

Schnellrecherche der SFH-Länderanalyse vom 12. August 2016 zur Türkei: Diskriminierung und Übergriffe gegen kurdisch-alewitische Personen

Fragen an die SFH-Länderanalyse:

- Werden kurdisch-alewitische Personen in der Türkei Opfer von Diskriminierung und Übergriffen?

Die Informationen beruhen auf einer zeitlich begrenzten Recherche (Schnellrecherche) in öffentlich zugänglichen Dokumenten, die uns derzeit zur Verfügung stehen.

1 Situation von kurdisch-alewitischen Personen in der Türkei

Alewitische Gemeinschaft hat kaum politischen Einfluss. Laut dem Artikel von *BBC News* vom 20. Juli 2016 sind rund 15 Millionen Menschen in der Türkei Angehörige der alewitischen Gemeinschaft. Nach Angaben verschiedener im Bericht des *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* (IRB) vom 2. Juni 2015 zitierter Quellen wurde die alewitische Gemeinschaft seit der Machtübernahme der Regierungspartei «Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi» (AKP) praktisch völlig vom Zugang zu politischer Macht ausgeschlossen – ausser in einigen Städten, in welchen die Lokalregierung zu Oppositionsparteien gehört. So seien Angehörige der alewitischen Minderheit in der Bürokratie unterrepräsentiert und stellen keinen der 81 Gouverneure, welche direkt von der Regierung ernannt werden.

Religiöse Diskriminierung. IRB (2015) zitiert verschiedene Quellen, wonach Alewiten in der Türkei nicht als eigenständige religiöse Gemeinschaft anerkannt werden. So ist ihnen verboten, ihre sprachlichen, religiösen und kulturellen Rechte auszuüben und sie werden unter Druck gesetzt, sich anzupassen. Die türkische Regierung anerkennt die alewitischen Versammlungs- und Gotteshäuser («Cemevis») nicht. Auch wird berichtet, dass alewitische Schülerinnen und Schüler nicht vom obligatorischen sunnitisch-islamischen Religionsunterricht freigestellt werden können.

Behandlung der Alewiten durch Behörden, Verunglimpfungen durch Präsident Erdogan und Regierungspartei AKP. Laut von IRB (2015) zitierten Quellen sehen sich Angehörige der alewitischen Gemeinschaft seit Beginn des Bürgerkrieges in Syrien im Jahr 2011 einer Zunahme von Diskriminierungen ausgesetzt. Zudem habe die Diskriminierung unter der Regierung durch die Partei AKP zugenommen. Laut einer von IRB zitierten Quelle «signalisiere die sunnitisch-dominierte Regierung eine institutionalisierte Diskriminierung gegen die Alewiten». Nach Angaben von IRB (2015) sehen sich Alewiten einer systematischen Diskriminierung durch den Staat ausgesetzt. Der jüngste Bericht des *US Department of State* (USDOS) vom April 2016 und IRB (2015) zeigen wiederholte öffentliche Verunglimpfungen, Herabsetzungen und Verfemung der alewitischen Gemeinschaft durch den türkischen Präsidenten Recep Tayyip Erdogan und durch Funktionäre der AKP-Partei auf. Letztere hatten unter anderem laut einer von IRB (2015) zitierten Quelle ohne jegliche Beweise die alewitische Gemeinschaft der Urheberschaft eines Bombenanschlags mit 53 Toten in Reyhani im

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Mai 2013 beschuldigt. Weiter wird durch verschiedene von IRB (2015) zitierte Quellen von wiederholter exzessiver Polizeigewalt gegen Alewiten berichtet.

