

Freedom of Expression and Digital Rights in Turkey

Delivered by MLSA

Themes



- Freedom of Expression in Turkey
- Press Freedom and Journalists Safety
- Digital Rights and Internet Freedom

Last review

- Turkey's last UPR review was in **January 2020**
- Turkey received **47 recommendations** on improving freedom of expression and press freedom.
- MLSA observes significant regression in **freedom of expression and rule of law**

Freedom of expression in TR

- Turkey increased judicial pressure against FoE. In MLSA observed FoE trials, defendants were sentenced to **233 years in prison**
- Since last review Turkey passed 2022 **Censorship Law** with a vague provision under the pretense of combating disinformation to curb FoE
- Turkey has been recommended to amend its **Anti-terror legislation** in line with its international obligations but failing to amend the legislation.

Press Freedom and Journalists Safety

- Turkey remains **one of the world's top ten jailers** of journalists. Currently **30+ journalists** are behind bars.
- In 2024 judicial year alone, 366 journalists stood trial for their work. They were mostly charged with anti-terror legislation, defamation and insult.
- Turkey failed to establish an **effective mechanism to protect journalists**. Journalist Hrant Dink's murder case is still pending since 2007.

Digital Rights and Internet Freedom

- Turkey passed 2020 social media law increased pressure on social media platforms. Arbitrary access bans and bandwidth restrictions continues.
- In 2023 along, Turkey banned 14.680 news articles and 5.641 social media posts.
- Turkey is putting forward a cybersecurity law bill which will further restrict internet space and increase online censorship in Turkey.

Recommendations

- Repeal the **Disinformation Law** and amend **Anti-terror legislation** in line with international freedom of expression standards.
- Ensure national courts adhere to **international standards of freedom of expression**
- Implement **effective protections mechanisms** to protect journalists and **end arbitrary arrests** and prolong detentions of journalists.