

NOVEMBER 2021 / ISSUE: 3

JOURNALIST POST

FREE MEDIA
CANNOT BE
SILENCED

FREE MEDIA
PLATFORM

CPJ's European and Central Asian
Program Coordinator Gulnoza Said:

**JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY
SUFFERED A LOT UNDER
THE AUTHORITY OF
ERDOGAN 16**



dju.

**JOURNALISTS FREEDOM
SHOULDN'T BE BARGAINED 24**

PETER FREITAG VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE GERMAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION

DFC

**Being a Kurdish
Journalist 6**

DİCLE MÜFTÜOĞLU CO-CHAIR OF
DİCLE-FIRAT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

Freiheit für Belarus

Journalismus ist kein Verbrechen - journalism is no crime

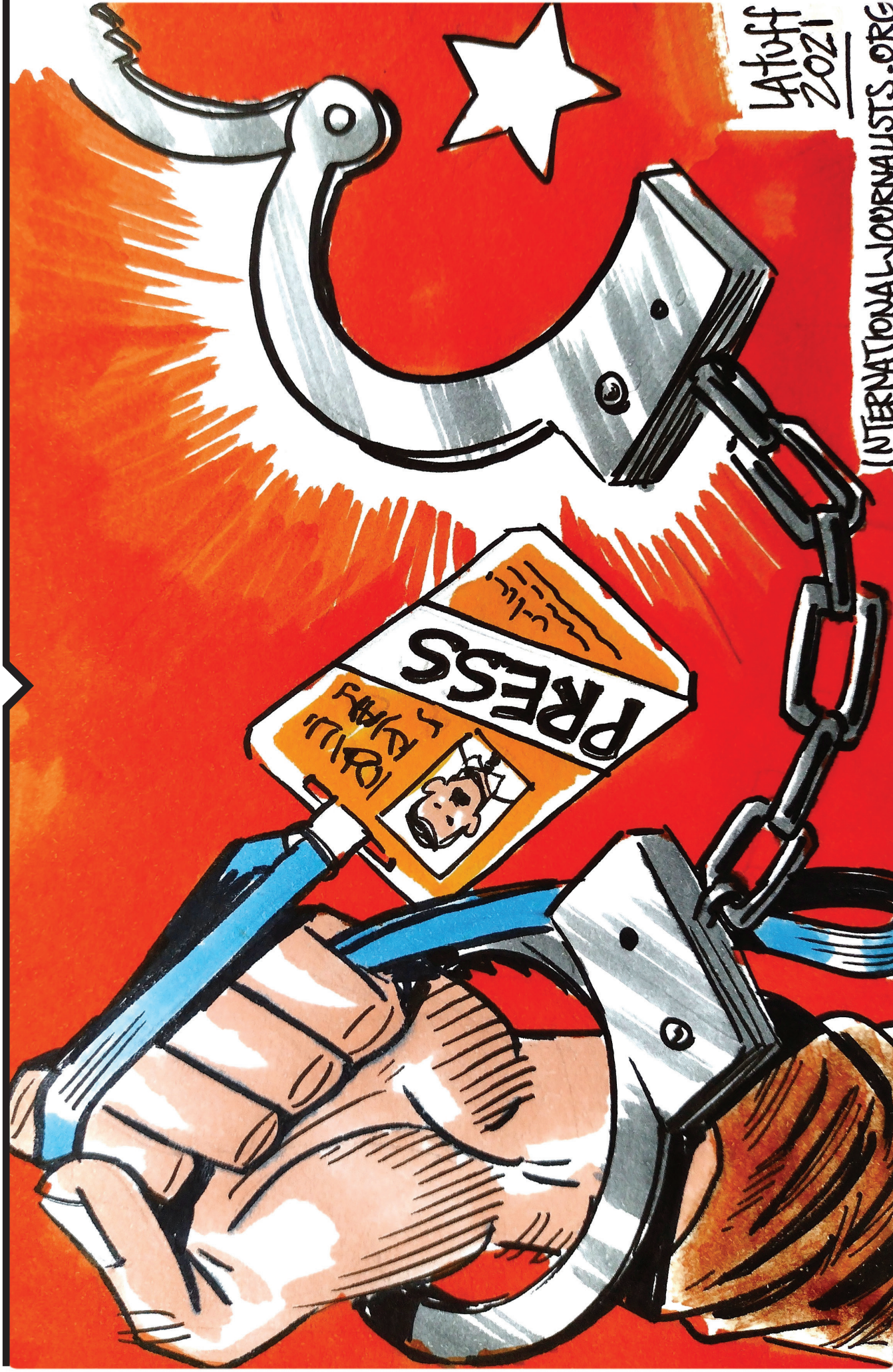


**Mutige Journalist:innen wurden ermordet
oder ins Gefängnis gesteckt**

Künstler:innen:
Gokhan Bozkus
Huriye Genc
Christina Hermann
Susanne Köhler
Christine Krahé
Ernestine Kuger-Hoberg

WAHRHEITS KÄMPFER  **PORTRAITS**
ermordeter und inhaftierter
JournalistInnen
www.wahrheitskaempfer.de
Mahnmal der Pressefreiheit

Künstler:innen:
Lucia Makelis
Steff Murschetz
Thomas Ormond
Udo Reckmann
Achim Ripperger
Verena Rossow



LATUFF
2021

INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS.ORG

contents

FOTO: MUSTAFA ÖZER, AFP

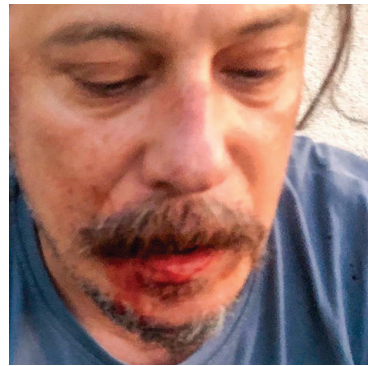


- **CARTOON** CARLOS LATUFF **3**
- **BEING A KURDISH JOURNALIST IN TURKEY MEANS HAVING A RISK OF DEATH!** DİCLE MÜFTÜOĞLU **6**
- **"JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY SUFFERED A LOT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF ERDOĞAN"** TÜRKMEN TERZİ **16**
- **MELTEM OKTAY: I WAS SEARCHED NAKED TWICE** HASAN CÜÇÜK **22**
- **JOURNALISTS FREEDOM SHOULDN'T BE BARGAINED WITH TAYYİP ERDOĞAN** ERKAN PEHLİVAN **24**
- **THE NEWS IS AS IMPORTANT AS 'SURVIVAL' FOR JOURNALISTS** ENGİN SAĞ **26**
- **UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE FAR AWAY FROM PEACE** SHABNAM DAWRAN **28**
- **THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE TALIBAN WERE JOURNALISTS** HAMİDULLAH SADIK **30**
- **FOLLOWING THE MEMORIAL OF DUTCH JOURNALIST PETER R. DE VIES** BASRİ DOĞAN **32**
- **THE COST OF TRUTH TELLING** RANJENI MUNUSAMY **34**
- **BELARUS: A YEAR OF BRUTAL AGGRESSION AND RISING FROM THE ASHES** BORIS GORETSKIY **36**
- **JOURNALISM IN THE PANDEMIC PERIOD** SERHIY ŞTURHETSKIY **38**
- **WE WILL WRITE UNTIL THE GOOD DAYS COME** HADEER MEKAWY **40**
- **VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS IN BRAZIL** CILENE VICTOR **42**
- **TORTURE OF JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY** ERKAN PEHLİVAN **45**
- **UNJUST ARRESTS DEMONSTRATED LAWFUL** DR. KAMAL SİDO **46**
- **FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA UNDER ERDOĞAN'S REGIME** PROF. DR. VEDAT DEMİR **48**

DESPITE ALL OPPRESSION, VIOLENCE AND THREATS **THERE ARE JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY**

A handful of journalists continue to write the truth and do their jobs bravely despite all the pressures and threats. Even if they end up in prison or have to flee abroad, they remind us of democracy, equality and the law with their pens. In this file, you will read the prices paid by the journalists who did not sell the honor of their pen but wrote only the truth. **8**

Journalist Erk Acarer



**ARE TURKISH
JOURNALISTS
NOT SAFE IN
EUROPE? 20**

Lawyer Veysel Ok



**"COURTS IN
TURKEY ARE GIVING
"COPY-PASTE"
DECISIONS!" 14**

OWNER:
INTERNATIONAL
JOURNALISTS
ASSOCIATION e.V.

LEGAL PERSON
REPRESENTATIVE:
MUSTAFA KILIÇ

EDITOR IN CHIEF:
YÜKSEL DURGUT

EDITORIAL BOARD:
ENGİN SAĞ
ERKAN PEHLİVAN
SELVİ ÇELEBİ
ŞEMİ AÇIKGÖZ
TUNCAY YAVUZARSLAN
İSMAİL SAĞIROĞLU
HASAN CÜCÜK
NECDET ÇELİK
RAMİS KILIÇARSLAN
TÜRKMEN TERZİ

DESIGN:
KEMAL KAHVECİ

COVER PHOTO BY:
OZAN KÖSE, AFP

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Adres: Poststraße 2-4,
60329 Frankfurt am Main
Deutschland

Phone: +49 069 84846306
GSM: +49 179 1385035

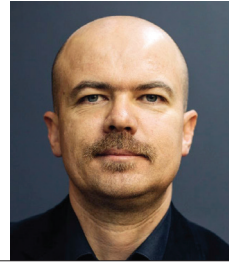
E-Mail: journalistpost@internationaljournalists.org

www.internationaljournalists.org

FOR SUPPORT:
IBAN: DE29 5065 2124
0004 1249 13

PayPal: paypal@internationaljournalists.org

Patreon: info@internationaljournalists.org



YÜKSEL DURGUT EDITOR

No time-out for crimes against humanity

Torture is not just the old-fashioned method of maltreating. According to the European Convention on Human Rights, deaths, mental and physical injuries, and other grievances resulting from torture and ill-treatment constitute both a violation of the right to life and a crime against humanity. The sufferings you will read in our cover file are the crimes committed in Turkey. There is no statute of limitations for such crimes.

You will read in the Journalist Post's last issue about the oppression, violence and human rights violations that many of my colleagues have encountered in Turkey. I will briefly tell you below will take its place in history, just like the dark days faced by many journalists.

As a journalist for 22 years, the date was September 1, 2016, when I stood before a judge. As soon as I stepped into the courtroom, the judge asked me just one single question: "How many children do you have?" I wasn't even in the middle of the hall yet when I said I had two sons. He sent me out without asking any further questions. When I was called to the hall again, I found the judge standing, having his robe on his arm, saying, "I am arresting you," with his steps striding towards the exit. I was imprisoned for 13 months with a single question about my sons.

I had a chronic heart condition. However, I had to shuttle between the hospital and prison many times for By-Pass surgery due to missing or misplaced documents. Finally, months later, I was able to see the doctor.

At the hospital where I was admitted for the surgery, I spent the first night in the detention ward, where two other

people were convicted of drugs.

After the operation, when I was transferred from the intensive care unit to the detention ward, they took me into a small dark room. There were bloodstains on the beds in the room. It was a night fraught with complications as I couldn't meet any of my needs. I couldn't even raise my voice and ask for help from the staff because of the stitches and pain in my chest.

The nurse who came to check me in the morning said they put me in the ward where prisoners with hepatitis checked out a day before.

The dressing, which is applied daily to promote healing and protect the wound from further harm after the By-Pass, was done three days later. My doctor who operated me came for the follow-up checks after three days and realised the truth. He really went crazy for the late dressing.

After such a delicate operation, the prosecutor, who gave a drug dealer permission to have an attendant in the hospital from his family, did not even allow my family to see me.

Usually, after the By-Pass surgery, you need to drink plenty of water. Isn't it torture not to be given a companion to help you while you can't even hold the water bottle?

If I hadn't been in my 45s, I would have overcome the difficulties and troubles of the surgery I had with more enduring psychological damage. Because what you read is only a summary of the problems that transpired...

*

Wishing all the journalists, who only do their jobs in Turkey and all countries governed by the one-person regime, find their freedom as soon as possible.

Have a lovely reading. ■



DICLE MÜFTÜOĞLU CO-CHAIR OF DICLE-FIRAT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

Being a Kurdish journalist in Turkey means having a risk of death!

Being a Kurdish journalist in Turkey is really difficult... Pressures, harassment.. Let alone impositions of spying, you always have a close brush with death. For instance, like the accident(!) we encountered in the car the plain clothes police tried to push our vehicle aside while we wended our way for news in Sirnak City... I had to stay on my bed for a year due to my broken neck bone's treatment in the accident...

Journalism in these lands is similar to the mission undertaken by the dengbêjs (singing storytellers) anciently, which are still of the same importance today. It means conveying the experiences that no one knows or hears, or instead does not want to hear, to the public. Dengbêjs fulfilled the duty like the oral literati or journalists of the time. They recounted the events and stories they witnessed in a melodious way, travelling from village to village by the day's conditions. Although journalism is generally defined as delivering the news around the world, it turns into a slightly more difficult task when it is about these lands – that also valid for any country where similar pressures are experienced. Nevertheless, just like the dengbêjs of their times, Kurdish journalists undertake a mission to publish & broadcast the news about the war, pain, oppression and resistance to the whole world.

I started such an adventure for the first time in Istanbul. However, after the “KCK Media Operation1 “ and “the Roboski Massacre2 “, I realized that I needed to come to the highly `Kurdish` populated cities and go ahead with journalism here in the southern part of Turkey. It was, of course, contradictory to journalism ethics to accept an understanding that remained silent for 13 hours after the Roboski Massacre and receiving the first news from the state officials' statements. Moving to Diyarbakir city (the

most populated city in the southeastern part of Turkey), I felt as if I had landed on the core of the news. Not long after I worked in the region, I personally experienced how hunting news here was like putting one's head in the lion's mouth. On August 28, 2012, our vehicle was pushed aside by a vehicle with police officers in plain clothes while we were going to Sirnak City for news (Sirnak is a town in southeaster part of Turkey with a predominantly Kurdish population border with Iraq and Syria). We had an accident as a result of our reporter, who was driving the car, lost control of the steering wheel. After the accident, I had treatment for my neck bone (C2) fracture, and I could not leave my house for about one year. Although the health complications that occurred after the accident are still noticeable, the love of journalism has never ended. As I personally experienced such violence, it would not have been possible to do otherwise.

Since I started my career as a journalist, dozens of investigations and lawsuits were filed against me as I was the editor-in-chief of the Dicle News Agency (DİHA) and dihaber, as well as a reporter. In addition to the ongoing trials, I was sentenced in 3 cases, which were postponed by HGB (HGB is delaying the sentence for five years if the same crime is not committed). But the most remarkable challenge the journalists confront here, awkwardly, is not the proceedings. Journalists, who were considered `dangerous`



by the former governments, are now entirely made the scapegoat for their enthusiasm in journalism. So much so, and regrettably, you have to conceal your identity and journalism equipment in any place you pass through many times. When you approach a checkpoint at the entrance of a city, if your profession is asked and you answer it correctly, your vehicle is searched entirely. Your GBT (General Information Collection – Online information collection system designed by the state for its citizens) is also verified, and sometimes your entrance to the city is banned. In 2016, I went to Sirnak city to make news about the people living in tents during the curfew. I was detained three times, all the photos and images in my camera were deleted, and my entry to the area was prohibited. When I was first detained, the police took my picture. I couldn't understand the reason then, but after that, when I was detained for the second time by a patrolling team, it was said, "We have not met you, but your description has been reported to us. You cannot make news here without the supervision of armoured vehicle teams and the governor's permission, and then my reporter colleague and I were threatened with death. The next time I was detained, the police said clearly and unequivocally, "People in the tents are against the state. I will not let you make news about them in this city."

Although the above examples look personal, it has become the routine of Kurdish journalists. Therefore we established the Dicle Fırat Journalists Association so as to defend our rights and organize solidarity among the journalists in an environment where the freedom of the press and expression is razed to the ground. Although our association is very new, most of the journalists in most regional cities (the cities where the Kurdish population has density) become our members. Gathering information from other press and analysing our members' applications, we regularly prepare monthly reports on the violations of rights in terms of press and freedom of expression.

The outcome that we are trying to announce to the world public opinion through these reports is not very heartwarming. According to the August report of our association, 63 journalists

are still behind bars. In August, five journalists were detained, eight were assaulted, one was forced to be a spy, 211 news and six websites were banned.

Being banned by the security forces during the news follow-up is pervasive throughout Turkey. However, it is more dominant in the highly Kurdish populated cities. The government announced a ban on actions and activities in the cities, and the police are basing this pretext to target journalists. The police, who blocked the way of journalists with their shields many times or removed them from the area, is trying to prevent the violence they use from being announced to the world public opinion. Even though the journalists are protected by both sides in any war environments, the journalists in Turkey are either subjected to violence or prevented from doing their jobs by law enforcement.