Gesellschaftliche Diskriminierung und Hassverbrechen gegen Alewiten und Kurden. Nach Angaben von IRB (2015) geben eine Vielzahl von Quellen Hinweise darauf, dass alewitische Personen in der Türkei gesellschaftlich regelmässig diskriminiert werden. Streng gläubige Sunniten würden die Alewiten als «Ungläubige» und «Teufelsanbeter» wahrnehmen. Alewiten würden im ganzen Land offen und versteckt diskriminiert. Insbesondere würden auch häufig Mitglieder der Führung der Regierungspartei AKP anti-alewitische Vorurteile äussern. USDOS (2016) sowie mehrere von IRB (2015) zitierte Quellen dokumentieren Übergriffe, Gewalt und Hassverbrechen gegen Angehörige der alewitischen Gemeinschaft.

Ungenügender staatlicher Schutz. Von IRB (2015) zitierte Quellen zeigen deutlich auf, dass Polizei und Justiz Angehörige der alewitischen Gemeinschaft in der Praxis in verschiedenen Fällen nur ungenügend gegen Übergriffe und Gewalt schützten.

Alewiten als Ziel von Übergriffen nach dem Putschversuch vom Juli 2016. Nach dem Putschversuch gegen Präsident Erdogan im Juli 2016 kam es unter anderem zu Verhaftungen und Entlassungen von zehntausenden von Personen sowie zu gewalttätigen Übergriffen durch Regierungsanhänger gegen angebliche Gegner (*BBC News* und *Al Jazeera*, 2016). *Al Jazeera* berichtete am 21. Juli 2016, dass es nach dem Putschversuch im Juli 2016 in der ganzen Türkei zu Zusammenstössen zwischen Unterstützenden des Präsidenten Erdogan und Angehörigen der alewitischen Gemeinschaft gekommen sei. Der Parlamentarier und HDP-Politiker Ertugrul Kurkcu wird im betreffenden Beitrag zitiert, dass nach dem Putschversuch Frauen, Alewiten und Kurden die verletzlichsten Gruppen im Zusammenhang mit Übergriffen durch Anhänger der Regierungspartei AKP seien. *BBC News* gibt im Beitrag vom 20. Juli 2016 an, dass sich zukünftig die ergriffenen staatlichen Massnahmen und Repressionen nach dem Putschversuch auch vermehrt gegen Angehörige der alewitischen Gemeinschaft richten könnten.

Kurdische Minorität besonders von Gewalteskalation zwischen PKK und staatlichen Sicherheitskräften betroffen. Nach Angaben des USDOS (2016) waren kurdische Gemeinden besonders von den gewalttätigen Zusammenstössen zwischen staatlichen Sicherheitskräften und der PKK betroffen. Zudem hatten kurdische Gemeinden staatlich verordnete Ausgangssperren, Unterbrüche von Strom und Wasser sowie blockierten Zugang zur Gesundheitsversorgung zu erleiden – in der Regel in Zusammenhang mit türkischen Militäroperationen, welche Gebiete mit PKK-Kämpfern «säubern» (USDOS, 2016).

BBC, 2016:

«After the failed coup, the crackdown. The number of people arrested or thrown out of their jobs stretches into the tens of thousands. From judges to teachers, civil servants to soldiers, the list is extensive. There are very real fears among Turks about what will come next. So who is being targeted and why? (...) In the words of one Turkish columnist it was a 'counter-coup' - a cleansing of the system, in the style of a coup, that had taken place in the past. The express aim of the president is to "cleanse all

state institutions". And the target is what he calls "the parallel state" - a movement headed by an arch-rival in self-imposed exile in the US, accused of plotting the coup. This could hark back to a 2010 cheating scandal in Turkey's civil service exams. When 3,227 were suspected of cheating because they scored top marks, the government suspected Gulenists.(...)

*The post-coup purge may be the time to get rid of the suspected cheats. **Another possibility is that the government is also weeding out opponents from Turkey's Alevi community, which numbers some 15 million. Turkey's ruling AKP is predominantly a Sunni Muslim party which gains support from an Islamist base. The Alevi sect combines elements of Shia Islam with pre-Islamic folk customs.***»

Quelle: BBC News: Turkey coup attempt: Who's the target of Erdogan's purge?, 20. Juli 2016: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36835340.

