by organised crime group leader Sedat Peker, were blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on April 19. The articles had titles like "No Matchstick Trading in Syria: Metin Kıratlı Responds to Peker's Allegations" and "Three-Salaried Metin Kıratlı Responds to Peker's Allegations: An Unlawful Statement."

News articles related to Fettah Tamince, the Chairman of Rixos Hotels, being acquitted in a case pertaining to FETÖ, with the legal representation of lawyer Gülçin Kıratlı, the wife of Metin Kıratlı, the Director of the Presidency Administrative Affairs, were also blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on April 19.



News and tweets about individuals producing fake court orders to block news articles about themselves were blocked from access by the decision of Pazarlık Criminal Judgeship of Peace, dated August 24.

News reports about TikTok influencer Ece Ronay filing a complaint against actor Mehmet Ali Erbil for alleged harassment, which was also reported on television channels, were blocked from access by Gaziantep 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace's decision dated May 13.

News articles about changes in the Environmental Law granting the authority to award mapa and buoy tenders covering all Turkish coasts to the Environmental Agency established under the auspices of Emine Erdoğan were blocked from access by Istanbul Anadolu 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace's decision on June 3.

Content related to former Beşiktaş footballer Feyyaz Uçar's statement regarding AKP Member of Parliament Alpay Özalan, saying, "The biggest liar I've ever seen," was blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul Anadolu 8th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on June 17. Articles reporting the blocking of these contents were also blocked from access by the same judgeship's decision on June 27.

Sözcü columnist Çiğdem Toker's article titled "They Repeated the Same Tender Secretly at Double the Price," regarding the Halkalı-Ispartakule railway project, was blocked from access by Küçükçekmece 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace's decision on June 27.



News articles regarding changes in the Environmental Law granting the authority to award mapa and buoy tenders covering all Turkish coasts to the Environmental Agency established under the auspices of President Erdoğan's wife, Emine Erdoğan, were blocked from access by Aydın 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace's decision on July 18.

News reports about Yusuf Tülün, the President of the Society for the Spread of Knowledge, and his children's Siyahmartı Advertising Company winning 43 separate tenders worth 57 million TL in total from the public over the last 12 years were blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on July 25.



News articles about the penalty and fine imposed on AKP Mersin Metropolitan Municipality Council Member İsmail Yerlikaya for illegal water consumption were blocked from access by Mersin 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace's decision on August 3.

Reports about a yalı (waterside mansion) project on a site belonging to the Ministry of Environment, Urban Planning, and Climate Change being awarded to the son-in law of Ahmet Mahmut Ünlü, also known as "Cübbeli Ahmet," were blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on July 4.

A video alleging that Zehra Taşkesenlioğlu, an AKP Member of Parliament for Erzurum, injured her husband Ünsal Ban with a knife, was blocked from access by the decision of Ankara 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on August 29.



An article by Cumhuriyet columnist Barış Terkoğlu titled "Documented High-Speed Train Bribery Siemens Took Corruption to Court to Receive Payments from Kolin" was blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul Anadolu 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on September 1.

News about TRT İzmir Radio Director Süleyman Hakan Kuralay's labelling of smartphone applications as "devilish" and his statement that "if you're a Muslim woman, sharing your photo on social networks is presenting yourself to the world" was blocked from access by the decision of İzmir 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on September 6.



OCTOBER

Reports related to Afyon Provincial Gendarmerie Commander Yılmaz Kırgel's targeting of Amedspor before the Afyonspor-Amedspor match played in Afyon on October 1, 2022, were blocked from access by the decision of Afyonkarahisar 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on October 6.

Reports about the arrest of the Sakarya Garrison Commander on allegations of sexual abuse against 15 soldiers were blocked from access by the decision of Sakarya 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on October 11.



NOVEMBER

Reports suggesting the former TÜRGEV President had bribed the former TCDD General Manager were blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul Anadolu 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on November 1.

Fifteen reports concerning the murder of a woman named Neriman Sakallı by a man named Sadrettin Özdemir at Beylikdüzü Metrobus Stop were blocked from access by the decision of Büyükçekmece Criminal Judgeship of Peace on November 7, based on a request from the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services.