Unfortunately, reporting the violations committed by state officials in Turkey is a reason for either arrest or investigation. In such cases, journalists stand trial for "membership in a terrorist organization" and "propagandizing for a terrorist organization" because of the news they publish & broadcast. We came across one of the most striking examples in the "helicopter torture" in Van city. The soldiers detained two citizens in a field close to their village and tortured them, and then thrown them from a helicopter. As a result, Cemil Ugur, Adnan Bilen, reporters of the Mesopotamia Agency, who revealed the incident, and journalists Nazan Sala and Sehirban Abi were arrested. Journalists were imprisoned for six months just for doing their duties. Their cases are still in progress. Nevertheless, the outcome of the investigation against the torturers is still unknown.

Another problem encountered by journalists is the imposition of spying. On July 28 and 29, JinNews reporters Gulistan Azak and Dilan Babat were subjected to threats and imposition of undercover activities by some unspecified people who introduced themselves as members of an intelligence unit. Azak and Babat were asked to leak information about their news sources and informants, which is entirely against journalism ethics.

Despite this series of violations and infringement of the law, which I could add here a lot more, I will not cease to proclaim the truth to the world, both as a journalist and as Co-Chair of Dicle-Fırat Journalists Association. The principle of journalism demands precisely this. ■

1) KCK Media Operation: Following a series of police raids targeting Kurdish media outlets such as Dicle Haber Ajansı (DHA), Özgür Gündem, and Azadiya Welat in March 2011, 32 journalists and media workers were detained and placed in pretrial custody.

2) Roboski Massacre: The Turkish Air Force attacked a group of Kurdish civilians involved in smuggling fuel and cigarettes near the Iraq-Turkey border on December 28, 2011, killing 34 people.

DESPITE ALL OPPRESSION,
VIOLENCE AND THREATS

THERE ARE JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY

A handful of journalists continue to write the truth and do their jobs bravely despite all the pressures and threats. Even if they end up in prison or have to flee abroad, they remind us of democracy, equality and the law with their pens. In this file, you will read the prices paid by the journalists who did not sell the honor of their pen but wrote only the truth.

**Gazetecilere
Özgürlük**

GAZETECİLERE
ÖZGÜRLÜK
PLATFORMU
2 0 1 0



ŞEMSİ AÇIKGÖZ

There is this famous story, “The King of Germany II. Friedrich wanted to build a palace on a land he liked in Potsdam, near Berlin. However, the miller who was living in the land refused to sell his field. When the king couldn’t change the miller’s mind, he tried to persuade by summoning him to his palace, this time he got angry and tried to threaten, “Remember! There is a king here.” Upon these words, the confident, brave and wise miller replied, “You are right, there is a king here; but don’t forget that there are also judges in Berlin!”

Shocked, King Friedrich could not say anything and had his palace built at another place without touching the mill. Now, these two historical buildings make the whole world think that justice is necessary for everyone.

This is why I told this story: Turkey has been going through challenging times where fundamental freedoms are restricted, tens of thousands of dissenters are put in prison, business people’s properties are destroyed, billions of dollars of corruption are scattered around, and the economy has been collapsed due to these ongoing crimes, especially in the last 10 years. And in such an atmosphere of fear, despite the danger of ending up in prison and death threats, “There are journalists in Turkey.” There are a handful of brave pens screaming.

*

The media in general, and the journalists in particular, have suffered the most from this negative course of events in Turkey, especially in the last decade. Since 2016, 34 TV channels, 53 newspapers, 37 radio stations, 6 news agencies, 20 magazines and 29 publishing houses have been closed. More than 200 journalists fled abroad(!). 34 foreign journalists were deported, 3,804 journalists’ press cards were cancelled. Furthermore, more than 400 journalists were arrested and put on trial. Currently, there are more than 60 journalists in prisons. There has been a lot of pain in this case and it is likely to continue. Here is one of them: journalist Mevlüt Öztaş. Journalist Öztaş was arrested

for the news he wrote. He had to undergo two surgeries in the prison. His kidneys failed and he got cancer. Courts denied eviction requests. His treatment was deliberately delayed. Sadly, it was too late when he was released after 874 days of ongoing public protests. Just after 57 days of his discharge, he passed away.

*

On the other hand, daily newspaper circulation, which was about 4 million before the July 15 coup attempt, dropped by 65 percent to 1.5 million today. The Erdogan government (although it’s illegal) shut down many newspapers. He made sure that the biggest newspapers of Turkey were bought by businessmen who were his supporters. He controlled 95% of the media. The media has lost its reliability.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) provides details in their World Press Freedom Index that Turkey was ranked 99th among 180 countries in 2002, while today it ranks 154th. Obviously, since the government turned its back on democracy, everything has been suffering in the country.

*

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gave up his favor for democracy in the first years of his presidency. Winning the elections as the sole leading party caused power poisoning in his personality. He started to hate dissident journalists. Because the thing he fears most in this life is honest words! A handful of journalists continue to write the truth and do their job bravely despite all the pressures and threats. Even if they end up in prison or have to flee abroad, they remind us of democracy, equality and the law with their pens. Some write about mafia relations and corruption while others tell us about violations of rights. Here in this file, you will read the prices paid by the journalists who did not sell the honor of their pen but wrote the truth. You will have a better understanding of what they have gone through and what difficulties they have faced. As if slamming the lies of those who say ‘There is no oppression and torture in Turkey’... ►

I AM THE VICTIM OF THE NAKED STRIP SEARCH BY POLICE



ROJDA AYDIN
JINNEWS

I started working at Jin News (JINHA) in 2016. When JINHA was closed by the government, I was transferred to Newspaper Shujin. Then this place was shut down by force. Currently, I continue my profession at JINNEWS Agency. Being a journalist here, especially being a Kurdish journalist, is very demanding. If you are a Kurdish journalist, you are seen as a “potential terrorist”. You are likely to be the target of a bullet after the news shoot.

I was detained 4-5 times because of the content of my news. In 2020, while I was shooting some news, I was detained with two other female colleagues by the police. There we were subjected to the naked strip search against all our refusals. The government denies naked searches in Turkey. However I am the very victim of this inhumane action. The investigations opened by the district attorney on charges of “me being a member of a terrorist organization” and “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” were dismissed. This time another lawsuit was filed with the allegation of “not dispersing despite warnings and participating in illegal meetings and marches unarmed”. This case is still ongoing though.



NUR ENER KILIÇ JOURNALIST

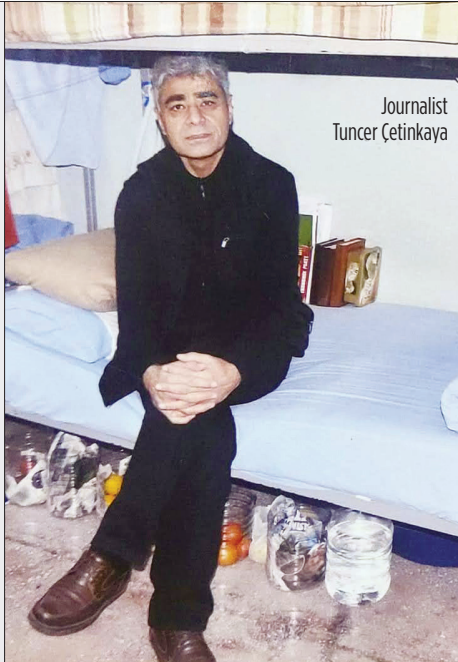
I WILL BE ALRIGHT WHEN THE IMPRISONED JOURNALISTS ARE FREE AGAIN

My imprisonment, which started on March 1, 2017, ended on February 21, 2018. This was just a small cost of investigating Erdogan's theater of the July 15th coup attempt. The judges of the Erdogan regime had decided that I had to spend 7 years in prison. The lawsuit filed with the allegation of being a member of a terrorist organization was followed by the trial of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization”. My book “Three Daisy Branches”, which consists of letters from people in prison, was the subject of this case. The wounds of the handcuffs on my wrists had healed, but the agony of the suffering and tortures could not be erased from my mind easily. Having decided to leave the country while under house arrest, we challenged living under these circumstances with my wife. During our journey from Turkey to Greece, I thought of imprisoned journalists, babies and innocent women. When I got out of the prison, I said the following: “I am here, but there is a 30-day-old baby and 6 children in the ward I left. I will only be happy when those babies come out as well.” I meant every word I said. I repeat the same wish from the bottom of my heart; I will be happy when those babies, journalists and innocent women are free too!

I WAS LEFT TO DIE AFTER MY SURGERY

After the July 15 coup attempt, the police raided my house and I was arrested without the need for a statement from the prosecutor's office, even without a trial, and I spent 2 years in jail. Only after 9 months, I was able to learn why I was detained in the first place. My fault was, “Making news in the media organs of the Hizmet movement and criticizing injustice.” My computer, my camera and my press card were all taken from me as evidence of crime. I was released soon after because they couldn't find anything unlawful. But the next day, I was arrested again under political pressure.

I was subjected to different kinds of torture, such as hunger, thirst, insults and exposed to death threats. They took my medicines away and didn't let me have any medical treatment at all. As a result of not being able to take my daily medicines for a long time, my kidneys lost their healthy functions. I had to undergo a surgery in prison. After the operation, I was left to die naked for 10 hours in a custody cell with open windows on a winter day. What I endured that day was just another episode of ongoing brutality that has been experienced in Turkish prisons for a long time.



TUNCER ÇETİNKAYA JOURNALIST

IT IS A CRIME TO FOLLOW NEWS IN TURKEY

I was put on trial in Van 2nd High Criminal Court and sentenced to 20 months in prison for the news I made for İMÇ TV which then was shut down in 2016. In 2018, I was detained after a night raid on my house. I had to argue in the court that this accusation was the same as in the previous case, only then the file was dismissed. The night I was detained, they also confiscated my mobile phone and the hard disk containing all my news archives. None of them have been delivered yet.

Since 2018, almost every month, different kinds of investigations have been opened against me because of the news I have made. They even forced my interviewers to testify against me. In January 2021, a lawsuit was filed against me due to a photo of me standing in front of an audience holding a camera. A prison sentence of 18 years was requested because of this press image. The prosecutor filed a lawsuit on the charge of “being a leader of an organization” with the allegation that “I am leading and managing the crowd”. Oddly enough, the judge approved this nonsensical accusation. But in fact, by standing there, I was just doing my job as a journalist!



RUŞEN TAKVA
JOURNALIST



BERITAN CANOZER
JİNNEWS
CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN, A JOURNALIST AND A KURD

When I was reporting in 2015, I was detained for being “overly sensational”. After 4 days of detention, I was sentenced to 4 months in jail as a result of some news I made before and my social media posts. I witnessed and was exposed to many violations of human rights during my locking up. Since 2015, 11 investigations have been launched against me. In one case, I was tried with a 15-year prison sentence. Some of the cases were acquitted, and some are still pending. In addition, I have judicial control measures and a ban on going abroad. In the last 6 months, I was detained twice and spent 8 days there. The accusations were aroused regarding my news and social media posts. Frankly, working as a Kurdish journalist in the Kurdish press, and being a woman on top of these mean that the oppression you might feel will be tremendous. Despite all the pressures, we are still pushing our luck to create reliable news content under any conditions. We believe that journalism is not a crime. We have dozens of imprisoned colleagues in Turkey. It shouldn't be a crime to be able to make news, and to be able to give accurate information to the public, and most importantly to be able to criticize wrongdoers in any place in the world.



OMER CELIK
EDITOR OF MESOPOTAMIA AGENCY

I MADE NEWS ABOUT ALBAYRAK THEN I WAS IMPRISONED FOR 10 MONTHS

I started my career as a journalist at Dicle News Agency (DİHA) in 2009. In 2011, I was arrested along with 32 other journalists during the operation against the Kurdish press agencies and had to spend 18 months behind the bars. The accusation against me was that I was allegedly chasing some news that could embarrass the image of the state and humiliate it in the eyes of the public. Another file I am on trial is about reporting the contents of emails which belong to Berat Albayrak, Former Minister of Treasury and Finance. I was tortured during the police raid on my house on December 25, 2016. I had to endure 24 days of detention, then I was finally able to get my freedom after 10 months of confinement. The penalty demanded for this news was 11 years. I guess I was lucky to get out of that cell soon enough. Although I suffered the physical torture, they destroyed the evidence of this crime which was reported in my file before! Similarly, a lawsuit was filed against me due to a news report about the Deputy General Commander of the Gendarmerie, Musa Çitil, who carried out a military operation that resulted in the removal of Sur district of Diyarbakır from the official map of Turkey. Although the court recently found me innocent, they haven't dropped the charges yet.

I EXPERIENCED TORTURE AT A LEVEL THAT NO HUMAN WITH A DIGNITY COULD BEAR

The AKP regime first destroyed the media before the genocide it wanted to commit in Turkey. Before July 15, all newspapers and TV channels which were against the Erdogan regime were closed down. Back then, I was working in Zaman Newspaper, which was also closed. I was following a case of great news and working on the news about the AKP Government's shipping guns illegally on the Syrian border and its support to many illegal organizations, such as ISIS and Al Nusra. I was detained and threatened at the border. I've been targeted and followed many times since then. Two of my colleagues were killed at the border.

A week after the attempted coup on July 15, the police raided my house with long-barreled guns and threatened my family. I experienced torture that befits human dignity at the police station. I was arrested without any evidence against me and I struggled to survive under very difficult conditions in prison for 19 months. I was released on parole because I was not guilty of anything. If you are a journalist in Turkey, life is intolerable in many ways. That's why many of my friends had to leave Turkey.



I SPENT MONTHS IN PRISON FOR THE NEWS I MADE

I have been working as a journalist since 2014. In 2016, while I was following some news, I was detained and arrested. I had to spend 3 months in jail. I was sentenced to 15 months in prison for my news and some contents I posted on social media. There was even nothing related to the criminal offense in them. In 2020, I learned that 2 villagers in the Çatak district of Van were being treated in the intensive care unit of a hospital. When I investigated the incident, I proved with documents that those two villagers were thrown from the helicopter by the soldiers. I was detained together with 3 of my colleagues because of the news I made. The court detained us by considering the social news we made as a crime and I was imprisoned for 6 months because of this very news. We were left without any basic rights in prisons. The detainees were in complete isolation. It's getting only harder each day for us -as journalists- to survive under these horrible working conditions in Turkey. But I look up to legendary journalist figures such as Metin Göktepe, Hrant Dink, Uğur Mumcu and Apê Musa. They give me strength and courage to stand firm as a journalist. No matter how hard it might get, I'm willing to continue following their steps and do this job.



CEMIL UGUR
JOURNALIST



NURULLAH KAYA JOURNALIST

I WAS IMPRISONED FOR 22 MONTHS WITHOUT A SINGLE OFFENCE



MEHMET ÖZDEMİR
JOURNALIST

After the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, upon learning that there was a detention order for me, I rushed and voluntarily surrendered to police. After 8 days of oppressive detention, I was arrested and then sent to Silivri Closed Prison. My indictment came exactly 9 months later. "Three aggravated life sentences" were demanded for me on charges of "attempted coup d'état" and "being a member of a terrorist organization". However, in the 65-page indictment, there wasn't a single evidence of crime that could be shown against me. They deliberately avoided mentioning my job in real life. I was working as 'Chief Page Editor' and 'Responsible Editor' in a newspaper but they didn't even put these facts in the indictment.

I asked the court committee what my crime was, but I did not get a sensible answer. The prosecutor of the trial first reduced the 3 life sentence demands to 1 at the hearing stage, then demanded a punishment only for 'directing a terrorist organization' for me. After 22 months, I was released and the court acquitted me. However, the prosecutor objected to the verdict and the Supreme Court overturned the acquittal and demanded that I be tried again and punished.

I WAS THREATENED TO BE IMPRISONED FOR 28 YEARS FOR THE NEWS I MADE

I started to work as a journalist at Dicle News Agency in 2013. When this place was shut down by the government, I continued my career at DIHABER. I had to go to Iraq in 2017 when many lawsuits were filed against me because of the news I made. In Iraq, I was an editor at RojNews and I used to write articles for Yeni Yaşam Newspaper. After 3 years, in December 2019, I went to Armenia from Iran to go to Europe. But I was caught there and brought back to Turkey via Iran. I got out of jail after 11 months. My trial still continues and I'm due to face 28 years of imprisonment. I was sentenced to 2 years and a month in prison for other news I made. Furthermore, I'm expected to spend 2 years in prison for my article titled "23 Years Ago Lice, and Now Cizre".

My wife was detained for a tweet she posted while I was in prison. My children were left unattended for days while my wife was in custody. We actually do our best as Turkish journalists by working relentlessly in a very severe environment. I am trying to convey the truth to the public and I want the whole world to know what has happened and is still happening here.



