

International Journalists Association (IJA) Press Release:

***Demanding Global Action: IJA Spotlights Dire State of Press Freedom in Turkey on World Press Freedom Day***

May 3, 2024 — On this World Press Freedom Day, the International Journalists Association (IJA) stands united with journalists across the globe, particularly those in Turkey who face extreme threats in their pursuit of truth.

The IJA remains steadfast in its commitment to championing the rights of journalists and ensuring their safety, irrespective of geographical or political challenges.

Today, we focus on the increasingly precarious situation of press freedom in Turkey, emphasizing our continuous support for Turkish journalists confronted with systemic repression, incarceration, and censorship.

Over the past decade, Turkey's press freedom landscape has worsened significantly, ranking it among the lowest in global press freedom indices. The 2024 Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index highlights Turkey's persistent position near the bottom. The Turkish government has employed diverse tactics to quell social and political dissent, including legal actions, economic sanctions, and the direct shutdown of media outlets.

Moreover, the state of democracy in Turkey continues to regress, marked by its designation as "Not Free" in Freedom House's 2024 report. The erosion of democratic structures and the concentration of power in the executive have severely hindered not only media freedom but also the broader civic liberties of expression, assembly, and association.

The persecution of journalists extends beyond Turkish borders, affecting exiled journalists such as Abdülhamit Bilici, Abdullah Bozkurt, Adem Yavuz Arslan, Bülent Keneş, Can Dündar, Cevheri Güven, Erk Acarer, Levent Kenez ve Said Sefa, who, despite finding refuge in democratic countries, still face orchestrated threats and attacks from Turkish authorities.

These actions demonstrate Turkey's strategic use of transnational repression to silence the dissent worldwide. This includes manipulating international legal frameworks and digital platforms, where algorithms on websites such as YouTube and X are exploited to censor and control dissent.

While recognizing initiatives such as the European Media Freedom Act as positive steps within the EU, the IJA urges other nations and global bodies to adopt similar, robust measures.



Given the severe challenges that journalists, particularly in States such as Turkey, confront, it is imperative for international cooperation and legislative actions aimed at protecting journalists from censorship and ensuring their freedom and safety.

**IJA calls for immediate international action to address the following critical issues:**

- **Unconditional release of jailed journalists:** Journalists such as Mehmet Baransu, Gültekin Avcı, and Hidayet Karaca are emblematic of wider media repression and must be released immediately.
- **Enhanced protection for exiled journalists:** We urge better security measures for journalists compelled to flee Turkey due to their work.
- **Reform to end the digital censorship practices:** We advocate for transparency and accountability in governmental use of digital platforms to prevent abuses targeting journalistic content.
- **Global adoption of protective legislation:** We support the worldwide implementation of laws akin to the European Media Freedom Act to universally safeguard journalists.

IJA is committed to advocating for, providing legal assistance to, and financially supporting the journalists of Turkey. Our efforts are aimed at creating a safer environment for journalists globally and fostering a media landscape in which diverse voices can flourish without fear.

**As defenders of press freedom and democratic values, we must unite in our efforts to ensure that oppressive regimes like Turkey cannot continue their repressive practices unchecked. The role of journalists as agents of accountability and pillars of democracy has never been more vital.**

For more information on how you can support press freedom in Turkey and globally, please visit the IJA website or contact us.

Contact: IJA (International Journalists Association)

Email: [info@internationaljournalists.org](mailto:info@internationaljournalists.org)

Website: [www.internationaljournalists.org](http://www.internationaljournalists.org)

***About IJA (International Journalists Association):***

The International Journalists Association is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting journalists facing threats, censorship, and persecution. Founded by exiled journalists from Turkey, the IJA works tirelessly to uphold press freedom, protect journalists' rights, and ensure the safe practice of journalism worldwide. Our diverse initiatives champion the fundamental human right to freedom of expression and aim to create a more inclusive and equitable journalistic community.