Articles about a piece by journalist Barış Terkoğlu claiming that a judge was allegedly influenced to issue a decision that would politically ban Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu were blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul Anadolu 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on November 10.



DECEMBER

Reports about the appointment of the son of President Erdoğan's chief advisor, Maksut Serim, as a deputy minister, and later his daughter-in-law as a high-level executive at the Directorate of Foundations, were blocked from access by the decision of Istanbul Anadolu 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on December 7.



C. ABSENCES IN THE REPORT DATA

In 2022, there were instances related to access restrictions that were not reflected in the report data, presenting different developments in the domain of access restrictions.

C.1. EMPOWERMENT OF THE ADVERTISING BOARD WITH

ACCESS RESTRICTION AUTHORITY

For instance, on March 24, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) passed a Consumer Protection Law in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, extending the Advertising Board's authority, a Ministry of Trade subsidiary, to restrict access to websites.¹⁹

Through Law No. 7392 on Consumer Protection and Amendments to the Condominium Ownership Law, the Advertising Board gained the authority to block access to commercial advertisements published on the Internet that did not comply with obligations. In cases where it couldn't technically block the ad, the Board was given the right to restrict access to the entire website. Consequently, the Board was granted the power to censor websites without requiring a judicial order.

C.2. MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION (MEB) BLOCKED ACCESS TO DIKEN

In March, it was revealed that the Ministry of National Education (MEB) imposed an access ban on the website diken.com.tr in state schools.

An article titled "MEB Imposes Access Restriction on Diken" on Diken reported that teachers in state schools, while trying to visit Diken through the internet connected to the Ministry, were faced with a warning stating "The webpage is blocked" along with a message stating, "The page you are trying to access has been blocked under MEB's access policies".²⁰

C.3. THE RECTOR OF SIVAS CUMHURİYET UNIVERSITY BLOCKED ACCESS TO THE

LOCAL NEWSPAPER BÜYÜK SIVAS FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S INTERNET

The local newspaper Büyük Sivas Gazetesi reported on June 28 under the title "Yıldız Blocked Our Site on Campus, Wanted It Shut Down Completely!" revealing that Prof. Dr. Alim YILDIZ, the Rector of Sivas Cumhuriyet University (SCÜ), restricted access to the website buyuksivas.com from SCÜ's internet due to the news published about the university.

The newspaper stated that Yıldız went further and, because of their reporting on SCÜ-related issues such as the university's anniversary, a fire drill on campus, dismissed staff, system changes at SCÜ, damaged entrance gates due to a truck collision on the campus, the call for COVID-positive students to attend exams, campus bus services, and opened/closed faculties, requested the site buyuksivas.com to be blocked nationwide or asked for the removal of related content. The newspaper also documented Yıldız's requests for access restriction/removal of content for articles titled "The Situation at Cumhuriyet University Is So Worrying That Any Movement Draws Attention" and "Students Roaming the Campus with a Horse's Head."²¹

¹⁹ April 1, 2022, Official Gazette Number 31796, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2022/04/20220401-17.htm>, Authority to Block Access Given to the Advertisement Board, <https://susma24.com/reklam-kuruluna-erisim-engelleme-yetkisi-verildi/>, Access Date: (April 28, 2023)

²⁰ Access to Diken Blocked by MEB, <https://www.diken.com.tr/mebden-dikene-erisim-engeli/>, Access Date: (April 28, 2023)

²¹ Yıldız not only blocked our website on campus but also demands its complete closure! <https://www.buyuksivas.com/engelledigi-yetmedi/>, Access Date: (28.04.2023)

C.4. BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY RECTORATE BLOCKED ACCESS TO DİKEN

FROM THE CAMPUS INTERNET

After Diken published an article on July 21 with the title "The Communication Faculty Ambiguity at Boğaziçi University," the administration of Boğaziçi University blocked access to [diken.com.tr](https://www.diken.com.tr) from the university's internet.²²

The related article stated that the school did not include the faculty in its promotional program, did not hire any academic staff despite posting a job advertisement, the faculty was established for patronage purposes, Vice Rector Gürkan Kumbaroğlu occupied the position of the dean of the communication faculty without any selection process, and that the faculty had brought the issue to the judiciary.