AZİZ ORUÇ JOURNALIST

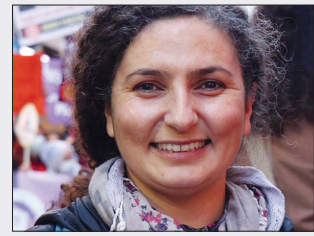


I AM A JOURNALIST WHOSE 22 MONTHS WERE STOLEN

I am also one of the journalists whose path ends up in Silivri. First, a trustee was appointed to Cihan News Agency, where I worked, and then I was fired. I became a partner in a media company. However, a trustee was appointed there because it was affiliated with Cihan. I was unemployed twice in a year. I started to serve to foreign media organizations. Until 26 July, 10 days after the coup. At 06:00 in the morning, the police raided my house with automatic weapons. afterwards detention and court, I was put in Silivri prison. Exactly 22 months spent in a 30 square meter cell. Then, without even saying pardon, my acquittal was decided as there was no evidence other than working as a journalist. Well, who will account for the 22 months stolen from my life? No one. While they did not find the 22 months I spent in Jail enough, an arrest warrant was issued 9 months after I was released. "Either prison or Evros," the justice of my country was saying. I chose Evros. One morning, I left my country by crossing the Evros river. My country issued an arrest warrant with a 'red notice' after my departure.



ZAFER ÖZSOY
JOURNALIST



MELIKE AYDIN JINNEWS
İZMİR CORRESPONDENT

THE GOAL IS TO DIVIDE PEOPLE INTO CLASHING GROUPS

For those who hold the power in Turkey, separating people from each other is a cunning way of ruling the masses in Turkey. As a Kurdish woman journalist, I can say that this is the main reason for the violence I experienced.

In April 2018, I was detained while returning from a news follow-up in Aydın. In 2016, I was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in jail because of a social media post I shared. Then I was released on the condition that I serve double that sentence. On November 11, 2019, the police raided my house at 5 am accusing me with one of the news I made. This incident traumatized my family. I was offered spying in custody, I was threatened not to do my job. I am still being followed and harassed. I was forcibly naked strip searched in prison. I was away from my job for three months, my books were confiscated and, despite my acquittal, they were not returned. I was discharged from the jail, but I became a journalist who was "terrorized" against my news sources, and some, especially nationalist-conservative Turks, broke off relations with me.

I WAS REPEATEDLY HARASSED BY THE POLICE



ZEMO AĞGÖZ
MESOPOTAMIA
AGENCY ANKARA
CORRESPONDENT

After I started working at the Mezopotamya Agency in 2018, I realized that being a journalist in Ankara, especially working in the Kurdish press agency, has nothing to do with the “journalism” we were taught back when we were students. When we wanted to follow the news, the police wouldn’t recognize the card of the agency we were the reporters of, and they would also threaten us. Personally, I was repeatedly insulted and harassed by many police officers during my career as a member of Kurdish journalism. Especially if the incident is somehow related to police brutality, and if you report it, you can rest assured that it will eventually put you in danger of police assault as well. That’s why we always have to carry our computers, cameras with us. Because if we leave them at the office, the police officers can raid our workplaces and confiscate them.

Despite all these difficulties, free media has become the most reliable medium for most people. For this reason, people reach us under any circumstances when they suffer from violence or torture of any kind. No matter where they are, they find us and speak to us freely. I’m in search of only the truth and I’m totally satisfied with my job.

BEING WOMAN, KURD, AND JOURNALIST...

Journalism was my dream job as a kid. I started journalism at DİHA in 2015 when I was at university and continued at JINHA and Şujin. I am currently working at Jinnews. Our agency is a media organization, based on women-oriented journalism, with the slogan of ‘By the woman’s pen, on the trail of the truth’.

Besides the traditional main stream media in which the masculine and male-dominated system came to life, we try to realize the phrase “We exist too” both intellectually and practically. However, at this point we also face pressure a lot.

In 2017, with 5 of my friends, I took into custody by the of our house, as a result of citing a notice about us. Throughout my career, I was detained 3 times there is an ongoing lawsuit about me.

Confiscation of materials with home operations stands before us as a policy against journalists trying to prevent our profession, as well as detention, arrest and repression. Being a woman, a Kurd and a journalist brings difficulties.



HABİBE EREN JINNEWS

HASAN BOZKURT JOURNALIST I’M JUST A JOURNALIST

On May 17, 2017, I was detained by the police who came to my house, and 6 days later, I was arrested for my editorial phone calls and having an account in a bank. One night, They sent me to Denizli Prison, 471 km from Ankara, without even informing my family about my location. I could only talk to my family on the phone after a month of my imprisonment. I had to stay with 30 other people in an 8-person ward. I slept on the floor for months because there was no bed in the cell. Using toilets and bathrooms became a mere torment. Especially the way doctors treated us was an utter shame. When they needed to examine us, they would do it from 10 meters away, as if we were lowly creatures!



ABDURRAHMAN GÖK
EDITOR OF MESOPOTAMIA AGENCY

JOURNALISTS SUFFER FROM CONSTANT FEAR OF BEING KIDNAPPED.

The difficulties which Turkish journalists have been undergoing for years have become unbearable with the current presidential regime. There has always been a price to pay for writing about the incidents where the government was involved in injustice and crime. However, nowadays, talking about these crimes is almost impossible, let alone making news about them. Journalists are afraid of being kidnapped. Ending up in prison, or being arrested is now preferred to getting lost all of a sudden! In the last 5-6 years, we have had hundreds of journalist colleagues who had to leave the country because they were no longer able to work as a journalist under this pressure or they couldn’t continue to practice this job because they were afraid. Turkey is now at the top of the list of risky countries for journalists. I’ve been a journalist since 2004 and more than 20 lawsuits have been filed against me. I spent 9 months in prison in 2009. I was detained during the news follow-up. Wherever I go, I was constantly questioned by the police, especially if I had a camera with me. I am now facing a 20-year prison sentence for taking photos of Kemal Kurkut, a university student killed by the police at the Nevroz celebrations in Diyarbakır in 2017.

FREE JOURNALISTS ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE TARGET

On November 24, 2020, I was detained after a raid on my house in Van by the Police Special Operations Unit. I was arrested on the charge of “membership in a terrorist organization” due to the phone calls I had with my news sources and the news I made. My first hearing was held 3 months later, only then I was released. But my trial has been still ongoing.

My journalist friends, Adnan Bilen, Nazan Sala, Cemil Uğur and Şehirban Abi were arrested. As journalists, we have been and will continue to be the voice of violations of fundamental human rights in the region, of murders, of citizens killed while doing border trade, and of female refugees raped in the refugee campsites.

It is quite a tragicomic fact that President Erdogan criticizes France for the lack of freedom of the press, but when it comes to reality, he actually ignores to see the same injustice in Turkey. As a journalist on trial, I have come to the realization that the AKP government and Erdogan do not want the dissidents to even breathe freely. As still being the free journalists in Turkey, we are the target.



DINDAR KARATAS
JOURNALIST

Courts in Turkey are giving “copy-paste” decisions!

During the period when journalist Deniz Yücel was in detention, my numerous objections to detention were rejected with the same phrases without any justification. With the approval of my client, I removed the legal objections in my petition for the arrest appeal and put a football article from a newspaper. The judge did not read the content of the petition I submitted, so he decided to continue the arrest on the same grounds without reading the football article.



İSMAİL SAĞIROĞLU JAILED JOURNALIST

As a legal activist, do you know the numbers and statistics about journalists who have been subjected to rights violations in Turkey?

We, as MLSA (Media and Law Studies Association), have been following the cases of journalists who have been imprisoned and subjected to judicial harassment for years. We try to monitor freedom of expression cases and publish reports through our case-tracking work. Currently, there are still at least 60 imprisoned journalists in Turkish prisons. Although this number seems to have decreased, more than 600 journalists have been arrested and released since the July 15 coup attempt. It is impossible to give precise information about the number of journalists who are not detained but who are prosecuted, but we estimate that this number is in the thousands.

How do journalists who are detained, arrested and sent to prison in Turkey face violations of their rights?

In fact, journalists in Turkey are subject to violations of their rights before a judicial action is taken against them. Journalists who violate the red lines of power and make news are primarily targeted by the so-called pro-media. Journalists are also detained and usually arrested after unfavorable media reports. If the detained and arrested journalists are detained on terrorism charges, it is impossible for them to receive legal support from lawyers in the first 24 hours of their detention. For this reason, journalists

may be exposed to psychological and physical pressure from the police for the first 24 hours. Problems arise for journalists taken into custody on issues such as health and nutrition.

The situation of the detainees is even worse. First of all, many journalists are being held in a prison outside the city where they live. This situation makes it difficult to get legal services from their lawyers and makes family visits impossible. Journalists are not physically brought to the hearings as they are held in different cities, and participation is ensured through the video conference system. This situation means a violation of the right to a fair trial.

Journalists are kept in unhealthy conditions in prisons. Especially during the pandemic, the right to access to health has been significantly hindered. Again, many rights such as doing sports and using the library in prisons have been blocked on the grounds of the pandemic. Journalists are still prohibited from reading non-government newspapers or watching television channels.

EVEN A FOOTBALL ARTICLE HAS BEEN ARRESTED

Can journalists object to violations of their rights and get results? Are officials punished, compensation paid? What problems do you encounter based on your own experiences?

Unfortunately, the policy of impunity in Turkey continues to strengthen. In crimes against journalists (police violence, murder, etc.), if the perpetrator is a public official, all the mechanisms of the state, including the judiciary, are in an attitude to protect the perpetrator. In detention cases, however, no objections are examined and the detention of journalists is decided with copy paste, unjustified decisions.

I want to give you an example; During the period when the journalist Deniz Yücel was in detention, my numerous objections to detention were rejected with the same formulaic sentences without any kind of justification. With the approval of my client, I removed the legal objections in my petition for arrest appeal and put a football article



WHO IS VEYSEL OK?

Press Law expert, 36-year-old lawyer Veyssel Ok acted as the lawyer of institutions such as Taraf Newspaper, Akim Publications, P24 Independent Journalists Association, and journalists such as Deniz Yücel, Ahmet Altan, Şahin Alpay, Nedim Türfent. He has been the Co-Director of the Media and Legal Studies Association (MLSA) for the last 2 years and provides legal support to journalists under the umbrella of the association. He carries out studies on the solution of rights violations in Turkey. He was awarded the Thomas Dehler Award in Germany and the Index on Censorship award in the UK for his "efforts on freedom of expression and the rule of law".

from a newspaper. The judge did not read the content of the petition I submitted, so he decided to continue the arrest on the same grounds without reading the football article. In fact, this example alone is giving a big picture of the Turkish judiciary.

THE ECHR GIVES BENEFITS TO THE TURKISH JUDICIARY

Are there any journalists whose cases you brought to the ECHR, who could not get results from their rights violation cases in Turkey? Can you tell us about this process and the problems you experienced?

In Turkey, we make applications to the European Court of Human Rights, especially when we cannot get a result in the cases of imprisoned journalists and after exhausting domestic remedies. We have dozens of applications, especially Ahmet-Mehmet Altan, Deniz Yücel, Şahin Alpay, Nedim Türfent, Idris Sayılğan, to name a few.

In order for these applications to be made, domestic legal remedies must be exhausted first. Because-unfortunately-the ECtHR still defines the legal system in Turkey as an 'effective and functioning' legal system. This is the reason, why we the applications can be made only after a long time and why the unjust treatment of the journalist held in prison last for a long time. Everyone is aware that the judiciary is under the control of the political power in Turkey, but the ECHR still lends credit to the Turkish judiciary.

Again, for the applications we make, it takes years for the decisions to come out. The ECtHR, unfortunately, does not show a quick reflex for detained cases. For example,

the decision on Ahmet Altan's application was announced almost 4 years later, and in this case, the detention period of journalists now turns into torture. In many of our applications, years have passed and still no decision has been made.

This slowness of the ECtHR causes the violations of rights in the country to continue for a long time. However, despite all its shortcomings, the ECtHR has an extremely critical and important role for us.

THE JOURNALISTS SHOULD CONTINUE THEIR WORK DESPITE THE OBSTACLES

What do you suggest against the violations of rights that journalists face while performing their duties in Turkey?

First of all, despite all kinds of judicial harassment in Turkey, there are countless journalists who do their job without fear. You have to give them the credit for this work.

My most important advice to journalists doing their job is to continue doing their job despite all obstacles and to use their legal objections against any obstruction. Because one day, of course, the law will return back to this country, and those who have committed unlawfulness will be prosecuted. Therefore, long-term results can be obtained with legal objections and annotations, even if it is not giving results in the short term.

My second important recommendation is my call for journalists to be organized and unionized. An organized professional group is stronger against anti-democratic obstacles.

“JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY SUFFERED A LOT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF ERDOGAN”

Gulnoza Said, the European and Central Asian Program Coordinator of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), expresses that Turkey is a very important country for them, “but the media community in Turkey has suffered a lot under the leadership of President Erdogan.



TÜRKMEN TERZI

Gulnoza Said has been doing her profession as a journalist and communication specialist in New York, Prague, Bratislava and Tashkent for more than 15 years. .

Said specialized especially to Central Asia, Russia and Turkey in politics, media, religion and human rights. Said currently serves as the European and Central Asian Program Coordinator of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. We touched on journalism with Said.

Can you introduce the CPJ and how it works? What are the CPJ's your campaigns some of its recent challenges it faces in protecting journalists in your region?

CPJ is a press freedom advocacy organization based in New York where most of our employees, including myself, work. We also have an office in Washington, D.C., and representatives and correspondents around the world. As our name suggests, we are dedicated to protecting journalists worldwide. We do so by advocating for their rights to be respected, for their ability to report freely and safely, for their release, if they are jailed, for full justice in their cases if they are murdered. That's the most visible part of our work. What's less visible but equally important is the assistance we provide journalists in emergency situations. We help

them pay for their lawyer if they are under investigation or jailed because of their works, pay their medical bills if they sustained injuries on duty, e.g. while reporting on protests that turned violent; we help jailed journalists' families to visit them in prison; we provide journalists with temporary relocation support if they need to leave their home city or home country because their safety is jeopardized as the result of their journalistic activity. We also provide journalists with trauma support – that's when a journalist suffers from psychological trauma sustained due to their work and needs counseling.

The most recent and ongoing campaign is, as you can easily guess, to assist Afghan journalists in and outside their home country with relocation and settling down in safe countries.

When it comes to Turkey, it's a very important country for us. The journalistic and media community in Turkey has suffered a lot under President Erdogan. We have a special representative based in Istanbul who is solely dedicated to reporting on press freedom violations in the country and helping Turkish journalists as well as other journalists who are in Turkey – be it journalists who fled their home countries, e.g. Syria or Iran and are currently in Turkey, or Tur-

key-based journalists working for foreign media outlets.

The CPJ receives criticism for not recognizing many jailed media workers including some well-known Turkish journalists as journalists. Could you please elaborate on the CPJ's methodology for describing who are journalist and who are not, especially in this age of social media, and citizen journalism? Do you only call journalists who carry official press cards journalists? The CPJ's database shows that only 37 journalists have been jailed in Turkey, but the actual numbers are much higher. How do you explain this difference?

Your question is spot on. CPJ's numbers of journalists jailed in Turkey can differ from the numbers you may get from other organizations because of the difference in the methodology each organization uses.

Whether a journalist has an official press card or not doesn't matter for us. In fact, CPJ has criticized the press card system in Turkey and asked the Turkish government to overhaul the process of issuing press cards because current policies hinder journalists' ability to report freely and safely.

Once a year, in December, CPJ releases its annual report on journalists jailed worldwide in direct retaliation for their work. The list of journalists we publish is a snapshot of the situation in prisons around the world at 12:01 a.m. on December 1, in other words, whoever was in jail for journalism at that time is included in the list. The methodology section of our 2020 census reads: "CPJ defines journalists as people who cover the news or comment on public affairs in any media, including print, photographs, radio, television, and online. In its annual prison census, CPJ includes only those journalists who it has confirmed have been imprisoned in relation to their work."

Let me try to make it even more clear: CPJ includes a journalist in the prison census if they have ended up behind bars as a direct retaliation for their journalistic activity. When we do research on Turkey – or any other country, for that matter – we research all available related legal documents regarding the case, we also interview lawyers, colleagues and/or family of a journalist whose case we are researching before we decide whether to include it in our prison census or not. If a journalist's incarceration is not related to their work, we don't include the case in the census even if their profession is journalist.

If CPJ's staff cannot procure any documents, e.g. indictments, or cannot speak to lawyers or family, we cannot include the case in the census. But if at a later point we do get access to any of the sources that give us a better idea of why a journalist is in jail, we retroactively correct the past censuses.

CPJ's numbers may also be lower than that of some other organizations because we do not include media workers, e.g. newspaper distributors, print workers and office staff, in the census although we do understand that their work is important. That's our methodology. We use the



same criteria in all countries of the world. For example, these days, I am also working on the cases of journalists imprisoned in Belarus. As you know, there are dozens of those who have suffered under the repressive regime of President Aleksandr Lukashenko. But as I go over the list of jailed employees of some media outlets, I cannot help but take some names out of the list, because their role with the media outlet was not journalism, e.g. they were working in advertisement or finance, or they were lawyers of the media outlet. It's clear that their imprisonment, just like the imprisonment of the outlet's reporters, decapitated the media outlet. But we are not going to include them in the list because that's how our methodology works.