Al Jazeera, 2016:

*«Clashes between Erdogan's supporters and Alevi communities across the country have flared since Saturday. According to Ertugrul Kurkcu, a national parliamentarian and leading member of the HDP- the socialist, Pro-Kurdish party, minority communities across the country have started establishing volunteer neighbourhood protection groups. "People are now setting up self-defence units to protect against AKP mobs," he says, referring to supporters of the ruling party. **"The most vulnerable groups are women, Alevis and Kurds," he adds.***» Quelle: Al Jazeera, Turkey, United against a coup, divided on the future, 21. Juli 2016: www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/turkey-united-coup-divided-future-160721072147389.html.

USDOS, 2016:

*"Government officials used discriminatory language toward opposition groups such as protesters, women, **Kurds, Alevis**, LGBTI individuals, and other vulnerable populations. (...)*

*Although official figures did not exist, more than 15 million citizens were estimated to be of Kurdish origin and to speak Kurdish dialects. **Kurdish communities were disproportionately affected by PKK-government clashes during the second half of the year. Several communities experienced government-imposed curfews, cuts in services such as electricity or water, and inability to receive medical care, generally in connection with government security operations aimed at ridding areas of PKK fighters** (see section 1.g.). As these areas were overwhelmingly Kurdish in composition, Kurdish citizens were disproportionately the victims of this increase in PKK-government violence. (...)*

*In the period leading up to the June parliamentary elections, **President Erdogan used disparaging rhetoric targeting a variety of minorities**, including Armenians. During a June 3 election rally in Bingol, for example, he criticized journalists, Armenians, and members of the LGBTI community, accusing them of supporting the opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). He stated, "their (the HDP's) biggest ally is Dogan Media...the Armenian lobby, homosexuals and those who believe in 'Alevism without Ali'--all these representatives of sedition are [the HDP's] benefactors."*

(...) **According to the HRF, as of November two persons had lost their lives and six were injured in hate crimes directed towards Kurds, Alevis, Roma, Armenians, Jews, and transgender individuals.**» Quelle: US Department of State: Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 - Turkey, 13. April 2016 (verfügbar auf ecoi.net)
www.ecoi.net/local_link/322542/462019_de.html.

IRB, 2015:

« 1.1 Political Rights

Sources note that the Justice and Development Party (JDP or AKP) has been in power since 2002 (*The Economist* 28 Mar. 2015; Reuters 25 May 2015). Sources state that the AKP lost its parliamentary majority during the June 2015 election (*BBC* 8 June 2015; *The Guardian* 7 June 2015; Reuters 8 June 2015) and will either attempt to form a coalition, most likely with the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), or call for early elections (*ibid.*).

An article published by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a US non-profit organization that works to promote US Middle East policy (Washington Institute n.d.), states that the opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), is supported by a "majority" of the Alevi population (*ibid.* 24 Mar. 2014). Sources report that the leader of the CHP is Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who is an Alevi (US 1 Aug. 2014, 52; EPC 24 Jan. 2014). The Washington Institute reports that over the past 12 years "**the Alevis have been almost entirely cut out of power, except in a few cities where the local government belongs to opposition parties like the ... CHP**" (24 Mar. 2014). (...) According to the US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Alevis are underrepresented within the bureaucracy and "held none of the country's 81 provincial governorships appointed by the central government" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 45). An article written for the European Policy Centre (EPC), an independent not-for-profit think tank that "fosters European integration" (EPC n.d.), similarly states that all of the country's 81 governors, "who are directly appointed by the government, are Sunni" (EPC 24 Jan. 2014).