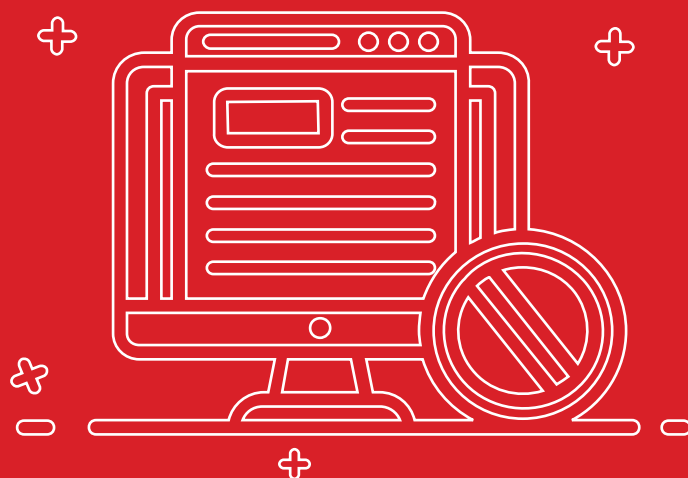
C.5. RTÜK HAD SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS DELETED

On August 17, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) issued a decision to remove playlists and podcast content from Spotify believed to contain "insults, defamation, accusations of Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) propaganda, insults against the President of the Republic of Turkey, political party leaders, and statesmen, and attacks on national and spiritual values".²³

C.6. BTK NARROWED THE BANDWIDTH AFTER THE EXPLOSION IN TAKSİM

After a bomb attack on Istiklal Avenue on November 13, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) implemented bandwidth reduction measures for social media platforms across the country. The reasoning behind this action was that "images and content shared on specific platforms may create fear, panic, and chaos in society and serve the purposes of terrorist organisations".²⁴

According to real-time measurements by NetBlocks, an organisation that monitors and analyses internet censorship worldwide, following BTK's implementation, access to Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and some Telegram servers from within Turkey was blocked, and this block lasted for approximately 10 hours.²⁵



²² Unresolved Mysteries at Boğaziçi University: The Faculty of Communications that saw our article blocked access to the website, <https://www.diken.com.tr/bogazicinde-muamma-suruyor-haberimizi-goren-iletisim-fakultesi-siteye-erisimi-kesti/>, Access Date: (28.04.2023)

²³ RTÜK, Supreme Board Decisions, 17.08.2022, <https://www.rtuk.gov.tr/UstKurulKarar/Detay/18274>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

²⁴ What is bandwidth throttling, and how are internet access restrictions implemented?, <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/c8v1ppl44z3o>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

²⁵ NetBlocks, Twitter, <https://twitter.com/netblocks/status/1591810296124948480>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

D. TURKEY IN TRANSPARENCY REPORTS

Social media companies publish transparency reports each year, displaying various statistics related to user data, records, and requests for content removal from the previous year. The primary objective of these reports is to transparently share data with users regarding what types and how many pieces of content official authorities requested to be removed from social media companies, what user-related information they requested, and how many of these requests were fulfilled.

These reports reveal official authorities' requests and include requests from individuals, aiming to increase user awareness and enhance the understanding of the evolving concept of transparency.

D.1. TIKTOK: TURKEY, THE COUNTRY WITH THE MOST ACCOUNT CLOSURES

According to data shared by TikTok, Turkey became the country with the most closed TikTok accounts worldwide during the period from January 1 to June 30, 2022, due to violations of laws. Turkey requested to remove 49 TikTok accounts and successfully had 28 accounts closed.²⁶

Regarding the countries with the highest number of content removal requests, Turkey ranked 10th with 64 requests. Turkey requested the removal of 76 pieces of content from TikTok due to local law violations, placing seventh in the world in this regard.

The account of Mükremin Gezgin, who claimed to be pregnant and posted a video of giving birth in a private hospital through staged videos on TikTok, was blocked by the Istanbul 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on June 8, 2022. The account had 1.3 million followers.

mukremingezgin
Mükremin gezgin
Follow

590 Following 1.3M Followers 37.6M Likes

Nasıl Mutluysam Öyle Yaşıyorum, Eleştirebilirsiniz Ama Yargılayamazsınız.
👉👉
[youtube.com/channel/UCChpe...](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChpe...)