In Turkey, CPJ stated "at least 37 journalists were jailed in direct retaliation for their work on December 1, 2020". "At least" means those are the cases we have been able to confirm – that a journalist has been imprisoned for his or her work – and there could potentially be more cases that we are not aware of or we haven't been able to get a confirmation for.

What do you want to say about female journalists in Turkey as Turkey has been listed as a country where women face the highest harassment?

Independent journalists in Turkey work in difficult conditions but female journalists face an additional set of challenges due to their gender – sexism, misogyny, and harassment both online and offline. When I was in Turkey in 2019 before the pandemic hit the world, I went to an all-women newsroom and listened to the stories about the challenges the journalists, especially street reporters face daily. During the pandemic, I had online meetings with Turkish journalists. I remember how at one point it was a Zoom-room full of women. In my interactions with female journalists from Turkey I know that Turkish women are strong, resourceful, independent and are ready to fight for their rights.

You may recall a case of a female journalist who was not provided with female hygiene products in a Turkish jail and had to use whatever she could find during her monthly periods. But then she used her menstrual blood to create art. That's how strong and resourceful she was. ►

“World’s longest-serving arrested journalist is in Turkey”

“According to CPJ’s research, the world’s longest-serving female journalist is Hatice Duman. She has been imprisoned since 2003 with a life sentence. We are trying to get information about her condition and health in the last months.”



Journalist Hatice Duman

► Since we are talking about female journalists, let me mention you the case of Hatice Duman. According to CPJ’s research, she is the world’s longest imprisoned female journalists. She’s been serving a life sentence since 2003. In recent months, we’ve been trying to get any information about her state and health. If your readers can share any updates with us, I’d appreciate it very much. Also, journalists like you and me should talk about her case in different events and platforms. Imagine a woman who was thrown to jail for her journalism when she was in her 20s, and now she is in her late 40s, if I am not mistaken. She’s been battling for her release. In late 2019, the Constitutional Court of Turkey ruled that her right to a fair trial was violated and she should be re-tried. But that hasn’t happened. I don’t know why. The Turkish authorities are not telling us although they should have never imprisoned her in the first place.

Turkey’s Justice and Development Party (AKP) left no space for journalist to conduct their profession freely. The AKP government uses politically motivated judiciary to prevent any critical stories. The AKP affiliated paramilitary groups harass, torture, and beat critical Turkish journalists in Turkey as well as

in Europe. Turkish police do not interfere against these groups’ violence against the journalists. What can the CPJ do in term of putting pressure on Turkish government to protect personal safety of these journalists and make sure that these journalists continue their jobs freely?

CPJ has been speaking out against the deterioration of the press freedom environment in Turkey for years, even before the attempted coup of 2016 when the authorities took the crack-down on independent media to a new – brutal – level. We have also been trying to have some sort of a dialogue with the authorities to demand to stop violating journalists’ rights and allow greater media plurality. CPJ and several other press freedom organizations will have a joint mission to Turkey next month and we want to meet with government officials to discuss exactly that. It will be the third media advocacy mission to Turkey CPJ will do along with other organizations in a row.

On top of that, we make public calls to the authorities through our statements, through the Council of Europe’s Platform for the safety of journalists of which CPJ is a member. Turkey is one of only few members of the Council of Europe that doesn’t respond to alerts about press freedom violations from

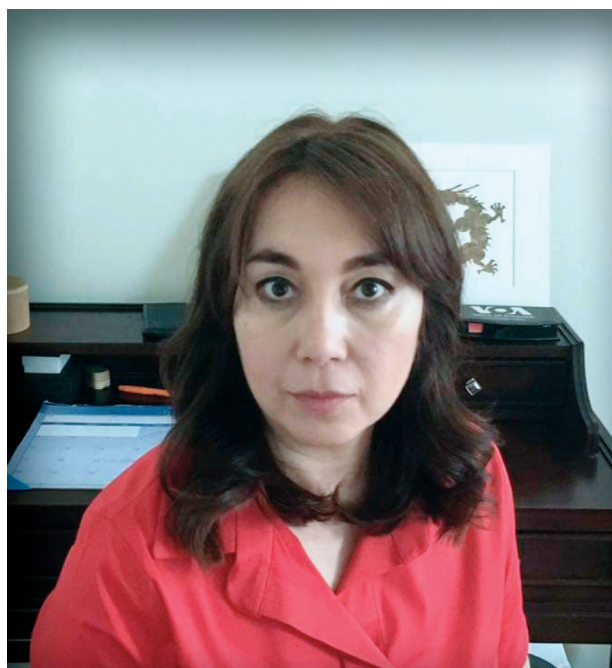
the Platform members.

Our efforts also include lobbying on an international scale – from Washington to Brussels – trying to raise awareness on the press freedom problems of Turkey among the global community.

I believe Turkey is a strong country that can overcome its press freedom problems and thrive with a free media atmosphere that operates without fear of retaliation from the authorities. I also want to commend the journalists who still work in Turkey despite all the obstacles and hope they will continue reporting independently. We stand ready to support them and help them whenever they need it.

What different methods did Turkish government use, besides political prosecution, to silence the critical media? How does the Turkish government compare to other autocratic states in the world?

Under the AKP government, Turkey lost the media plurality it once had. Several brave critical outlets are still operational in Turkey, and they are doing invaluable work, but it is clear that a lot less news and opinions are being freely voiced in media these days compared to, say, a decade ago. Television remains the top medium of receiving the news for people in Turkey, and the vast majority of the existing channels are openly pro-government. Some of Turkey's critical media outlets were bought by pro-government actors and many were shuttered by government decrees after the failed coup attempt of 2016. This leaves us in today's Turkey where most critical media can operate as online outlets, and the few remaining critical outlets on TV, radio and print are under constant pressure from the judiciary. In that regard, the Erdogan government is a very typical authoritarian regime. Their tools may vary from the tools the Russian, Belarusian or Chinese authorities use in some nuances, but their



goal is the same – to silence critical voices and have a tight control over media sphere.

How can CPJ provide a road map for independent journalists living in exile abroad, many of whom are refugees, to adapt to the country they live in and do their jobs again?

That's a very good question because adapting to a new environment after you are forced to leave your home country is not an easy or quick process. Exiled journalists are a big part of CPJ's work. CPJ's Emergency Response Team (ERT) provides rapid response and support to journalists who need urgent help, including help to relocate if journalists fear for their well-being and life. The team which can be contacted through our website cpj.org, for example, has been tirelessly working to help Afghan journalists to flee Afghanistan and settle down in new countries. In recent months, my team and ERT have also assisted many journalists from different countries – from Turkey to Belarus to Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan to resettle and find a safe heaven. ■

“The Erdogan government is a very typical authoritarian regime. Their tools may differ in some nuances from those used by Russian, Belarusian or Chinese authorities, but their purpose is the same; silencing critical voices and maintaining tight control over the media.”

Journalist Abdullah Bozkurt (left) was attacked in front of his house and Erk Acarer was attacked by 3 people in the garden of his house in Berlin.



ARE TURKISH JOURNALISTS NOT SAFE IN EUROPE?

Turkish journalists are now under threat not only in Turkey, but also in Europe. Journalists who went to Europe to write freely are now under threat as well. There are attacks on Turkish journalists in Berlin and Stockholm. There's even a list of journalists on the Internet who are going to be killed.

İSMAİL SAĞIROĞLU

According to the report published by the Turkish Journalists' Union in April 2021, 44 journalists have been physically assaulted in Turkey in the last year. 10 of these attacks were carried out with weapons. A person in Bursa killed Hazim Özsü, 46, a radio operator who he said did not like his broadcasts, by shooting him in the chest with a gun saying, 'I'm turning down your voice now'. Opposition journalist Levent Gültekin was attacked in the middle of the street while going to participate in a program on Halk TV. 3 people attacked Yeniçağ Ankara Representative and author Orhan Uğuroğlu with sticks in front of his house.

ATTACKS ON TURKISH JOURNALISTS IN EUROPE

Attacks on journalists inside Turkey have become commonplace. The threats are increasing every day. But threats, attacks are no longer limited only to Turkey. Erk Acarer, a daily newspaper writer living in Berlin, was attacked by 3 people in the garden of his house. The attackers could not use their weapons because the area was too crowded. But they used sticks and bashed up Acarer. An attacker shouted, 'you are not going to write, damn'. In a statement after the attack, Acarer, without giving names, pointed out that AKP deputy Metin Külünk was behind the events. Külünk is known as 'Erdogan's man in charge of the Turkish in Germany'. There were allegations that Külünk organized and armed Turkish teenagers living in Europe dependent on the money received from the mafia. During the investigation of the criminal organization of the Hesse Police Service of Germany against the group of German Ottomans (Osmanen Germania), Metin Külünk's name was often mentioned. However, the poli-

tical dimension of the incident could not be revealed about how this organization was financed, its relationship with the AKP or the government, and whether it was managed from Turkey.

"WE WILL REACH YOU EVEN IF YOU ARE ABROAD"

Abdullah Bozkurt, Editor-in-Chief of the Nordic Monitor, which publishes English-language publications about Turkey living in Sweden, was attacked by three unidentified 20-25-year-olds in front of his house during daylight hours. After the blows he received, Bozkurt, whose mouth and nose were covered in blood, was taken to hospital and treated. Bozkurt, as the perpetrator of the attack, pointed to the Turkish intelligence agency MIT, "Even if you are abroad, we will reach you, our long arms will find you everywhere," he said this message had been given.

Bozkurt told our magazine about the incident, "I was expected to leave my house. As soon as I got out, I was attacked from behind. It's a planned attack. I assume that one of the types of the attackers is of Turkish origin. People I don't know, people I've never seen before. They started beating and I fell to the ground. The police investigation into the incident is ongoing. They didn't share the details with me either. I don't know when the case will be filed. After the incident, I took measures on my own. The police also made some referrals and made suggestions. I'm not personally affected, but my family is. My wife and children are psychologically shaken. Due to security measures, they had to live in a narrow circle. Our freedom has been curtailed.

WHO'S BEHIND IT?

Erdogan and his supporters, his allies. I think they made such an attack to scare off by the the extensions in Sweden. They gave the message "Don't write, be careful what you write". At a rally, Erdogan made a speech aimed at opponents saying "there is no peace in Europe for them". We saw a similar situ-

ation after the Iranian revolution. Assassinations, kidnappings of dissidents forced to go abroad after the Iranian revolution, terrorization and threats had taken place. At the moment, the Turkish government is acting like post-revolutionary Iran. They apply those methods and tactics. In its editorial, The New York Times wrote that Erdogan is the only leader who openly brags about illegal acts of kidnapping. We are facing a boastful regime that imposes international responsibility and even takes illegal actions. No other country has been able to take such actions so openly. So anything can be expected.”

A LIST TO KILL!

The incidents are not limited to attacks on journalists only. There are 2 lists of executions, including 43 people who oppose the government and 21 people, and these lists include the names of dissident journalists, artists, intellectuals and writers living in Europe. Artist Hilal Nesin, who has received death threats, announced that the French police are looking for a safe house for her. The atmosphere of fear created in Turkey is spreading step by step throughout Europe. Those who publish these lists, threaten opposition names; they use the code names of murderers used by the deep state in the past. One of them is Mahmut Yildirim, code-named “Yeşil”. Mahmut Yildirim is a name that many perpetrators have been accused of unknown murder, mysteriously disappeared and no one has heard about him. Threatening messages are also sent from the “jitemkurt” account using the name of the Gendarmerie Intelligence Agency JITEM, which Yildirim is said to be affiliated with. The place of JITEM in the memory of the Kurdish people in particular means “death”. Using these names, fear is spreading more and more, opponents are trying to be “silenced”. ■

THE NEXT STEP OF ATTACKS!

In 2007, journalist Hrant Dink, Editor-in-Chief of the Agos Newspaper, was similarly shot in the neck in the middle of the street after being the target of death threats. In 1993, Uğur Mumcu, the editor-in-chief of the Cumhuriyet newspaper, who received similar threats, was killed by a bomb placed in his car. If attacks and threats on journalists in Europe are not prevented now, if the necessary response is not put forward, the next step in fistfights will be assassinations.



JOURNALIST TARIK TOROS:

“THE ATTACKERS ARE THE REGIME FORCES OF THE STATE OF TURKEY”

Journalist Tarik Toros has been living in London for about 5 years due to the investigations conducted against dissidents in Turkey. The name of Toros is on the list of “names to kill” circulating on the Internet. A journalist who has to live under constant threat.

We have asked him about this issue.

How do you get threatening messages?

Since 2013, I have been heavily threatened, mainly from anonymous/anonymous accounts on social networks. Death, beatings, snubbing, it's all there. During the period I lived in Turkey between 2013 and 2016, there were some harassment or decriminalization in the street/cafe, but this was relatively small. As of 2016, I receive hundreds of threatening messages almost every day, I report some of them to account administrators, block some of them, and it is not possible to reset them because the swamp is standing there.

Does the police department of your place of residence know about the threats made to you? Did they give you a warning?

I have been living in the UK since March 10, 2016. I have not had any direct/indirect contact with any security agency about this. I don't know if they know, I didn't apply either. Because I didn't face a physical threat. There have been some journalists who have been attacked. This happened recently in Wales. From there, I understand that the UK police are aware of journalists at risk. They must know about

me, too. Because we know that the execution lists in question are being evaluated by the intelligence agencies of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany.

How did you take precautions in case of an attack?

I don't go out or travel unless I need to. It was like this in Turkey as well. I don't have a gun, I don't have a bodyguard. I have never had. I don't go in and out of deserted, uncanny places. The people we are in contact with as a family is also very limited. In addition, no matter what precautions you take, someone or a group of people who has decided to do evil to you will definitely find their way. What we can do is beyond taking our personal precautions.

Who or who do you think is behind these threats? What are their goals?

I have no intel on this subject. Like everyone else, I follow relevant publications as meticulously as possible. Of course, when I evaluate and analyze my feelings with information, I come to the following conclusion: the regime forces of the Turkish state. Groups that have decided to “clean up the space” in the struggle for power inside. Assassination or execution squads with intelligence and military connections... In my ranking, the AKP and Erdogan regimes do not enter the top 3. They only swear on Twitter. Although it falls back in globalization, in the world that completes digital globalization, there exists and will always keep existing those who think about eliminating those who annoy them because they cannot discredit them.

Journalist Meltem Oktay talked about the pressure and harassment she experienced in Turkey at the Turkey Tribunal held in Geneva.



Journalists told the media about the repression in Geneva

MELTEM OKTAY: I WAS SEARCHED NAKED, TWICE



HASAN CÜCÜK

Turkey and the press freedom are two concepts that do not like to come together for the last 7 years. Turkey has become a country where the atmosphere is getting darker for the members of the press who did not adopted prime minister of the term Recep Tayyip Erdogans 'It was coup, not corruption' rhetoric after the 17/25 December corruption operations. The opposition press was silenced step by step. Dozens of media outlets have been shut down. Hundreds of journalists have been imprisoned. Turkey has become the country that has imprisoned the most journalists in the world after China. Members of the press tell about the difficulties they have experienced, the tortures they have seen in the international arena and draw attention to the gravity of the situation. Two of these names were journalists Meltem Oktay and Cevheri Güven. Between September 20-24 in Geneva, Oktay and Güven told about their experiences at the Turkey Tribunal (Turkish Court).

The Belgian-based Turkey Tribunal has, in a sense, pro-

secuted the Erdogan regime in Geneva, Switzerland. The lawlessness and torture that took place before and after July 15 were expressed in the international arena for the first time. At the 3rd session of the Turkish Tribunal the issue of Media Freedom was discussed. Before the testimony of journalists Meltem Oktay and Cevheri Güven, a report prepared by Philippe Leruth, former President of the International Federation of Journalists, was presented. Leruth's report pointed out that Turkey is currently a country where freedom of the press and expression are not guaranteed, and detected that Turkey no longer acts in accordance with the standards of a functioning democracy, because a functioning democracy is impossible without effectively guaranteed freedom of the press.

Meltem Oktay, who worked at the Diyarbakir-based Dicle News Agency, who first identified herself as a Kurd and an Alevi, took the witness stand. Oktay, who worked as a journalist in Nusaybin during the curfew period in 2015, has faced implausible problems while performing her profession. She was sentenced to 4 years in prison for 'organizational propaganda' for her news reports. Journalist Oktay said that on the 29th day of the curfew, about 15 Special Operations Police raided her house and took her into custody. Meltem Oktay, was put in the records that she was subjected to a naked search twice by a female police officer at the police station, said, "They took me to an unofficial interview at the police station." "Here, they indirectly offered me spying for them by saying 'you are young, you have a family, come help us, save your future.' "When I refused, they took me back to the detention center." expressed she.

Meltem Oktay believes that a message she sent to the agency where she worked while being detained saved her life.



