

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/turkey-constitutional-court-reduces-03-10-2014,47059.html>

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Europe/Ex-USSR - Turkey

Encouraging sign

## Constitutional court reduces agency's censorship powers

3 October 2014

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The court has rescinded additional powers granted last month but many more need to be repealed

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Reporters Without Borders hails yesterday's decision by Turkey's constitutional court to rescind the additional online censorship and surveillance powers that the High Council for Telecommunications (TIB) was accorded in [legislative amendments adopted last month](#).

The court's ruling that these powers were unconstitutional is an encouraging sign after a year of constant growth in online censorship in Turkey.

September's amendments allowed the TIB to order the immediate "preventive blocking" of websites on "national security," "public order" or "crime prevention" grounds without seeking a judge's permission first.

They also gave the TIB the authority to gather all Internet user connection data independently of any judicial investigation.

*"This ruling serves as a reminder that national security requirements must be balanced against respect for freedom of expression,"* said Johann Bihr, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk.

*"We hope parliament will act quickly on this decision. Nonetheless, much more must be done to fully guarantee freedom of information, including rescinding all of the TIB's [powers to block websites with referring to a court](#), ending widespread [online surveillance by the intelligence agencies](#) and an overhaul of Law 5651 on the Internet."*

Even without last month's amendments, Turkey's Internet legislation is still very repressive. The TIB [can still block websites](#) without a court's permission if they are suspected of violating privacy, if they have content that "discriminates against or insults certain members of society," or if the TIB is acting to "protect the family and children."

The constitutional court already ordered the unblocking of Twitter and YouTube in April and in May in the name of freedom of expression.

*(Image: Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey)*

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