Videos **Liked**

46.3K
Kurban olurum sana anne...

2.3M
Hastaneden bir kare kurban olsun sana ANNEN ONUR'um

7.2M
Ayaklarını nasıl sallıyor kurban olurum sana annem babasız yavrurum

7.0M
Onur senin baban yok ki hastaneye sakına gelmeyin hayırsız koca evladımı yazın size değil şarkım ve tümimde tüm dünyaya göstereceğim

Kurban olurum sana evlat...
Kurban olurum sana anne...

²⁶ Government Removal Requests Report, <https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/tr-tr/government-removal-requests-2022-1/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

D.2. REDDIT

Turkey is among the countries with a weak performance in the Mid-Year Transparency Report, which focuses on legal requests from global government entities, law enforcement, and other third parties related to the removal of content/community or the disclosure of account information for Reddit between January and June 2022.²⁷

According to the report, Turkey made 12 separate requests to remove content/community, covering 12 cases during the January-June 2022 period. With this number, Turkey ranked eighth among the 21 countries with the most removal requests.

Government/Law Enforcement content removal requests by country

Country	Requests	Content or communities identified in requests	Content or communities removed for Content Policy violations*	Content or communities restricted in requesting country	No action**	% of content or communities removed or restricted
Australia	35	96	92	0	4	96%
Belgium	4	17	17	0	0	100%
Brazil	1	1	1	0	0	100%
Canada	3	5	5	0	0	100%
Denmark	2	3	3	0	0	100%
France	14	29	29	0	0	100%
Germany	3	4	4	0	0	100%
India	33	99	76	13	10	90%
Malaysia	6	15	15	0	0	100%
Mexico	1	2	2	0	0	100%
New Zealand	2	4	4	0	0	100%
Norway	1	1	1	0	0	100%
Pakistan	1	2	2	0	0	100%
Philippines	10	16	16	0	0	100%
Russia	14	14	1	2	11	21%
South Korea	17	110	108	0	2	98%
Switzerland	1	1	1	0	0	100%
Turkey	12	12***	11	1	0	100%
United Kingdom	38	104	102	0	2	97%
United States	16	45	41	0	4	91%
Grand Total	214	580	531	16	33	94%

*includes content already removed by the user, by mods, or by admins

**reasons for no action include incomplete requests, duplicate requests, or requests where we asked for more information and the requester did not respond or follow-up

***includes 11 pieces of U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization content

²⁷ Mid-Year Transparency Report 2022, <https://www.redditinc.com/policies/mid-year-transparency-report-2022-2>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

D.3. META

According to the Transparency Report for January-June 2022 by Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, Turkey is ranked 16th among the countries with the highest content restrictions, with 825 restrictions.²⁸

The report indicates that Turkey restricted access from within the country to 294 posts on Facebook, 53 groups, 351 accounts, and 127 posts on Instagram due to legal requests.

Here are some of the Facebook posts that were subject to access restrictions by court orders in 2022:



D.4. TWITTER: TURKEY, THE SECOND COUNTRY SEEKING THE MOST

CLOSURE OF JOURNALIST ACCOUNTS

At the time of writing this report, Twitter had yet to publish its transparency report showing the removal requests for the year 2022.

However, based on the report for the period between July and December 2021, Turkey ranked fourth among the countries with the most legal "content removal" requests by official authorities, following Japan, Russia, and South Korea.²⁹

During that period, Turkey made 4,284 separate content removal requests regarding 8,496 accounts, resulting in the blocking of 540 tweets and 62 accounts.

Furthermore, Turkey ranked second globally regarding the most access restriction requests for verified accounts belonging to journalists and news sources, following India with 114 requests.

According to the report, Turkey made 78 separate requests regarding verified accounts of news sources.