She would soon find out the effect of the Dicle News Agency reporting the arrested reporters. A police officer in custody dared Oktay to say, 'Pray to god that you were reported in the press, otherwise you wouldn't have guessed what would happen to you.' Although she stated in court that she was a journalist and that she met with people from all parts of the society for professional purposes, she was punished for membership and propaganda for the organization. She said that after 4 months in prison, she was released for trial without arrest, and then she was acquitted of membership in the organization, but received a sentence of 4 years for propaganda of the organization.

Oktay, who decided to go abroad to avoid being arrested again, said that she no longer has the opportunity to work as a journalist in Turkey, "Then I went to Bulgaria to not to be arrested again." There we were battered, our belongings were extorted and we were returned to Turkey unofficially. I was taken to court again in Turkey and sent to Edirne prison. I was released a month before the end of my sentence. I decided to go abroad again because of the risks of further punishment. In January of 2020 I illegally crossed into Greece. Since Greece was also not safe for me, I crossed 4 countries on foot and sought asylum in Switzerland."

The second name heard as a witness was journalist Cevheri Güven, former editor-in-chief of Nokta magazine. Unlike many journalists, Güven said that difficulties in his professional life began with his dismissal from the newspaper he worked for for his reporting on corruption operations on December 17/25, 2013. Güven, who later began to republish one of Turkey's most established magazines, deconstructed the violence of Erdogan's anger against him in 2015 by publishing a cover showing a photoshopped image of Erdogan taking a selfie in front of the coffin of a Turkish soldier, as a reference to Erdogan's efforts to take political advantage of the clashes between the army and Kurdish militants. The magazine was raided by the cops. Difficult days for Nokta Magazine began. Advertisers were threatened. Compensation cases were constantly filed.

Cevheri Güven, who was arrested in November 2015, remained in a cell for two months at Silivri Prison, the new ve-

nue of journalists "The policemen who took us from court to prison forced us to listen to Tayyip Erdogan's election anthem along the way," the experienced journalist said. We were put in cells in prison, we were not contacted by anyone. although we were released by the court after 2 months, the editions of our magazine continued. Our magazine was closed down after the coup attempt. A decision was made to arrest me and my assistant Murat Çapan. Because I was afraid of torture in this environment, we jumped on a refugee boat and risked our lives with my family and crossed into Greece. After I moved to Greece, Murat Çapan was captured, the prosecutor's office and the court panel were changed, and we were sentenced 22.5 years in prison. Çapan has been in prison for more than 5 years. At the moment, there are over 60 years of criminal charges against me."

Cevheri Güven, who crossed to Greece in difficult conditions on a refugee boat with his wife and two children, said that they came to the free world at the risk of death from where there is no freedom. Güven stated that he was sued for insulting the President, and then accused of organizing propaganda. It took him 6 months to find out what he was accused of. Güven described his tragicomic situation as follows: "There was a young prosecutor before us, and when I said to the prosecutor, "You are accusing us of propaganda for a terrorist organization, but which terrorist organization is this, I will defend myself"; "I am asking the questions here" said the prosecutor. For 6 months, we could not find out which terrorist organization we were accused of membership in or accused of propaganda. This happened in 2015. At the end of 6 months, we learned that we were accused of propaganda of the PKK terrorist organization. Then a second lawsuit was filed. In this case, very serious charges were brought, such as overthrowing the Republic of Turkey this time and trying to start an armed rebellion."

Stating that he had learned that his name was on the list of assassinations of 21 people, which includes journalists and academics living in Europe, Cevheri Güven said that he would continue his struggle under any circumstances. Güven said it had been called and alerted by police authorities in Germany when this list came went public. ■

“JOURNALISTS FREEDOM SHOULDN'T BE BARGAINED WITH TAYYIP ERDOGAN”

The new government in Germany should put pressure on the NATO partner Turkey to release our colleagues in prison. This issue can not be negotiated with Erdogan, it is not a matter of bargain. In Turkey, there is an arbitrary regime that destroys critical journalism, freedom of the press and human rights and systematically represses them.

ERKAN PEHLIVAN

Peter Freitag, vice-president of the International Union of German Journalists (DJU), is really worried about things happened to journalists while doing their work in different countries of the world

“We are very worried about our colleagues in Belarus. However, journalists are also under pressure in other parts of the world.” said Freitag.

Freedom of the press remains an important issue. There is still pressure on journalists in Europe as well. How do you evaluate the situation in Belarus?

We are very concerned about our colleagues in Belarus. According to the Belarusian journalists' union BAJ, several hundred media workers have been arrested since the beginning of the mass protests and many of them have also

been victims of state violence. The regime does not even shy away from torture. Belarus is the second major “journalists’ prison” in Europe after Turkey. It is particularly depressing that we can only provide insufficient help to those affected, because the Lukashenko regime reacts to any form of direct support with further reprisals.

Things are not looking good in Hungary either. There, the traditional media of print, radio and television are predominantly in government hands. The country is a member of the EU. What do you expect from Brussels?

The EU is not just an economic area, but a community of values. Our expectation is therefore that the EU will use all the means at its disposal to force the Orban government to comply with the principles of the rule of law. Of course,



this also includes freedom of the press. In the EU, we finally need effective tools against the erosion of media freedom – and not just in Hungary.

There are also increasing attacks on journalists in Germany. Again and again there are attacks on colleagues at demonstrations of the so-called “Querdenker.” How do you judge these attacks and what do you wish from the state?

These attacks are unacceptable. Just a few weeks ago, our Berlin dju managing director Jörg Reichel was attacked on the fringes of a “Querdenker” demonstration and beaten to hospital. There are now broadcasters who send their teams to demonstrations of so-called lateral thinkers, right-wing populists and fascists only with personal protection. This is very commendable, but it cannot be a solution. Journalists must be protected in their work by those responsible for it – by the police and, if necessary, by the courts. We hope that police forces and their superiors will also recognize freedom of the press as an indispensable asset and help to enforce this fundamental right. Unfortunately, we experience again and again that police officers perceive media representatives at demonstrations as a disruptive factor and not as people who do fundamental work for our society. Our

impression is that the police throughout Germany have a lot of catching up to do when it comes to freedom of the press. This important topic must be given more attention in police training. As Europe's largest media union, we are happy to serve as a point of contact.

Four journalists, supported by the German Journalists' Union (dju) in ver.di, have filed a lawsuit against the State of Bavaria with the Munich Administrative Court. They had been stopped and checked by police officers on the grounds of the International Motor Show (IAA), and were taken into custody despite evidence that they had already been checked at the entrance and that they were properly accredited and had shown their press cards. An isolated case? How do you assess this?

Unfortunately, the incidents surrounding the IAA are not an isolated case. More and more often, we as dju in ver.di have to support journalists in forcing German authorities through the courts to adhere to the principles of the rule of law and to respect the fundamental right of freedom of the press. We experienced that colleagues were prevented from reporting at the G20 summit in Hamburg in 2017 as well as at the Hambacher Forst protests in North Rhine-Westphalia. As recently as June of this year, there were even violent attacks by police on journalists during a demonstration against the planned NRW Assembly Act in Düsseldorf. That is unacceptable.

At present, the problem child seems to be Afghanistan. Many colleagues are still in the country and cannot make it out. The Taliban have arrested many of them. What do you expect from the German government and the international community?

The rescue of Afghan media and cultural workers is currently an absolute priority, but the German government is not pushing it forward with the urgency it deserves. Our colleagues are in acute danger to their health and lives, and the security situation is steadily deteriorating. Germany and the other democratic states of the international community must do everything in their power to get the endangered people and their families out of Afghanistan and to offer them safe prospects of admission.

Turkey also remains a dangerous country for journalists. 300 colleagues fled abroad after the attempted coup, about 100 media workers are still in prison, and the German government seems to be standing idly by. What do you expect from a future federal government?

Our expectations of the future federal government are the same as those of the current one: it must use its influence on its NATO partner Turkey to ensure that our colleagues are released. There must be no deals or lazy compromises with President Erdogan. Turkey is an arbitrary regime that criminalizes critical journalism and systematically suppresses human rights such as freedom of the press. If the German government is serious about its proclaimed values, there must be no concessions to such a state. ■

THE NEWS IS AS IMPORTANT AS ‘SURVIVAL!’ FOR JOURNALISTS

Journalism is becoming an even more dangerous profession every day. In the last 18 months, at least 50 members of the media have been killed due to their profession all over the world. The files that most of the murdered journalists worked on were corruption, organized crime, or environmental massacres...



ENGİN SAĞ

Being difficult by its nature, journalism is getting more and more dangerous day by day. There is a noticeable increase in murders of journalists worldwide. In 2020 and the first half of 2021, at least 50 journalists worldwide were murdered because of their profession.

Many of the murdered journalists were targeted to explore issues such as corruption, organized crime, or environmental problems. In addition, more than two-thirds of the journalists were killed outside the conflict zones.

DISSIDENT JOURNALIST EXECUTED IN IRAN

In the last days of 2020, the horrifying event for journalists took place in Iran. Dissident journalist Ruhollah Zem, accused of inciting anti-government demonstrations in 2017 - 2018, was executed in Iran on December 12, 2020. The death penalty, in which a press-member was executed for the first time in 30 years, caused a great reaction in the world.

Living in France with refugee status, Zem was illegally kidnapped by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in October 2019 and taken back to Iran.

Zem directed Amednews, and it had approximately 1.5 million followers on Telegram.

JOURNALISTS KILLED IN 2021

It was recorded that 18 journalists were killed in the first half of 2021.

February 19, 2021: Borhan Uddin Muzakkir, the correspondent of Barta Bazar news in Bangladesh and local correspondent of Indian based Samachar newspaper, was shot in the throat while following the street clashes among the ruling Awami League party followers.

August 8 2021: Local news channel EV5-TV reporter Chennakeshavalu was stabbed by a police officer and his brother in Kurnool city, India. According to the police statement, the journalist had published a report accusing the alleged murderer of being involved in illegal gambling and tobacco sales.

July 16, 2021: It was announced that Reuters news agency's Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist Danish Siddiqui was killed in the clash between Taliban soldiers and security forces in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Indian journalist has projected many events to the world through his lens, including the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Rohingya refugee crisis, the Hong Kong protests and the Nepal earthquake.

April 26, 2021: David Beriain, multimedia director of Spain-based 93 Metros, was abducted by unidentified per-



sons in Burkina Faso, along with journalist and cameraman Roberto Fraile. After their abduction, the authorities found Beriain and Fraile's bodies. Two journalists were shooting for a documentary on the 'fight against wildlife'.

June 4, 2021: Azerbaijan state news agency AzerTag reporter Muharrem Ibrahimov and Azerbaijan state television AzTV cameraman Siraj Abishov lost their lives when they stepped on a mine in the Kelbajar district of Azerbaijan, near Nagorno-Karabakh.

February 3, 2021: Lokman Slim was killed in Lebanon

March 1, 2021: Jamal Farah Adan was killed in Somalia

May 9, 2021: Sisay Fida was killed in Ethiopia

June 3, 2021: Mina Khairi killed in Afghanistan

June 13, 2021: Sulabh Srivastava killed in India

June 17, 2021: Gustavo Sánchez Cabrera killed in Mexico

July 22, 2021: Renante Cortes killed in the Philippines

July 22, 2021: Ricardo Domínguez killed in Mexico

August 8 2021: Manish Kumar Singh killed in India

August 13 2021: Joël Mumbere Musavuli killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

August 19, 2021: Jacinto Romero Flores killed in Mexico

A PAINFUL YEAR

The most dangerous countries for journalists in 2020 were Mexico, Iraq, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. In addition, 8 to 11 journalists have lost their lives in Mexico every year since 2015 because of the news they made. Eight journalists were killed in the country last year alone. Mexican Journalists have been particularly targeted for investigating relationships between drug cartels and politicians.

A total of six journalists in Iraq and five journalists in

Afghanistan lost their lives in 2020 while doing their duties. The perpetrators of the murders have not been arrested. Four journalists investigating corruption and drug dealing in India were murdered. Four journalists reporting on drugs were killed in Pakistan.

The Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign (PEC) announced that in the first ten months of 2020, more than 600 journalists in 59 countries lost their lives due to COVID-19. According to the figures given by the PEC, most deaths occurred in Latin America.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has not been a thorough study about how many journalists worldwide have lost their lives while on duty.

The Women's Network in India (NWMI) announced that 474 journalists lost their lives by the end of May due to the epidemic that hit the country as the 'Indian Variant'. According to NWMI, the deaths of many of these journalists are directly related to their work.

SOME OF THE JOURNALISTS KILLED IN 2020

February 16, 2020: Abdiwali Ali Hassan killed in Somalia

Feb. 20, 2020: Abdul Nasser Haji Hamdan killed in Syria

January 10, 2020: Ahmed Abdul Samad killed in Iraq

February 4, 2020: Amjad Anas Aktalati killed in Syria

June 22, 2020: Christoff Griffith murdered in Barbados

November 12, 2020: Elyas Dayee was killed in

Afghanistan

July 1, 2020: German Vallecillo Jr killed in Honduras

December 12 2020: Hussein Khattab killed in Syria ■

Source: *The Numbers Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports*



SHABNAM DAWRAN AFGAN TV ANNOUNCER

Unfortunately, we are far away from peace

I shared my post-Taliban grievances on social media. The UK's office for refugees has offered to take me out of Afghanistan. I came to England leaving all my savings behind. I wish Afghanistan was as peaceful as it is here.

When a child steps into this world, whether it is a girl or a boy, remains under the influence of the family and society.

In a country where war and victimization were the first to come to mind when Afghanistan was mentioned, my father completed his higher education in the military field and served the country as a pilot in the army.

I remember from my childhood the days when Hamid Karzai became the head of the interim government and the traces of the Taliban were erased. The sounds of fighter jets are still ringing in my ear. My sister and I couldn't sleep until the morning out of fear. By the first hours of the morning, we used to collect, accumulate and sell shell casings that fell in the garden of the house to blacksmiths. And with the money we earned, we used to buy junk food. We used to be happy collecting shell casings, not knowing how many lives those casings took...

My father, who had been on duty for a long time, came home one day covered in blood. During the mission, a bullet hit him in the foot. Since we were small, my father's wound didn't not concern us, we would only be glad of the gifts he brought.

We are four sisters. We couldn't go outside ever. There was no girls' school in our town. When my youngest sister was born, we moved to another city. Where our new house was, there was a school, a hospital and a bazaar.

WE WERE INSTRUCTED OUTSIDE ON WAXCLOTH

We couldn't speak Persian because we were from a Pashtun family. As I couldn't speak Persian, I don't like school and I didn't want to go. At that time, schools did not have buildings. We were following our classes on waxcloth on the floor in hot weather.

After a while, we started our lessons under a tent distributed by UNICEF. US soldiers came to visit our school. They gave me a notebook, a pen and a toy as a gift, as I could count to 10 in English. They took a picture of my sister and me. The next day that photo was published in the newspaper. Fortunately, my father is an educated man. While my father welcomed the news as normal, my relatives criticized it, saying that it was a shame that "the photos of the girls were published in the newspaper".

COMMUNITY PRESSURE HAS INCREASED BECAUSE I WAS AN ANNOUNCER

While watching TV with my father, I used to dream of being able to present news like announcers on the screen. I was always the host when any program was organized at school.

Since my native language is Pashto, my speech, writing and diction were good. After graduating from school, I began to present morning programs on a private television channel. That's how I stepped into the media world.



I was faced with the community pressure for presenting programs on television. Many of our relatives have stopped contacting us because I was hosting the programme. I continued my work regardless of the rumors. I have given up neither my job nor my goals. My parents have never spared their support from me.

We had economic difficulties. My dad wasn't working anymore. My sister and I were working and making a living at home. As a result of my hard work, I began to present the news. Being a newscaster also means an increase in salary. I presented a news program for 2 years on Jowandon television, where I first started my job.

A SUICIDE ATTACK WAS CARRIED OUT ON THE TV I WORK FOR

I received a job offer from the Shamshad Group, a popular television channel among the Pashtun. I was getting more and more known among the public. This made me very happy.

The suicide attack on the Shamshad television building was one of the worst moments I can't forget. I was presenting a program at the time of the attack. With a bang, the studio shook. A large fire occurred due to the impact of the explosion. I survived the attack, but there were some of my friends who died and were injured. After the attack, we took our wounded friends to the screen. We have conveyed the message to the world, "You cannot silence the press and freedom of expression".

My life has changed with the job offer from Tolonews, the most famous publication in Afghanistan. My popularity with Tolonews had increased. I quit for special reasons and got a job at state television.

OUR LIFE WITH THE TALIBAN HAS BEGUN TO CHANGE

Our lives have begun to change with the progress of the Taliban in many regions of the country without slowing down. No one predicted that the Taliban would be able to take over the country in a short time. Everyone has bad memories of the Taliban in the past. That was why there is a great fear in the public.

I had a duty on the day in the channel before the Taliban took over Kabul. I presented the news of 19 and 22. When I read the news that the Taliban had advanced and captured many provinces, my hope was low. My despair was also reflected on the screen. That was the last news I presented on TV that evening. The next day, the Taliban captured Kabul.

The Taliban had said they would not interfere in women's rights and girls' education during peace talks with the United States in Qatar. Yet, as a result, my sister and I were unemployed.