1.2 Religious Rights

Sources indicate that the **Alevi are not recognized as a distinct religious group** (Akdemir 2014, 65; Al Jazeera 4 Dec. 2014). Freedom House similarly states that the Alevi "lack protected status" (10 Mar. 2015). Country Reports 2013 states that "religious minorities, including Alevis ... **are prohibited from fully exercising their linguistic, religious, and cultural rights and continued to face varying levels of pressure to assimilate**" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 44). Sources indicate that mosques are being built in Alevi communities (Professor 21 May 2015; Reuters 2 Dec. 2014). Sources note that this is viewed by some as an attempt at assimilation (*ibid.*; Al-Monitor 11 Sept. 2013) or "conversion" (Professor 21 May 2015).

Sources indicate that the **Turkish government does not recognize Alevi cemevis [houses of worship] as official houses of worship** (*ibid.*; Al-Akhbar 9 Feb. 2015; EPC 24 Jan. 2014). Sources report that Alevi cemevis do not receive state funding (US 27 Feb. 2014, 45; Professor 21 May 2015; EPC 24 Jan. 2014), unlike Sunni mosques, which do (*ibid.*). Sources report that in December 2014, the **European Court**

for Human Rights (ECHR) ruled against Turkey for failing to give the same status to Alevi houses of worship that mosques, churches and synagogues have (Professor 21 May 2015; Reuters 2 Dec. 2014; Today's Zaman 18 May 2015). Today's Zaman, a daily English-language newspaper in Turkey (*ibid.* n.d.), reports that in particular, the ECHR ruled in favour of the Alevi community in relation to electricity costs paid by individual *cemevis*, finding that the costs should be covered by the government's Religious Affairs Directorate and that the state's failure to pay for these costs amounts to discrimination (*ibid.*, 18 May 2015). Al Jazeera reports that the Directorate pays for the electricity costs of mosques, churches and synagogues (Al Jazeera 4 Dec. 2014). Today's Zaman reports that the ECHR was to hold another hearing in June to further examine whether the fact that *cemevis* are not legally recognized by the state constitutes discrimination under the European Convention on Human Rights (18 May 2015). According to Hurriyet Daily News, a daily English-language newspaper in Turkey, the hearing was held on 3 June 2015 and the court is expected to have concluded its ruling within 6 to 12 months (3 June 2015).

Unlike Jewish and Christian students, **Alevi students are unable to be exempted from compulsory [Sunni Islamic] religion classes** (Norwegian Helsinki Committee Jan. 2015, 16; US 30 Apr. 2015, 187; RNS 18 Feb. 2015). According to sources, the ECHR ruled in September 2014 that the state's compulsory religious education for students discriminated against Alevis (Freedom House 2015; US 30 Apr. 2015, 187); and held that the state should allow pupils to be exempted from religious classes without parents having to disclose their religious beliefs (*ibid.*). According to a briefing produced by the German Information Centre on Asylum and Migration (IZAM), which provides specialist information to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) in Germany (Germany 27 Feb. 2013), as of 23 February 2015, the Turkish government had "refused to implement" the ECHR ruling (*ibid.* 23 Feb. 2015).

2. Treatment by Society

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a professor at the Department of History, Anthropology & Philosophy at Georgia Regents University, who specializes in the political history of Turkey, explained that some "**who consider themselves to be devout Sunni Muslims feel that Alevis are non-believers or 'devil worshippers'**" (21 May 2015). Other sources state that "**many" Sunni Muslims regard some Alevi practices as "heresy"** (Reuters 2 Dec. 2014; Al Jazeera 18 Dec. 2014; CACI and SRSP 11 June 2014). According to Country Reports 2013, "**Alevis regularly faced societal discrimination**" (US 27 Feb. 2014, 45). The Professor similarly stated that **discrimination of Alevi "both subtle and more overt, takes place throughout the country"** (21 May 2015). In contrast, a 2014 article in the Turkey Analyst, a bi-weekly publication of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Joint Center that focuses on news and analysis of domestic and foreign policy issues in Turkey (CACI and SRSP n.d.), states that the "**increasing frequency of anti-Alevi prejudice**" comes from "**members of the AKP leadership,**" that there has been no major increase in anti-Alevi sentiment "amongst the Sunni population as a whole" and that most Sunnis and Alevis co-exist with relatively few problems on a daily basis (CACI and SRSP 11 June 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report on **incidents of violence against Alevis**, including the following:

During the month of Ramadan in **2012, the home of an Alevi family** was surrounded by local residents after the family tried to stop drum noise used to wake people for a predawn Ramadan meal (The New York Times 4 Aug. 2012; Hurriyet Daily News 25 Aug. 2012; Akdemir 2014, 69). Sources report that the **home was stoned and a stall next to the house was set on fire** (ibid.; Hurriyet Daily News 25 Aug. 2012).

According to Hurriyet Daily News, in August 2012 "[a]rsonists attempted to set fire to a cemevi ... in Istanbul's Kartal district" (ibid.). According to the same article, the day before the attempted arson, **the houses of 25 Alevi families were "marked" by unknown individuals in the same neighbourhood** (ibid.).

In December 2013, the **homes of 13 Alevi were marked with red paint, similar to that which occurred prior to the 1978 killings of Alevis** [1] (US 27 Feb. 2014, 45; MRG July 2014, 181-182). Minority Rights Group International (MRG) indicates that this took place in Adiyaman province (ibid.).

According to an article in Today's Zaman, in October 2014, nine apartment **buildings in an Alevi-majority area in Istanbul were marked with the message "Death to Alevis and Kurds. ISIL"** (13 Oct. 2014).

In November 2014, **Deniz Naki, a footballer playing for a Turkish club, was physically attacked and "insulted" for his Alevi and Kurdish origins** (AFP 6 Nov. 2014; Reuters 6 Nov. 2014). Hurriyet Daily News reports that he had experienced past abuse for being an Alevi (4 Nov. 2014). As a dual Turkish and German citizen, he left the club and returned to Germany (Reuters 6 Nov. 2014).

3. Treatment by Authorities

According to sources, since the civil war in Syria [2011], **Alevi in Turkey have faced increased discrimination** [2] (Professor 21 May 2015; Today's Zaman 22 Dec. 2013; Akdemir 2014, 69). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a PhD candidate and sessional lecturer at the University of Sydney who has published multiple academic articles on the Alevi in Turkey (University of Sydney n.d.), stated that **discrimination of Alevi has increased "since the 1980s, but even more so throughout the AKP government rule"** (28 May 2015). The EPC article describes the **Sunni-dominated governorship in the country as signalling an "institutionalized discrimination" [against Alevis]** (24 Jan. 2014). Country Reports 2013 notes that Alevis **"faced systemic discrimination from the state"** (US 27 Feb. 2014, 45).

Sources note the following examples of the treatment of Alevis by state authorities:

According to the Turkey Analyst article, **AKP officials reportedly blamed a May 2013 car bombing in Reyhani which killed 53 people on the Alevis, claiming that the attack was carried out by Turkish Alevis based in Syria, even though no evidence was produced to this effect** (11 June 2014).

Sources report that the **request of a prison inmate to see an Alevi religious figure was rejected and an imam was sent instead** (Today's Zaman 22 Dec. 2013; Professor 21 May 2015; Bianet 31 Jan. 2013).

According to Freedom House, in 2014, **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and "AKP officials" criticized members of the Alevi religious minority; in particular, Erdogan "made repeated disparaging remarks about Alevi"** (Freedom House 2015). Al-Monitor, quoting a translated interview with the head of the Alevi-Bektashi Federation, Selahattin Ozel, similarly reports that **Erdogan's rhetoric ... on the Alevi has been very divisive, very ostracizing** (9 May 2013).