²⁸ Content Restrictions Based on Local Laws, <https://transparency.fb.com/data/content-restrictions/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

²⁹ Twitter Transparency Report, <https://transparency.twitter.com/tr/reports/countries/tr.html>; Twitter Transparency Report: The number of accounts and tweets blocked at Turkey's request has doubled in six months, <https://www.freewebturkey.com/twitter-seffalik-raporu-turkiyenin-talebiyle-engellenen-hesap-ve-tweet-sayisi-alti-ayda-iki-kat-artti/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

D.5. WORDPRESS: TURKEY, THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD

According to the Transparency Report of the free and open-source content management system, Wordpress, from January 1 to June 30, 2022, Turkish courts issued 24 separate decisions for removing Wordpress content or websites.³⁰

This represents worldwide court decisions for removing WordPress content or websites during the same period. During this period, no other court decisions for removal requests globally existed. The report states that Turkey made removal requests for 24 websites with 24 separate court decisions during this period.

Furthermore, the report mentions that Turkey issued 16 separate court decisions for content/website removal from July 1 to December 31, 2022. This ranked Turkey as the first country in the world in terms of the number of court decisions issued for content/website removal during the relevant period.³¹ The report also notes that there were 17 court decisions issued worldwide during that period.

According to the report, Turkey made content removal requests for 18 separate websites with 16 different court decisions, and WordPress accepted 81% of these requests.

However, WordPress noted in the report, "We generally geo-block content or sites for requests from Pakistan, Russia, and Turkey so that WordPress.com remains accessible from other countries. However, in cases of censorship, we refused requests and continue to do so whenever possible."

D.6. TUMBLR

In the report from January 1 to June 30, 2022, the social sharing site Tumblr indicated that Turkish authorities were among the top three countries making the most content removal requests from Tumblr, alongside Spain, with nine requests.³² These nine requests sought the removal of 35 separate contents, of which Tumblr removed only seven.

In the second half of the year, from July 1 to December 31, 2022, an increase in content removal requests and the number of removed contents were reported.

According to Tumblr's report for this period, Turkish authorities made 22 content removal requests (ranking third globally) seeking the removal of 38 contents, and Tumblr removed 37 of these 38 contents. This means that 97% of Turkey's requests were accepted.

³⁰ Government Takedown Demands, <https://transparency.automattic.com/wordpress-dot-com/government-takedown-demands/government-takedown-demands-2022-jan-1-jun-30/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

³¹ Government Takedown Demands, <https://transparency.automattic.com/wordpress-dot-com/government-takedown-demands/government-takedown-demands-2022-july-1-dec-31/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

³² Government Takedown Demands, <https://transparency.automattic.com/tumblr/government-takedown-demands/government-takedown-demands-2022-jul-1-dec-31/>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

D.7. LINKEDIN: TURKEY PUSHES FOR THE TOP

In the transparency report of LinkedIn, the professional social networking platform aimed at connecting people in the business world and facilitating knowledge exchange, Turkey is noted to have a prominent position.

The platform indicated that Turkey ranked second globally regarding the highest number of content removal requests during January-June 2022.³³ Turkish authorities made eight separate content removal requests during that period, and LinkedIn accepted all eight requests.

For example, a post on LinkedIn by Food Detective, which shared information about the ingredients in food products, was blocked upon the request of Ülker through a decision by Istanbul Anatolian 8th Criminal Judgeship of Peace.



D.8. GOOGLE

Google, the world's most widely used search engine, along with the video-sharing platform YouTube and the blog site Blogger under its parent company Google Inc., stated in its transparency report that Turkish authorities made a total of 1,012 removal requests during the period from January 1 to June 30, 2022.³⁴

The report indicated that there were a total of 6,016 items requested for removal, including 4,010 YouTube videos, 1,719 Google search engine results, and 45 posts on Blogger.

³³ Government Requests Report, <https://about.linkedin.com/transparency/government-requests-report>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

³⁴ Official requests for content removal, https://transparencyreport.google.com/government-removals/government-requests/TR?lu=country_item_amount&country_item_amount=group_by:reasons, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

E. TURKEY IN THE INTERNET AND PRESS FREEDOM REPORTS

E.1. FREEDOM HOUSE "INTERNET FREEDOM" REPORT:

TURKEY HAS REGRESSED IN TERMS OF PRESS FREEDOM

Freedom House, a US-based think tank, annually publishes a report called "Freedom on the Net" that classifies countries worldwide regarding internet freedom.