THE ERA OF AMIRATE HAS BEGUN

After the Taliban took over, life began to return to normal. People were going out and work. So I went to the TV. When I got to the main entrance of the TV, I showed my card to the Taliban member at the door. He didn't let me in and said, "The Republican era is over, the amirate era has begun. You guys go sit at home for a while."

I shared the incident I had when I got home on social media. I expressed my victimization. In a short time, national and international support began to pour into my message box. I started to tell what happened with the live broadcast. I have received a response to these calls from the UK's office for refugees. They offered to take me out of Afghanistan.

The troubles at Kabul airport were on the agenda of the whole world. After staying at the airport for 2 days, we reached the UK. I left all my savings behind. There is peace and trust in this country. I wish Afghanistan was like this. Unfortunately, we are far from peace. ■

THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE TALIBAN WERE JOURNALISTS

HAMIDULLAH SADIK

Journalists are experiencing the greatest concern in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Many of them leave the country, while those who are left behind either quit journalism or struggle to survive under difficult conditions. And those who have to continue their profession cannot find an official to talk and report.

 Chaos prevails in Afghanistan, which came under Taliban rule with the withdrawal of the United States. While the fear of the Taliban has caused tens of thousands of people to leave the country, the media is also experiencing its most troubled days. Some journalists have left the country for fear of being killed, while others complain about being unable to find an answerer and report on behalf of the Taliban.

In recent months, Deutsche Welle's Afghan correspondent has been targeted by the Taliban. Taliban raided the journalist's house, killed one person, and injured another.

30 MEDIA EMPLOYEES WERE KILLED

At the first press conference after the Taliban took over, they announced that the media would be able to continue their work if they adhere to Islamic values, maintain neutrality and national interests. Time will show whether more than 170 radio stations, more than 100 newspapers and dozens of television channels will resume broadcasting in the country. However, it is necessary to record the fact that at least 50 media outlets have closed in the last 4 months, and at least 30 media employees have also been killed since the beginning of the year.

Currently, many Afghan journalists are hiding, leaving the profession, deleting their social media profiles, or trying to flee the country. The United Nations (UN) report confirms that threats to journalists are increasing. According to Human Rights Watch, Taliban are tracking journalists, alerting them by text messages via Facebook, or detaining them. It is also now commonplace that journalists who have been tortured or exposed to violence in detention.

"AFGHANISTAN IS LOSING ITS ACCUMULATION"

For journalists who have left the country are 'a great loss,' said journalist T.O., (Due to the safety of journalists, we had to encode the names that were reserved for us.) "Afghanistan is losing its huge accumulation. these people have been invested the country for 20 years, but they are forced to leave the country and take refuge in other countries due to the lack of security. Unfortunately, those who cannot leave the country are hiding," expressed he. Journalist T. O. explains that the frame is also dangerous for him, that there is no life safety left and that he wants to leave his country due to economic difficulties.

"IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE NEWS NOW"

"According to the past, it is very dif-



difficult to perform journalism in the country,” said the young journalist S.K. he expresses that he has never had such a hard time making news. S. K., who started journalism 13 years ago, “Although there were similar bans in the past, we were not having difficulties with access to news sources and information.” However, we are currently tied up. Sometimes it’s not even possible to take an image from the street. Because we are threatened, even subjected to violence,” said he.

“WE CAN’T FIND AN ANSWERER TO ASK QUESTIONS”

The Taliban’s view of journalists is clear. A Taliban spokesman warned in May that journalists would “face consequences” as a result of unilaterally reporting or meeting with intelligence agencies.

Journalist A.K., stating that it is difficult to get to the news and write it by confirming the source of the news firsthand, “Difficult days of journalism await us. In addition to freedom of expression, freedom of thought was also taken hostage. You want to get an opinion from the Taliban authorities on something, but no one is answering you. You can’t find anyone to answer your questions either. Finally, you have to give up the news,” he says.

“DON’T TALK! YOU’RE TEMPTING ME!”

Despite statements by the Taliban that women can continue their duties, female journalists are threatened. Some female journalists say they have received death threats and are hiding because the Taliban are looking for them. Female journalists are seriously concerned following the assassinations of female journalists last year.

Journalist and women activist K. A., comparing the situations of female journalists before and after the Taliban, said, “Journalism was difficult in previous periods, but it is even more difficult now. As women, we have no right to be in any environment. We have entered a period when the woman’s face should not be visible, they should be trained behind the scenes,” she says.

Journalist K.A., “I began to make an interview a Taliban member. He said “Don’t talk looking my face. You’re tempting me.” How do you think a woman can be a journalist in a regime with this logic?” asks she.

This is how the situation is summarized in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, which has closed most of its media outlets. more than 1200 journalists have lost their jobs due to closures or the displacement of Taliban supporters. The reopened media outlets are spreading Taliban propaganda. ■



FOLLOWING THE MEMORIAL OF DUTCH JOURNALIST **PETER R. DE VRIES**

Peter R. de Vries, a 64-year-old Emmy-winning Dutch journalist who played a key role in deciphering organized crime organizations, was killed last July. The murder of such a journalist in the heart of Europe is also a warning for other journalists(!) actually.



BASRI DOĞAN

6th of July, Tuesday evening in the Netherlands capital Amsterdam, 64-year-old Peter R. de Vries, one of the most well-known security and judicial correspondents in the Netherlands and an expert on matters related to criminal organizations, passed away as a result of a gun attack. After the murder of Peter R. Vries, the whole country was strangled by grief.

A pioneer of both investigative journalism and criminal journalism, de Vries was one of the most famous journalists in the Netherlands. He was seriously injured as a result of a gun attack in Amsterdam in the evening. Peter R. de Viries, who was treated in intensive care for a week, lost his life.

Thomas Bruning, Secretary General of the Netherlands Journalists Association, Peter R. describes the attack on de Vries as a



stabbing at the heart of journalism. The RTL channel where de Vries worked said in a written statement after their colleagues lost his life: “Peter fought until the end, but he didn’t win this war. He lost his life when he was with the people he loved. Our pain is great.”

THERE’S NO WAY TO KNEEL AND BE FREE

De Viries’ family also said that while Peter had all his loved ones with him, his sun has set and he lived by his faith, saying: “There is no way to kneel down and be free. We are proud of all that he has done, but this is not enough to console us at the moment. His family, wife and loved ones want to commemorate him in peace and we invite everyone to respect this.”

The suspects of the murder were caught in a vehicle on the Amsterdam - Hague highway on the evening of July 6, when the incident occurred. The murderers were 21-year-old Rotterdam resident Gelano D. with 35-year-old Polish citizen Kamil Pawel E. as announced.

AN EMMY AWARD-WINNING JOURNALIST

The 64-year-old journalist, who played an important

role in the deciphering of organized criminal organizations, especially in the Netherlands, was known for his courageous reporting on the underworld. Because of this news, he was also under threat from mafia groups.

De Vries had also won an International Emmy Award in the current affairs category in 2008 for his work investigating the disappearance of Natalee Holloway in Aruba in 2005.

De Vries, 64, a sought-after commentator on television programs, has always been a journalist with his name mentioned through his criminal investigations in the Netherlands. De Vries had investigated numerous high-profile cases as a journalist, including the kidnapping of Freddy Heineken in 1983, and received applause for the news. This news made him win the Emmy Award, the most prestigious award in the field of journalism.

Before his murder, Peter R. de Vries, who helped vulnerable people in society, especially illegal immigrants, make their voices heard, was also an ambassador for the “Meet Kate Foundation”, founded by his daughter Kelly to help poor children in Ghana. De Vries, who is married and has one child, did not seek state protection despite the threats. ■



RANJENI MUNUSAMY *

The cost of telling the truth

Will there be a recovery for the journalism? Would it become normal to reveal the truth and hold the authorities to account without fear of the wrongdoers? Or should only journalists bear the burden of always telling the truth, regardless of the consequences? I have no idea.

In his 2019 book, “The Enemy of the People: A Dangerous Time to Tell the Truth in America”, CNN anchor and chief correspondent Jim Acosta recounts an extraordinary public exchange between him and former US President Donald Trump.

The incident took place in the wake of deadly violence in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017 when racists marching to unite white supremacists and neo-Nazis clashed with counter-protesters.

Rather than condemning the racist thugs, Trump had said the display of hatred, bigotry and violence was “on many sides”.

Reporters including Acosta took Trump to task for this, leading the ex president to resort to the legendary and childish theatrics that defined his presidency.

“You’re fake news,” he scolded Acosta.

The journalist would not let the matter go and tackled Trump on the issue again the next day, leading the following exchange.

TRUMP: Yes, I think there’s blame on both sides. If you look at both sides – I think there’s blame on both sides. And I have no doubt about it, and you don’t have any doubt about it either. And if you reported it accurately, you would say.

ACOSTA: The neo-Nazis started it. They showed up in Charlottesville to protest –

TRUMP: Excuse me, excuse me. They didn’t put themselves – and you had some very bad people in that group, but you also had people that were very fine people, on both sides. You had people in that group.

ACOSTA: No sir, there are no fine people in the Nazis.

As Acosta points out in his book, he was not asking the then president questions – which is what much of the world assumes is the role of journalists.

Instead, he was confronting Trump with the truth.

This is easier said than done, especially in a world awash with disinformation, populist rhetoric, sponsored propaganda, chauvinism, online harassment and denialism.

In this context, journalists cannot simply ask questions and report “many sides”. The mainstream media is the frontline in the global information warfare and therefore must be protectors of the truth.

Years of dangerous disinformation campaigns have manifested in severe political consequences in many parts of the world – from Brexit in the UK, to the rise of white nationalism in Europe and the US, to the onslaught on civic freedoms in Turkey.

Standing up to the bullies, the racists, the rogues, the misogynists, the tyrants, the abusers, the anti-vaxxers, and the climate denialists is a heavy burden for journalists to bear. It is particularly difficult to confront those who wield power. Some pay the price by having their lives and their freedoms taken away – as has happened to hundreds of media workers in Turkey.

Others face abuse, harassment and character assassination. For women journalists, rape threats and sexualised attacks are par for the course.

In strong democracies, the media fraternity and civil society are able to fight back.

When Acosta’s White House accreditation was revoked after another prickly exchange with Trump, the matter was immediately challenged in court. Acosta’s press pass was restored after a week.

In China, Turkey and many countries in Africa, trying to restore media freedom and other civil liberties through the courts would be a foolhardy exercise.

In 2018, I was among five journalists who through the South African National Editors’ Forum sought protection from our country’s Equality Court against a barrage of abusive and dangerous threats from the second biggest opposition party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and their supporters.

As it turned out, the application was defective as it should have been lodged in the normal court system rather

than the Equality Court – journalists do not have special protection against discrimination under the South African Constitution.

The ill-fated application only emboldened the EFF and their supporters and also led to palpable self-censorship amongst some journalists to protect themselves against attacks. Some journalists had tried to downplay the threats, asserting that they were not “cry babies” and attacks on the media were far worse in other parts of Africa.

When arguing against the application, the EFF’s legal counsel declared that journalists should be made of sterner stuff and roll with the punches. Sadly, some in our profession believe that too.

One of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is that it allowed people to speak more openly about the emotional toll of isolation, sickness and death.

Journalists too have been more forthcoming about the fear and stresses of covering the pandemic. Some of those who were previously gung-ho now realise the importance of mental health and self care in our profession.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, everyone who has had to distance from others, contend with serious illness and death, lose their livelihoods and adapt to a new way of life has felt emotional exhaustion. Hopefully there will be recovery and greater normality as more people vaccinate.

But will there be a recovery in the practice of journalism? Will it be normal to expose the truth and hold the powerful to account without fearing the bullies?

Or should journalists always bear the brunt of telling the truth, irrespective of the consequences?

For most of my career in journalism I knew the answer to this question. Now I do not.

** Ranjeni Munusamy is a South African journalist for over 20 years. She previously worked as associate editor and columnist at the Sunday Times and Daily Maverick. ■*



BORIS GORETSKY BELARUSIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

Belarus: a year of brutal aggression and rising from the ashes

The Belarusian government has almost destroyed the independent media in the country. About 30 journalists were sent to prison. The shut-down broadcasting organizations were forced to leave the country. The most promising thing is that readers are constantly following the newly established publications at an increasing rate...

 ver the past year, the Belarusian authorities have destroyed almost all independent political and social media in Belarus, almost three dozen journalists were arrested, most of the publishers and news agencies had to leave the country to continue informing the public.

A year ago, the Belarusian Association of Journalists noted an unprecedented surge in repressions against journalists in their country. At the beginning, detentions, brutal beatings by the security forces, bullet wounds and random arrests seemed the worst that could happen to journalism in Belarus. But apparently the worse was yet to come.

In November last year, the authorities succeeded in suppressing Sunday protests, and then the security forces moved on to targeted repression and criminal prosecution of journalists. After the dispersal of one of the last street marches, hundreds of people were trapped in apartments

and basements of residential buildings, where they hid during the dispersal. All night long, the security forces searched the “Ploshchad Peremen” district, where opposition activist Roman Bondarenko had been beaten to death three days before. All night long, people, including journalists, hid from the security forces in the basements of houses.

That day, several dozen journalists were detained on the Minsk streets, and authorities have opened criminal cases against Katsiaryna Andreieva and Daria Chultsova who have been later sentenced to two years of imprisonment for broadcasting the event on the Belsat TV channel.

From that day on, the authorities began a total destruction of the free-media: more than 150 searches in editorial offices and buildings, dozens of criminal cases and arrests of 28 journalists. Over the spring and summer, the authorities destroyed all major independent publications, and TUT.BY, the most popular Belarusian news portal, which



was first blocked and then declared as extremist news portal. 14 employees of its editorial office, headed by the editor-in-chief Marina Zolotova, are under arrest since May.

NEW LIFE

After a summer campaign of repression, the most popular independent publications found the strength to re-establish their editions. Most of the major newsrooms moved to neighboring countries and resumed their work, despite the detention of their editors. The TUT.BY team launched the Zerkalo.io project and also Nasha Niva, European Radio for Belarus, Belsat TV channel, Kyky.org, Gazetaby.com editions restarted their work after blocking.

Obviously, editorial offices and journalists faced new challenges during relocation: deprivation of advertising revenue

from their media, moving to new countries and settling in new places, restoring editorial processes. In addition, not all journalists were able to find opportunities for work. That is why one of the main tasks of the Belarusian Association of Journalists is to help their colleagues. We also need the support and the help of our international colleagues during these difficult times. You can get in touch with us through press@baj.by.

But the most positive thing in this story is that the Belarusian audience still supports their publications and is looking for truthful information. Popularity rates show a steady increase in the number of people returning to independent media sites after summer blockages. The Belarusian society continues to seek high-quality and free journalism. And that gives hope. ■



SERHIY SHTURKHETSKYY CHAIRMAN OF THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA TRADE UNION OF UKRAINE

Journalism in the Pandemic Period

In Ukraine, the political upheavals of 2014 and the accompanying armed conflicts have increased violence against journalists. And then there were tragic cases.

Mid-September... These days, for 20 years, Ukrainian journalists have been honoring the memory of their colleagues who died in the line of duty. These days, it is the time to ask the government, law enforcement, these days are for searching for reflection in our professional circle. So, how to keep yourselves in the profession and... survive at the same time?

The issue of the safety of journalists is closely related to the general situation in the country and, of course, the growth of tragic incidents and violence against journalists in 2014 in Ukraine was caused precisely by the political confrontation and armed conflict. And a significant pain for Ukrainians is Crimea, where violations of journalists' rights have reached the level of systemicity and even some kind of sad inevitability.

Years have passed and the "hot" phase of the conflict does not seem to affect more journalists, but the matter of safety is not only the ability to survive, but also the ability to live and stay in the profession at the same time. And, of course, this is a complex issue, it covers not only the physical aspects of the journalists' safety.

Our trade union (Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine, IMTUU) in collaboration with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), is working on the safety of journalists in Ukraine. What are the directions of this activity?

Firstly, we recently have begun to pay attention to the problems of digital vulnerability of journalists, especially

those who work in online publications. Discrediting, bullying, shaming, watching, data theft and financial fraud are just a few of the all threats and problems that seem to have moved into the digital world after journalists. Therefore, we have been paying attention to this and, starting from 2016 we have been conducting trainings on digital security, and any Digital Security trainings now have in their plan a session of digital skills lessons for journalists.

By the way, it is the aspect of digital security that has become more relevant than ever during the quarantine period, and obviously, it will be relevant in the post-COVID period as well. After all, right now the part of online activities and online information in the world has increased, so journalists are forced to catch up and sometimes even outstrip these trends. Therefore, online time dictates new requirements to online security.

Secondly, we have witnessed the serious impact of the COVID situation on the mental stability (resilience) of people, and especially on journalists, who receive and process huge amounts of information. Fake information has sharply increased and its influence also increased, it even got the name of infodemic - when information impact against the background of a viral pandemic has tangible destructive consequences and can threaten not only psychological, but also physical safety of a person and the whole society. Since 2011, on our trade union safety trainings, we have provided separate sessions of lessons and even separate trainings on psycho-



logical resilience for journalists. In 2014-2015, there appeared a necessity to help journalists who worked in the war zone or visited the occupied territories. Now, with the outbreak of the pandemic, we have again introduced the component of psychological safety in our trainings.