According to Country Reports 2013, there was **excessive use of force by police** in responding to Gezi Park protests [2013 protests against the development of Istanbul's Gezi Park that escalated to involve larger issues like the "oppression of individual liberties" (Akdemir 2014, 72)] **involving Alevi citizens** (US 27 Feb. 2014, 28). According to a 2014 article on the **conflict between the Alevi and the AKP** published in the Eurasian Journal of Anthropology, Alevi neighbourhoods were highly supportive of the Gezi Park protests and **the majority of the people killed during the protests were Alevi, as a result of "the harshness of the police violence in certain neighbourhoods populated largely by Alevi"** (Akdemir 2014, 72). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Without providing further details, Freedom House reports that in May 2014, **"violence between Sunni and Alevi groups in Istanbul claimed two lives"** (2015). Similarly, the Turkey Analyst article reports that on 22 May 2014, members of the militant leftist group the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), which "almost exclusively" recruits Alevi, **"clashed with police in the Alevi part of the mixed Sunni-Alevi neighbourhood of Okmeydani in central Istanbul,"** and two people were killed (CACI and SRSP 11 June 2014). Sources report that one of the victims was shot while waiting in a cemevi courtyard to attend a funeral (ibid.; Human Rights Watch 23 May 2014). Human Rights Watch reports that the police had originally been targeting protestors after they threw a Molotov cocktail at a police vehicle (ibid.).

According to Religion News Service, a non-profit online news source that aims to "provide in-depth, non-sectarian coverage of religion" (RNS n.d.), **police responded to protests on 13 February 2015 by Alevi and other religious minorities regarding compulsory religion classes in primary schools with pepper spray, water cannons, and detaining and filing charges against protest leaders "for insulting the Turkish president"** (ibid. 18 Feb. 2015). Corroborating and further information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. State Efforts and Protection

(...) 4.2 State Protection

According to the PhD candidate, there is **no protection "specifically designed for Alevi victims" to their knowledge, and in reference to the marking of Alevi homes, "the fact that there has not been adequate investigation by state officials leaves**

the victims (and their Alevi witnesses) unprotected and in fear" (28 May 2015). In reference to the markings on apartments in an Alevi neighbourhood in Istanbul in October 2014, **Today's Zaman quotes the CHP deputy as stating that "such incidents are not taken seriously by the government" and that "a police officer ... had implied that members of the Alevi community might have been behind the graffiti"** (13 Oct. 2014). According to Human Rights Watch, referring to the incident in which an individual waiting in a cemevi courtyard was shot on 22 May 2014, **"it took 26 hours before a prosecutor visited the scene"** (Human Rights Watch 23 May 2014). In relation to the Gezi Park protests, the same source notes that **"investigations and trials of the police for alleged killings during the Gezi protests in the summer of 2013 have proceeded slowly and have been highly flawed"** (ibid.).

According to a report produced by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a legislative branch agency within the US Library of Congress that provides policy and legal analysis to members of Congress (US n.d.), "[m]inority Muslim sects (most prominently, the Alevis) and non-Muslim religions largely depend on legal appeals, political advocacy, and support from Western countries to protect their rights in Turkey" (ibid. 1 Aug. 2014, 57). The Professor similarly stated that obtaining recourse through the courts "can be a possible solution, depending on the situation. However, in recent years the government has been weakening the independence of courts" (21 May 2015). Other sources indicate that as a result of government attempts to block an anti-corruption investigation in 2013, there is concern with political intervention in the judiciary and its impact upon the independence of the court system (Reuters 8 Oct. 2014; AI 24 Feb. 2014; Ozbudun Jan. 2015, 3). According to some sources, the intervention by the government resulted in the reassignment of police officers, prosecutors (US 27 Feb. 2014, 1-2; AI 24 Feb. 2014), and judges (ibid.).» Quelle: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), Turkey, Situation of Alevis, including political and religious rights; treatment of Alevis by society and authorities; state protection (June 2012-May 2015), 12. Juni 2015: www.irb.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455948&pls=1.