In the report titled "Internet Freedom 2022: Combating the Authoritarian Revision of the Internet," which shares data for the year 2022, Freedom House assessed 70 countries and noted that the Internet is "free" in 17 countries, "partly free" in 32 countries, and "not free" in 21 countries.³⁵

According to the report, Turkey, as in previous years, remains among the "not free" countries for the Internet in 2022. Regarding internet freedom, Turkey, which scored 34 out of 100 in 2021, saw its score drop to 32 in 2022, positioning itself among the 28 countries where internet freedom has regressed.

The report also mentioned the law that came into effect on October 18, 2022, for "combating disinformation," highlighting that the law leaves the determination of "misleading information" to the discretion of prosecutors and judges and imposes imprisonment as a penalty. The report emphasised that this law is expected to increase the government's control over social media and suppress opposition in the run-up to elections.

The summary section of the report regarding Turkey states:

"Internet freedom continued to decline in Turkey. During the coverage period, the 2020 Social Media Law was used to force platforms to remove content, primarily from independent and critical media outlets' websites. Thousands of online users, including members of the political opposition, faced criminal charges for their social media activities. Self-censorship, the proliferation of pro-government outlets, and the blocking of independent media websites have created a less diverse online space in Turkey. Furthermore, pro-government troll networks orchestrated smear campaigns against outspoken activists, and prominent journalists faced physical violence in retribution for their online reporting. During the coverage period, lawmakers proposed a "disinformation" bill that would impose criminal penalties on anyone who deliberately shares fake news online and could further strengthen the government's control over the online space."

E.2. RSF WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX: CIVIL SOCIETY'S EFFORTS HAVE

YIELDED RESULTS, BUT THE SITUATION IN TURKEY IS STILL BAD

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), an international civil society organisation advocating for press freedom, publishes its World Press Freedom Index annually, assessing the press freedom situation in countries.

In RSF's 2022 report, Turkey has moved up four places compared to the previous year, ranking 149th out of 180 countries.³⁶

The report notes that Turkey has improved its ranking by four on the index due to the efforts of civil society in resisting the pressures on the media.

³⁵ Freedom on the Net 2022: Countering an Authoritarian Overhaul of the Internet, <https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/FOTN2022Digital.pdf>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

³⁶ RSF World Press Freedom Index 2022, <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2022>, (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

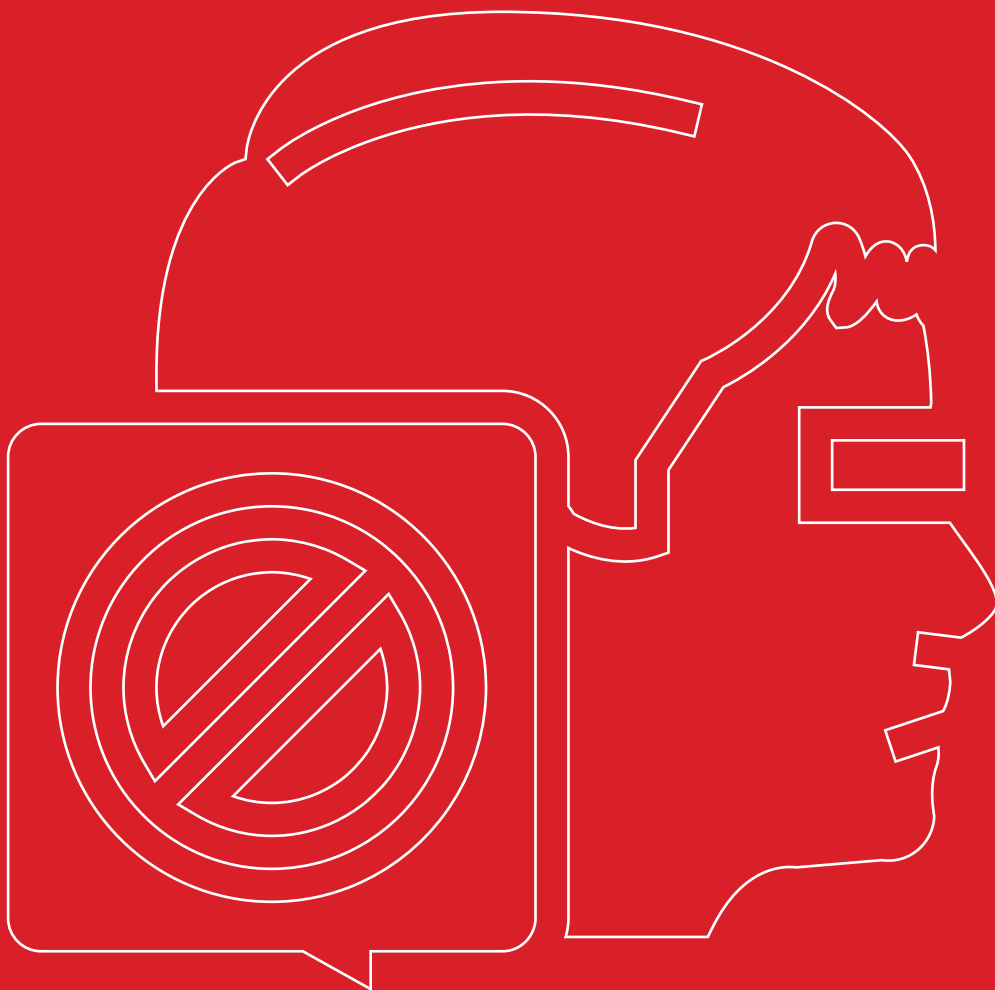
According to the report, Turkey moved up one spot in the list last year due to the deteriorating situation in neighbouring countries. Over the past year, Turkey has risen from 153rd to 149th place in the index due to mass protests against violence against journalists, some positive court decisions criticising excessive pressure, and a decrease in journalist arrests, suggesting that the crackdown had gone too far.