Therefore, as a result of our response to modern challenges for journalists, we have implemented a two-day comprehensive safety training program, which we conducted in cooperation with the IFJ in December 2020 and we hope to repeat it in 2021. This training will include sessions on digital security, legal literacy, psychological stability, physical safety and behavior during mass riots, the work of a journalist in compliance with sanitary requirements in a pandemic. The comprehensive training, which will be conducted with the participation of the best specialists from Ukraine and the UK, has already received positive feedback and became the basis for a video course on the safety of journalists, and we will soon have the honor to present the training to the professional community. ■



Media members in Ukraine are protesting in front of the Ministry of Interior in order to support photojournalist Oleksandr Kujelnyi, who was attacked while filming the protests in front of the Presidency. Journalists, who left their cameras on the ground, demanded that the penalties prescribed by law be given in attacks against members of the media. PHOTO: YUNUS ERDOĞDU

Ukrainian journalists participating in the "Training of union leadership" seminar organized by IMTUU with the assistance of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in December 2019. (top)



HADEER MEKAWY JOURNALIST

We will write until the good days come

We will follow your every step. Until the Motherland embraces all its children. Until people who were forced to flee their homeland for fear of oppression, death, hunger and arrest return to their homeland... We will continue to write until the good days come.



Although many painful years have passed, we still want our right to life.

An honorable life is the right of every person without being subjected to humiliation and oppression. The right to life is the ability of an individual to provide for his/her daily sustenance, needs, the needs of his/her family and home. It is the ability of the children to continue their education and meet all their needs.

I remember well the slogan of the Egyptian revolution: bread, freedom, justice and human dignity.

Bread means, for me, a person's work pays off. Every person in society should have a job where one gives time and health. They should be paid according to their needs. Not even the middle of the month has arrived, one should not have to think about what to eat, what to wear, where to meet school needs, the October tuition fee for their children, home rent, where and how to pay electricity and water bills.

BREAD AND JUSTICE

No one should be below the poverty line. No one should not be deprived of daily food and clothing. No one should be homeless. A shelter for homeless people should not be the sidewalk.

No one should use their influence to intimidate someone else's freedom. Everyone should have economic, social and political freedom. A person should be able to get whatever is a must for life.

A person should be treated fairly throughout his life, without political and social persecution. If this slogan is realized, freedom and human dignity will become the basis of a just life. I deeply believe in the essence of this slogan.

Although many years have passed since then, nothing has changed. All the slogans we said hang in the air. There is a need for brave people to bring this to life. The situation is getting worse every day. Despotism and cruelty have sett-

led down thoroughly. Along with poverty and hunger, greed and theft have also increased in the country. The society has become a victim of these corruptions, which are carried out in a conscious way.

The situation is so bad that a large segment leads a more miserable life than the one in which the forest laws apply. It's almost impossible to live like this. When those at the head of the country put aside their despotism, cruelty and ignorance, that's when the years of change will begin.

Now many of us are paying the price as victims of these wrong policies. Me and supporters of change like me, as we promised, think about the future of our children. Although we have written the facts and fled our country due to the risk of arrest, we will never stop telling the truth.

We will work to end this march, which we started until the last moment of our lives. Even if we will not be able to return to our homeland again, we will continue to dream of good days.

I will continue to dream of a future for every child living in their homeland without even knowing their rights that have been taken away from them. We will not let Egypt and other despotic countries steal our dreams. We will try everything until we get a livable world like we dream of, and we will try everything.

We will work until we find a world where there is no cruelty and corruption, or where few people are trying to realize their personal interests on behalf of others. As Free Journalists, we will write until we see our countries in a livable state.

We will watch until there is a country where the soldier retreats to their barracks and does the duty of protection, does not interfere with the administration. As soon as the managers who are not qualified for their job stop deceiving the public in the name of their interests, each of them will easily happen.

FOR A LIVABLE COUNTRY

If governments had listened to them instead of arresting young people who think differently from themselves and extinguishing their lives, detaining journalists and lawyers for

doing their job, and imprisoning citizens for opposing persecution, that land would have become more livable.

I wish the teacher wouldn't worry about making a living while teaching at school. Think about how beautiful the country would become a livable place if the laws that would deter corruption, theft, rapists and abusers were followed,

I wish children's hospices cease to be 'places of torture'. I wish the authorities do not take the word 'homeland' into their mouths for their personal interests. I wish prisons are not a burial place for criminals. I wish the thinkers, economists, politicians, lawyers and journalists of a country get the position they deserve. I wish the dignitaries of the country were not in dungeons, but standing next to us. I wish these people, whose freedoms have been taken away, are released as soon as possible. A father who is considering suicide in order to take a piece of bread home will never stop doing this until he spends more time with his child...

We will follow your every step. Until the Motherland embraces all its children... Until people who were forced to flee their homeland for fear of oppression, death, hunger and arrest return to their homeland... Until the moment when we will write in social networks and newspapers without fear... Until they are stopped to be refuted in prisons... Until they get the rights of the martyrs who gave their lives for the beautiful dreams they created... In the name of humanity, we will continue to write and dream in spite of all the suffering until the good days come. ■

WHO IS HADEER MEKAWY?

The Egyptian journalist began her journalistic profession in 2012. She was arrested and released in Egypt. In addition to journalism, she also works as a human rights activist. She was part of the team that started the "Journalism is not a crime" movement. She left her country and settled in Europe.



CILENE VICTOR *

Violence against journalists in Brazil

The cycle of the threats and persecutions perpetrated by state actors

In authoritarian states the activities of persons in exile are considered a threat to the regime they have established themselves and resorts to the method of oppression in order to create problems for them.

Many believe that armed conflicts and wars coverage is intensely more dangerous for journalists than other types of reporting. Likewise, it is believed that journalists are exposed to state violence only under authoritarian regimes. There is no doubt that media professionals are not safe in reporting wars and violent conflicts and working under totalitarian regimes, but contrarily to public perception, democracies have become unsafe for journalists, photographers and other media workers as well.

In Brazilian democracy, for example, professionals and the press have been daily persecuted, harassed and defamed. The main aggressor is President Jair Bolsonaro, who has female journalists as one of his main targets, harassing them during live interviews, aiming to intimidate, embarrass and public humiliate them.

In this case, we are not talking about perception or accusations without proof or substantial data. The various forms of violence against journalists have grown exponentially in the country. Several civil society organizations (CSOs) and journalist unions have gathered compiling data on this practice of intimidation and press freedom violation. Among the CSOs is the National Federation of Brazilian Journalists (FENAJ), institution that has been gathering data on violence and other threats to the press since the 1990s.

The latest edition of the Report on Violence against Journalists and Press Freedom in Brazil, published by FENAJ, shows that, in 2020, there were 428 cases of attacks against journalists, which

corresponds to an increase of 105.77% compared to 2019, when 208 cases were registered. According to FENAJ, 2020 was the most violent year for the press since the 1990s, when the historic series of the report started.

Also, according to the report, of 428 cases, President Jair Bolsonaro was the main aggressor in 175 cases, which is equivalent to 40.89% of the total. Next come the public employees including directors of the Brazilian Communication Company (EBC), with 86 cases (20.09%), politicians, 39 (9.11%), Internet users, 21 (4.91%), civilians, with 18 cases (4.21%), judges/prosecutors/, with 17 (3.97%). The police and protesters were each responsible for 14 cases (3.27%). Among other aggressors are media businessmen, hackers, security guards. Traffickers were responsible for 1 registered case (0.23%).

These numbers demand a deep understanding of the complexity of violence and its ramifications against the press, which has become structural, adopted as a political tactic. As the government is pressured to respond to the country's real problems, such as unemployment, hunger and extreme poverty, in addition to control the pandemic, it becomes more aggressive. The attacks aim to discredit the press – one of the worst threats to democracies.

The attacks committed by the president against the press grow as he finds himself pressured for not having controlled the progress of the pandemic in the country, for having delayed the purchase of vaccines and for taking a stand against sanitary measures and scientific advice, and the suspicions of irregularities in

** She is a Brazilian Journalist, researcher and full professor at Metodista University, where is the leader of the workgroup Humanitarian Journalism and Media Interventions. As a journalist, she has covered humanitarian issues, including activities as an international envoy to Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Turkey, Poland, France, Belgium, Germany, Japan and Ecuador. She has PhD in Public Health (USP), a post-doctorate in Planning and Territorial Management.*

his government and in the political mandate of his three sons.

One example was the verbal aggression against the young journalist Victoria Abel, from Radio CBN. On June 25, in Brasília (capital), the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (CPI), set up to investigate the government's role in the pandemic, which was not only carried out because of this formal complaint. On the same day, Bolsonaro participated in an event in Sorocaba, state of São Paulo. When asked by Victoria Abel about the purchase of Covaxin vaccine, the president verbally attacked her several times: "You again? You need to go back to university. You need to go back to school, to kindergarten. You need to be born again. Ridiculous! Where do you work?". In aggressive gestures, he tried to identify to which press vehicle journalist works for.

An emblematic case involved the journalist Patrícia Campos Mello, from Folha de S.Paulo newspaper. Author of article that reported a fraudulent scheme of the massive fake news dissemination by WhatsApp, at the end of 2018, the year of Bolsonaro's electoral victory and, therefore, before he took office, the journalist became constantly and intensely persecuted by the president, his sons and supporters. Among the attacks, one of sexual nature took large proportions on social media, taking sexual harassment to the extreme and resulting in death threats. Patrícia Campos Mello, who covered wars and conflicts in various parts of the world, had to resort to bodyguards for a while.

The increase in violence and violations of press freedom allude to a past that once again threatens Brazilian democratic institutions. The government is militarized as it has never been in a democracy. In 2020, there were 6,157 militaries occupying civilian positions in the government.

One of these militaries and perpetrators of several attacks against journalists was Eduardo Pazuello, minister of Health for 10 months, from May 2020 to March 2021. Questioned by the neglect and serious errors in dealing with the pandemic, such as the lack of oxygen in hospitals in Amazonas, Pazuello responded with aggression and disqualification of press work. Active military, the general participated in political acts in support to Bolsonaro, which is prohibited for an active military. Although the Armed Forces discussed whether or not he would be punished, nothing happened.

Bolsonaro, a retired army captain, never hid his authoritarian profile and his admiration for dictators. In 2016, during President Dilma Rousseff impeachment procedures, Bolsonaro, then federal deputy, voted for the president's impeachment and during the vote he paid homage to Colonel Carlos Brilhante Ustra, who from 1970 to 1975 headed one of the most repressive institutions of the military regime (1964-1981) in the country. Ustra had been President Dilma's torturer; she was arrested in 1970 and held as a political prisoner for her involvement with resistance movements.

The past threatens again, but we have seen that tragedies are

not sudden. They are gradually built up. Bolsonaro is the result of several mistakes, such as the lack of control and accountability on the part of large international corporations that operate social media, messaging apps and streaming platforms. From them, not only disinformation and misinformation are propagated with speed and intensity, but also hate speeches against democratic institutions and the press, in particular. Bolsonaro is the result of the anti-political and anti-left ideologies. He is the result of the rise of far-right, which threatens Brazil and several other parts of the world.

Bolsonaro won't give up. For the 2022 elections, the president left his warning: "I have three alternatives for my future: being arrested, killed or victory".

On September 7, celebration of Brazil's Independence, Bolsonaro convened and participated in events with his supporters. On that occasion, he made threats to democratic institutions and part of his supporters believed and celebrated the possibility that the president could declare state of siege. His supporters have been asking for military intervention, the closing of the Supreme Court and the return of AI-5 (Institutional Act Number Five), which suffocated political civil rights in Brazil and made the dictatorship regime even more oppressive.

Polls reveal that Bolsonaro's rejection is 64%, but he is not yet a small concern. The militarization of a civil government must be treated as a daily warning, an understanding that the past is once again threatening the present and future of Brazilian democracy.

Taking down Bolsonaro may not be all that difficult, but his ideology "bolsonarismo" – which has been compared to fascism – needs to be brought down altogether. If we don't combat them both, a baton will be passed by the president to his supporters, including their voters, and the violence against journalists will be perpetuated.

It is crucial to draw the world's attention to the violence against journalists in Brazil, before it becomes naturalized and underestimated, since it is already perpetrated and endorsed by the President of the Republic.

BRAZIL IS NOT AN ISOLATED CASE

The Brazilian conjuncture is part of a worldwide reality, as we can see in the maps of violence against media professionals. In 2018, UNESCO launched the Observatory of Killed Journalists, a database that gathers information since 1993 on the judicial investigations of each murder, with the purpose of denouncing and combating chronic impunity for these crimes. This initiative is in line with UNESCO's role to ensure the monitoring of progress and effectiveness of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's Objective 16, unanimously adopted by all 193 UN Member States in September 2015. ►

Brazil

► The SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions - aims to “promote peaceful societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, inclusive and accountable institutions at all levels”. According to UNESCO, the emphasis is on target goal 16.10, which aims to “ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international and inclusive agreements”, and its indicator 16.10.1 “Number of verified cases of murders, kidnappings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, union members and human rights defenders in the last 12 months”.

Despite international and local protocols, agendas and commitments, violence against journalists has been a constant threat. According to the latest report from UNESCO Observatory’s, Intensified Attacks, New Defences, between 2018 and 2019, 156 journalists were murdered. Although there was a drop in the number of murders in 2019, 57, the lowest in a decade, other forms of violence against journalists, women in particular, have grown, such as attacks and harassment on the internet, as we have seen in Brazil. Another fact that is connected with this discussion was the predominance of murders in countries without wars or armed conflicts, revealing that political coverage, corruption and crimes have been more dangerous than war coverage. From the total of 57 murders, 22 happened in Latin America and the Caribbean, 15 in Asia-Pacific and 10 in Arab countries.

Data from the Shadow Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 16.10.1 in Latin America in 2020, presented as “an independent assessment prepared by Voces del Sur for the 2021 United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development”, show that Voces del Sur (VdS) registered 3350 alerts in 2020, considering the focus on 13 countries in the region. The major perpetrator of violence against journalists, media outlets and press freedom was the state, as shown in detail by the images below (VdS).

NUMBER OF ALERTS PER INDICATOR IN 2020

VDS INDICATOR	2020
Abusive use of state power.....	138
Agressions and attacks.....	1630
Arbitrary detention.....	279
Criminal and civil legal processes.....	200
Enforced disappearance.....	4
Internet restrictions.....	376
Kidnapping.....	14
Killing.....	17
Legal framework contrary to international standards.....	13
Restrictions in access to information.....	279
Stigmatizing discourse.....	397
Torture.....	3
Total.....	3350

PERPETRATORS PER COUNTRY IN 2020

Country	State	Non-state	Outlaws	Not available & unidentified	Total
Argentina	30	9	0	9	48
Bolivia	15	66	0	36	117
Brazil	312	92	0	15	419
Colombia	199	87	79	134	499
Cuba	328	6	0	10	344
Ecuador	69	44	0	16	129
Guatemala	6	0	0	106	112
Honduras	76	9	0	32	117
Mexico	349	167	39	137	692
Nicaragua	204	46	1	31	282
Peru	29	20	0	8	57
Uruguay	9	14	0	1	24
Venezuela	352	116	4	38	510
Total	1978	676	123	573	3350
%	59%	20%	4%	17%	100%

According to the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ), between 1992 and 2021, 2,077 journalists and media professionals were killed, being 1,962 journalists, 1,400 of them with confirmed motives for their deaths. The database has some important crossing information filters, but it only applies to this number of 1,400, whose reasons for the deaths have been checked. From that total, 308 died in crossfires, with 92 acting as freelancers and 216 as formal employees; 187 on dangerous missions and 894 murdered.

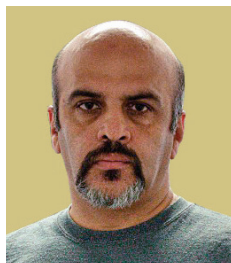
AREAS OF ACTIVITY WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS KILLED 2001-2021, UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists

POLITICS	WARS	HUMAN RIGHTS	CORRUPTION	CRIMES
550	470	256	222	206
TOTAL.....				1704

In addition to violence, which has resulted in murder, imprisonment and torture, journalists have been plagued by PTSD and moral wound. Reporters Without Borders’ handbook, Safety Guide for Journalists - a handbook for reporters in high-risk environments, is undoubtedly one of the most comprehensive documents on guidelines that journalists need to follow when covering humanitarian tragedies such as wars, armed conflicts, disasters and pandemic.