According to the results of the 2022 World Press Freedom Index, among 180 countries, 8 have a "good" status of freedom, 40 are "satisfactory," 62 are "problematic," 42, including Turkey, are "bad," and 28 are "very bad."

The RSF Index, which has been released for the 20th time this year and focuses on the conditions under which journalism is practised, contains the following statements regarding Turkey:³⁷

"In Turkey (149th), the "hyper-presidency" of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his authoritarianism are accompanied by a denial of freedom of the press and interference in the judicial system. Even if the courts tend to imprison when Erdogan demands it, some judges have recently come out against "this repression that goes too far": journalists have been acquitted of abusive charges such as "insulting the president", "belonging to a terrorist organisation", or "propaganda". Judicial review now takes precedence over the imprisonment of journalists. In July 2021, for the first time since the state of emergency was declared, journalists mounted a massive protest over the brutal arrest of AFP photo-journalist Bülent Kiliç.

Over a two-year period, two journalists were murdered in Turkey: Güngör Arslan, editor-in-chief of Ses Kocaeli, on 19 February 2022, and Hazim Özsu, presenter of a programme on Radio Rahmet FM, gunned down in Bursa in March 2021 by one of his listeners. The alleged murderer was arrested six days later."



³⁷ RSF World Press Freedom Index 2022, Europe - Central Asia: Polarization in the West, War and Propaganda in the East <https://rsf.org/en/classement/2022/europe-central-asia> (Accessed on: 28.04.2023)

F. APPEAL TO THE PUBLISHERS WHOSE CONTENTS HAVE BEEN BLOCKED

ALİ SAFA KORKUT

Free Web Turkey Project Coordinator

The data in this report on access restrictions constitute only a portion of the data related to internet censorship in Turkey in 2022. This is because we cannot access all the access restriction orders issued by the judiciary. There are two reasons for this.

First, institutions responsible for implementing internet censorship, such as the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) and the Union of Access Providers and judicial authorities like the General Directorate of Criminal Records and Statistics, do not publish any data on access restriction orders.

Second, the attitude of the publishers for whom access to their content has been restricted.

Many publishers for whom access to their news has been restricted do not inform the public or report that their content has been blocked. The reasons for this may vary, whether they do not consider it newsworthy, are too busy to report it amid their hectic schedules, or are concerned about legal threats. When we attempt to contact these publishers to inform them that their content has been restricted and to request a copy of the access restriction order through our regular open-source monitoring, we sometimes receive responses like, "Don't bother us to find the order now." Of course, this does not apply to every publisher, and we are able to obtain the relevant orders from the majority of the publishers we contact for the same purpose. However, even if a single publisher adopts the attitude I mentioned, it serves the normalisation of censorship, which is exactly what the censors want. Moreover, since the number of people fighting against censorship is relatively small, these orders can be issued quickly.

Therefore, regardless of the subject, impact, or effect of every news article and/or social media post for which an access restriction order has been issued, it is crucial that the details of who requested it, which judiciary issued the order, the date of the order, how many URLs are affected within the scope of the order, and to which platforms these URLs belong, should be shared in a detailed manner, without exception, as long as it has public interest and, therefore, news value.

However, if you do not have the time to do this due to your current workload, there is another way to announce these censorship orders. That is by sharing the relevant access restriction orders with us. If you provide us with these orders, we can, as we always do, announce the specific access restriction along with the details mentioned above.

This would not only be a step against the normalisation of censorship but also an essential data source for organisations that monitor and report on internet censorship, such as Free Web Turkey.

G. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The significant number of access restrictions imposed on websites and news articles in Turkey in 2022 due to court decisions and the practices of various institutions with the authority to restrict access is another clear indicator of how much freedom of expression and democratic values are under threat in the country. This situation interferes with the freedoms of the entire society, not only internet users, erodes freedom of thought and expression, and creates a single-voiced media environment.

Therefore, it is evident that there should be a fight against internet censorship in Turkey.

The first step in this fight is to demand more transparency from the government and relevant institutions. They should provide more precise explanations and justifications for access restrictions and share data about the URLs affected by access restrictions with the public.

However, given the "Law on Combating Disinformation" that came into effect in October 2022, commonly referred to as the "Censorship Law" by the public, and the amendments made to various laws, it does not seem likely that the government and relevant institutions will take steps in this direction. Nevertheless, it is essential not to accept this situation and to take action in the face of these censorship decisions.

In this context, the following actions can be taken:

Don't normalise censorship; announce that your content is blocked: The ease with which those who request these restrictions can do so is partly because content censorship is now normalised by both publishers and readers.

Some publishers and social media users do not report the access restriction order to the public, believing their content is not newsworthy. However, this not only hinders readers from understanding the severity of the censorship climate in the country but also deprives future research on censorship of valuable data. Therefore, announcing that your content has been blocked with a separate news article will serve as a crucial record for preserving freedom of thought today and in the future.

Back up your content before implementing the access restriction order: Before implementing access restriction orders that require you to remove your content, make sure to back up your content on archive websites.

Appeal: Contest access restriction orders that require you to remove your content. In our monitoring activities throughout the year to prepare this report, we have occasionally seen that appeals have yielded positive results and access restriction orders have been lifted. Even if your appeal does not result in a positive outcome, it demonstrates that you are not yielding to censorship.

Educate your readers: Many internet users in Turkey lack sufficient information about the reasons and causes of access restrictions. Raising awareness among users is a crucial step in the fight against censorship. With their broader reach, publishers should educate their readers about what censorship is, how it is implemented, and its consequences. This will help users protect their rights and freedoms and contribute to a more robust voice against censorship.

Seek support from the international community: International support is essential in the fight against internet censorship in Turkey. International human rights organisations and civil society groups can play a significant role in encouraging the Turkish government to take appropriate measures to reduce censorship and protect freedom of expression.

Develop technological solutions: Users and publishers should develop technological solutions to bypass internet censorship. For example, users can use simple and effective tools like VPNs to overcome access restrictions imposed directly on a domain. However, ensuring that the VPN service provider used is trustworthy is essential.

Publishers can continue to publish their content by using alternative domain names when access to the original domain is restricted. Examples are Deutsche Welle using dwturkce.com as an alternative to dw.com or Ekşi Sözlük using various domain names to continue publishing when eksisozluk.com is blocked.

Preserving internet freedoms in Turkey and protecting freedom of expression is essential to a democratic society. Therefore, the government must be more sensitive to this issue and take the necessary steps. Citizens, as well as civil society organisations, activists, and media professionals, should actively work to fight for the preservation of internet freedoms in Turkey.

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