We have elements to think about the complexity of Covid-19 coverage, including journalists’ physical and emotional security, in the face of the humanitarian crisis that was established alongside with the pandemic in many countries, such as in Brazil, making even more pressure on media professionals. ■

TORTURE OF JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY



ERKAN PEHLIVAN

According to the UN Convention against Torture, torture is any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person. This is what happens in many places around the world, and journalists are not exempt. However, with journalists, they try to cover it up as much as possible. So torture is not “crude”, for example by beatings, but in a hidden way. The torturers are too afraid that the world community will show solidarity with the victims and that they will later have to answer to international courts. Turkey, in particular, makes sure that journalists are tortured in a “special” way.

IBRAHIM KARAYEĞEN

Journalist Ibrahim Karayeğen had to suffer for a long time. For more than six months, the employee of the newspaper Zaman was held in solitary confinement. Only after 14 months behind bars did the prosecutor announce what he was specifically accused of. “We are the law,” shouted the police officers from the police headquarters Vatan Emniyet in Istanbul. There, the journalist was repeatedly beaten in corners where no cameras were installed.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE

Political prisoners are always put under massive psychological pressure. For example, Karayeğen’s first interrogation by officers from the TEM anti-terrorist police took place at 5 a.m. However, due to massive health problems with the journalist, it had to be aborted. The journalist was also repeatedly threatened by officers, as were many of his colleagues.

KIBRIYE EVREN

The Kurdish journalist Kibriye Evren also experienced terrible things during her imprisonment. Her food contained mouse droppings and broken glass. Evren, like hundreds of her

colleagues, claims that she was only doing her job as a journalist. The prosecutor accuses the Jin News employee of membership in a terrorist organization and propaganda for a terrorist organization. The fact that hundreds of her colleagues have been tried on the same charges does not make matters much better. Their health is suffering from the arbitrary persecution by the Turkish government.

ZIYA ATAMAN

Journalist Ziya Ataman is also one of the victims of the system in Turkey. On April 11, 2016, the employee of the Kurdish news agency DIHA was arrested and has been behind bars ever since. During his detention, his health has also deteriorated. Medical care, poor nutrition and the certainty of being imprisoned for his journalistic work aggravate the situation of the prisoners. While some 90,000 convicted criminals were allowed to leave prisons early at the beginning of the pandemic, political prisoners remain locked up. The DIHA correspondent was sentenced to 14 years and 3 months in prison, also for “membership in a terrorist organization.”

WHY?

Journalists are dangerous to autocracies and dictatorships. They expose wrongs involving governments and their members. On the one hand, critics are silenced through arrest and torture, and on the other hand, other journalists are intimidated. Turkey does not use “brute force” to torture journalists, but this is no less dangerous for the victims. Instead, medical care and medication are denied, hygiene regulations are disregarded, poor and insufficient food is given, and psychological pressure is exerted. Journalists like Karayeğen who made it abroad are still receiving medical treatment years later. The traces on body and soul will last for years, for many even for a lifetime. ■



Unjust arrests demonstrated lawful

In authoritarian states the activities of persons in exile are considered a threat to the regime they have established themselves and resorts to the method of oppression in order to create problems for them.

Every year, on the “International Day to end Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists” (November 2), journalists who are in prison or receive death threats although they are free, are commemorated. On this day, attention is drawn to the low penalties imposed worldwide for crimes committed against journalists and media workers. The attackers usually go free because they attack journalists. Only one out of ten crimes is being clarified and punished. This issue causes young people to think again before doing political journalism. Working in this area has a great value. Media workers play a key role in informing the public about social issues of importance. For this reason, the impunity of attacks on media employees negatively affects the conscience of society.

ATTACKS ARE INCREASING AROUND THE WORLD

Attacks on media workers are increasing worldwide. These attacks can range from virtual mobbing to unlawful imprisonment and even assassination. The attacks are usually organized by the governments of the countries where media workers in exile have fled. This is how Free-

dom House, founded by human rights defenders, defines the concept of “transnational repression”. The reason for the increase in these attacks in the 21st century is, first of all, technological developments, increased interstate cooperation against migrants and the lack of international guidelines. Authoritarian states view the activities of those in exile as a threat to their own established regime. Along with this, they resort to the transnational method of repression in order to intimidate those in exile and create problems for them. Freedom House stated in its 2021 report that an estimated 3.5 Million people were subjected to transnational repression. Transnational repression can be divided into four categories:

- 1) Direct attacks such as physical attacks, kidnappings and assassinations,
- 2) Practices such as illegal deportation with the help of other countries,
- 3) Restrictions on freedom of travel, such as passport cancellations, which can lead to imprisonment,
- 4) Cyber mobbing or threatening of family members in the country.



FOTO: ENGIN AKYURT, PIXABAY.COM

TURKEY TAKES THE LEAD IN KIDNAPPINGS

Transnational repression from Turkey has also not lagged behind the trend in the world and is noticeably on the rise. Previously, those who were abducted to Turkey by the Turkish intelligence service with the help of “friendly states” were supporters of the banned Kurdish party PKK,

today they are mostly followers of preacher Fethullah Gülen, who lives in exile in the United States. The Turkish government under Recep Tayyip Erdogan accuses Gülen of involvement in the 2016 coup attempt. This coup attempt has led to the extraordinary wide-ranging transnational repression of the Turkish government. Deportees in 30 countries in Asia, the Middle East, North and South America and Europe have been subjected to these practices.

Russia’s transnational repression practices are usually in the form of assassinations, while China uses all four repression methods. Turkey is the leader when it comes to kidnappings.

In recent years, the Turkish government has been carrying out most of its attacks against names linked to the Gülen Movement. The Gülen Movement is also associated with the coup attempt in 2016 and has been declared a “terrorist organization” in Turkey.

ARRESTS DEMONSTRATED LAWFUL

According to Freedom House’s research, 58 cases of kidnapping, unlawful arrest and torture have been detected in 17 countries since 2014. However, since such cases have not been publicly carried out, the numbers provided by the United Nations and the Turkish government are perhaps only half of the truth. Those in exile are arrested and handed over to Turkey in their countries of residence without running legal processes. Similar events have occurred as a result of the cooperation of the governments of Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan with the Turkish government.

Turkey itself does not hide kidnapping cases either. The victims are proudly displayed in the media, and illegal arrests are shown as a legitimate tool in the fight against terrorism. For this reason, the Sabah newspaper, which is close to the government, regularly publishes articles that will make kidnappings legitimate under the name of combating terrorism. Various transnational repression practices implemented against members of the Gülen Movement, which has been declared a terrorist organization, or people who are considered to be connected with the movement, are also legitimized in this way. 110 Physical attacks detected by Freedom House, which were carried out by the Turkish government, are linked to terrorism charges. ■

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA

UNDER ERDOĞAN'S REGIME

Freedom of expression, an essential human right, forms the basis of an open government and a well-informed society through public debate and independent media. Ensuring freedom of expression and a free, independent, and diverse media is a vital element for any healthy and strong democracy. Therefore, freedom of communication has its place in international documents as a human right.



PROF. DR. VEDAT DEMİR

The AKP came to power in the 2002 Elections and became the dominant party by establishing an electoral hegemony in the following elections. The personality of Erdoğan played an important role in the success of the AKP. He and his party gained the support of the mass of the population who identified themselves with him due to his background.

The AKP rule since 2002 could be divided into more specific periods. The reform period was only limited to its first 3 years, ending in 2005. Between 2005 and 2007, the AKP government focused on strengthening its power and successfully demonstrated its power in the 2007 presidential election. In 2011, Erdoğan started to work to realize his ambition of a one-man rule.

THE PERIOD OF ERDOĞAN'S AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

Compared to the first period of the AKP, the EU process and democratization reforms lost momentum after the AKP's second election victory in 2007. After the 2010 referendum on a number of changes to Turkish Constitution and 2011 General Elections victory, Erdoğan and the AKP started to follow their own agenda to establish an authoritarian one-man regime.

The AKP won three consecutive elections and had a stable majority in the parliament. The political challenges from the opposition, Kemalist civil society and organizations as well as the army which was the biggest threat at the time, had all been met successfully.

As the AKP was gaining more and more power in the second period of the AKP, the system of the Turkish government had turned into the personal rule of Erdoğan. It was in this time that

the first signs of monopolizing tendencies became more apparent and Erdoğan started to make religious references and morally patronizing comments in public.

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA AFTER THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

Erdoğan and the AKP managed to break down a sclerotic semi authoritarian form of government, a regime of military tutelage, and the identity of the informal rulers of the regime. They, however, failed to break down the structure of the regime itself. In fact, once Erdoğan overcame the former regime and its instruments, he immediately started to build a new form of semi-authoritarian government by promoting a presidential system in which he would be the sole ruler without checks and balances.

GIFT FROM GOD

The reasons behind the July 15th Coup Attempt and the details about it still remain a mystery to this day. What is known is the fact that it was defined as a "gift from God" by Erdoğan and it gave him an excuse to carry out a widespread purge and crackdown on all opposition while expanding his hold over the state. Shortly after the coup attempt, the government declared a state of emergency for 3 months which was expanded multiple times and eventually ended long after in July 2018. With the State of Emergency, Erdoğan, bypassed Parliament and preventing them from being appealed at the Constitutional Court.

Although it was not clear who exactly was behind the coup attempt, Erdoğan, his government and the pro-government media

pointed the finger at the Gülen Movement, referred by the government as the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO),” as the only power behind the plot. As a result, a huge purge began targeting anyone who was suspicious of having the remotest link with the Gülenists.

WITCH HUNT TARGETED JOURNALISTS

The government issued decrees that undermined the foundations of the rule of law by claiming to fight threats to “national security and unity.” This opened the way to arbitrary arrests and dismissals as well as direct interference to the judicial system by the government. The witch-hunt targeted the allegedly pro-Gülen media and journalists but also the representatives of the Kurdish, secularist and left-wing media outlets.

MASS ARRESTS OF JOURNALISTS

In the first 2 months of the State of Emergency, dozens of renowned journalists, including leading reporters and editors of newspaper and magazines, were placed in detention or arrested and a total of 620 press credentials were canceled. The scale of the roundups of jailed journalists was astonishing. For instance, 42 arrest warrants were issued on journalists on July 25, and another 47 were issued 2 days later. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) analyzed the attained interrogation records and stated that “many journalists are being targeted above all for working for media sympathetic to the Gülen Movement. Their work as journalists is equated to membership of the movement, and this in turn is equated to complicity in the coup attempt.”

Following the coup attempt, 160 media outlets, allegedly associated with the Gülen Movement or Kurdish media, were shut down by government decrees. In mid-November, the number of journalists in pretrial detention on the basis of their writing and journalistic activities raised to 144, making Turkey the worldwide leader in jailing journalists. Many of these reporters and columnists were detained with no evidence.

DIRECT ORDERS FROM ERDOĞAN

Although the state-owned media had always been a supporter of Erdoğan and taken direct orders from him, hundreds of employees of the state-owned news agency Anadolu and the state-owned broadcaster TRT were also dismissed from their positions and became victims of Erdoğan’s purge.

THE METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS TO SILENCE THE MEDIA

Turkey’s media was a clear example of the AKP’s domination in the public area. Pressuring private media bosses, using the laws against incitement, defamation, and the spread of terrorist propaganda were the methods of the AKP to eventually have a grip over the entirety of Turkish media excluding a few broadcasters and publishers.

The long-time assaults on independent media and crackdown on press freedom intensified by the government after the coup attempt in 2016. Censorship of journalism had always been employed as a method for a long time, but President Erdoğan and the AKP government utilized more creative methods to silence critics

TRANSFERRING THE MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Many media conglomerates had already collapsed due to the 2001 Turkish Economic Crisis, and therefore the state was the largest media boss in Turkey when the AKP came to power in 2002.

Erdoğan used this situation in favor of his government and supporters. He handed over the state-owned media outlets to businessmen who had ties with him. Those transferred media corporations were gradually turned into propaganda organs of the AKP government, followed by the dismissal of critical columnists and journalists.

Turkey’s media played a significant role in maintaining public support for the AKP, and therefore it was crucial for Erdoğan to control the entire media. He and his party came to exercise control over all media by putting pressure on private owners who were not supporters of Erdoğan. They utilized state power to their advantage and made arbitrary laws against incitement, defamation and the spread of “terrorist propaganda.” Eventually, only a small number of broadcasters and news publishers were able to criticize Erdoğan’s actions in Turkey.

JUDICIAL SUPPRESSIONS

The exploitation of the criminal justice system is another one of Erdoğan’s methods to suppress free media. The core of all human rights problems in Turkey, including press freedom violations caused by the faulty rule of law, is a profound structural issue. Without addressing this problem, it is impossible to explain any issue regarding fundamental rights in Turkey. Constant abuse in the judiciary during the last decade turned the judiciary into a government instrument. After winning the 2010 constitutional referendum, the AKP took control of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors.

After the December 2013 Corruption Probe, the editors, journalists, and columnists linked to the Gülen Movement and some other critical journalists were arrested and held in pretrial detention, joining the Kurdish and leftist journalists who used to be the main victims of lengthy pretrial detention on terrorism charges. After the failed coup attempt, the prosecution of journalists who were associated with the Gülen Movement reached a zenith. Nearly 80 journalists were placed in pretrial detention for having ties to the Gülen Movement or the failed coup attempt. On October 2016, eleven senior staff members of Cumhuriyet newspaper along with its editor-in-chief were arrested on charges of being associated with both the PKK and the Gülen Movement.

VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS

Many oppositional journalists and their families were threatened and attacked by Erdoğan supporters as well as Erdoğan himself. These attacks aimed to silence government critics and force them to self-exile. Another silencing method of the government was ordering the removal of oppositional television channels from satellite distribution and digital platforms which eventually led to the shutdown of those TV channels.

ERDOĞAN’S HATE SPEECH AND INTERFERING IN MEDIA CONTENT

The content of Turkish newspapers and television channels was constantly intervened by Erdoğan. This could be clearly seen in one of the leaked recordings between Erdoğan and a Habertürk senior executive, which spread on YouTube and Twitter. The recording demonstrates how Erdoğan controls the way the private Habertürk television channel covers its news. He insults and yells at the senior executive on the phone for broadcasting the views of an opposition politician on the news ticker. As a result of the phone call, the part about the opposition politician was quickly removed from the news ticker. ■

IN TURKEY MEDIA WAS SILENCED

In Turkey after 2016, 34 TV channels, 53 newspapers, 37 radio stations, 6 news agency, 20 magazines and 29 publishing companies were closed by statutory decrees of AKP government. Thousands of journalists were tried and many of them were arrested for the news they wrote.



Ayşenur Parıldak
Zaman



Ali Ünal
Zaman



Vahit Yazgan
Zaman



Tuncay Akkoyun
Zaman



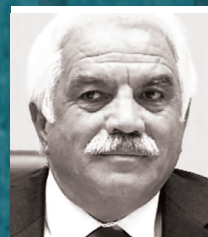
Cihan Acar
Bugün



Ahmet Torun
TRT



Çetin Çiftçi
Özgür Gündem



Alaattin Kaya
Zaman



Aytekin Gezici
Journalist



Ali Ahmet Böken
TRT



Ercan Baysal
Star



Mesut Mercan
Zaman



Ercan Gün
Fox TV

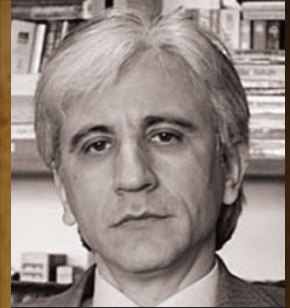
TURKEY IS A PRISON FOR JOURNALISTS

According to the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom Index, Turkey was ranked 99th among 180 countries in 2002, but is now 154th.

* Since there is no fair trial in Turkey, more than 200 journalists fled abroad(!)

* 34 foreign journalists were deported.

* Press card of 3804 journalists were cancelled.



Gültekin Avcı
Bugün



Faruk Akkan
CHA



Hamza Günerigök
TRT



Mehmet Baransu
Taraf



Erkan Akkuş
Bugün TV



Hidayet Karaca
Samanyolu TV



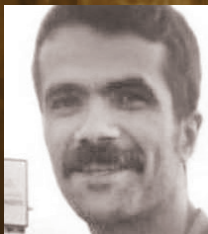
Mehmet Bilal Çolak
TRT



Muhsin Gün
Habertürk



Kazım Canlan
CHA



İsmail Çoban
Azadiya Welat



Fevzi Yazıcı
Zaman



Murat Çapan
Nokta

JOURNALISTS ARE MURDERED

More than 400 journalists have been arrested in Turkey since 2016, and more than 60 journalists are still in prison.

* Journalists in prison are systematically pressured and tortured.

* Journalist Mevlüt Öztas was 'forced' to be released from prison 874 days after he was arrested with cancer, and died 57 days later in the hospital.



Mevlüt Öztas
Zaman



İlhan Toprak
AA



Harun Çümen
Zaman



Ziya Ataman
DİHA



Nuh Gönültaş
Bugün



Mustafa Ünal
Zaman



Aladdin Akkaşoğlu
Akis



Yakup Şimsek
Zaman



Zafer Özcan
Bugün



Ali Demirer
Bugün TV



Sedat Laçiner
Haberdar.com



Hatice Duman
Atılım



Nedim Türfent
DİHA