

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/turquie-harassment-of-turkey-s-media-since-10-01-2014,45719.html>

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Europe/Ex-USSR - Turkey

News feed

## Harassment of Turkey's media since January 2014

22 January 2014

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*Reporters Without Borders is resuming its news feed with updates about harassment of news providers in Turkey.*

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### **17.01.2014 - Eight TV stations warned over corruption scandal coverage**

In mid-January, the Radio and TV High Council (RTÜK) issued a warning to eight TV stations – *Samanyolu TV, Bugün TV, Kanal Türk, MTV, Cem TV, Sokak TV, Halk TV* and *Ulusal Kanal* – for “violating the presumption of innocence” in their coverage of [the corruption scandal that has rocked the government](#).

Two of the stations – *Samanyolu TV* and *Bugün TV* – are regarded as allied with the religious movement led by Fethullah Gülen.

Shortly after the first arrests of high-level suspects on 17 December, the eight TV stations broadcast images of bundles of foreign currency and the shoeboxes allegedly used to store bribes – details that were widely reported in the rest of the Turkish media.

RTÜK members appointed by the opposition CHP, BDP and MHP parties opposed the measure on the grounds that coverage of the case was in the public interest and that similar coverage in other leading political cases such as [the Ergenekon trial](#) had never been sanctioned. Their objections were overruled by the RTÜK majority appointed by the ruling AKP.

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### **14.01.2014 - Near paralysis in Kurdish “media committee” trial**

Reporters Without Borders condemns the virtual paralysis of [the trial of 44 journalists who are accused of being members of a “media committee” created by the Union of Communities in Kurdistan \(KCK\)](#), an outlawed organization linked to the PKK armed movement.

The ninth hearing, which was scheduled to last a week, began on 13 January but the special court for terrorism and organized crime adjourned it the next day on the grounds that the heated political climate would endanger the impartiality of the proceedings.

The court granted none of the defence requests, which included termination of the trial and then dismissal of the jury. The only progress was *Demokratik Modernite* journalist **Nahide Ermis**’ release on bail. Eighteen of the journalists on trial remain in detention. Held since 20 December 2011, they have no possibility of being released before the next hearing, scheduled for 3 March.

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### **10.01.2014 – Impunity fuels police violence against journalists**

New demonstrations are resulting in renewed police violence against journalists, which has been encouraged by the fact that the approximately 150 [attacks on journalists during last year’s “Occupy Gezi” protest movement](#) remain unpunished.

Reporters Without Borders condemns these abuses and reiterates the importance of bringing those responsible for each of these attacks to justice.

## "Occupy Gezi" police attacks on journalists go unpunished

The Istanbul prosecutor's office announced on 23 December that it was dismissing the "abuse of authority" judicial proceedings that victims of police violence had brought against Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbas, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç and interior minister Muammer Güler.

Deputy prosecutor A. Cengiz Haciosmanoglu cited the alleged lack of seriousness of the accusations and lack of evidence as grounds for the dismissals.

The 12 plaintiffs included three journalists: **Ahmet Sik** of the [Habervesaire](#) website, **Onur Erdem**, a reporter for the left-wing daily *BirGün*, and **Ender Ergün**, a columnist with the left-wing monthly *Express*.

Sik complained about the teargas grenade that was fired at him on 12 June, hitting him on the head. Only his helmet spared him a second concussion less than two weeks after being [seriously injured in the same manner](#). Erdem suffered from the inhalation of teargas employed abusively by the police. Ergün was hospitalized with serious injuries caused by a rubber bullet and blows with a knife.

In mid-September, the police general directorate announced an administrative investigation into 132 riot police officers and 32 police units chiefs. It appeared to cover all the complaints filed by journalists and demonstrators who had been the victims of police violence. But so far nothing has come of this investigation.

### *New demonstrations, new police violence*

New anti-government demonstrations in connection with [a major corruption scandal](#) in late December saw more police violence. A dozen journalists were injured by police while covering the protests. The Turkish Journalists' Union (TGS), which said journalists' equipment was also destroyed, has demanded a judicial investigation.

On the night of 27 December in the Beyoğlu neighbourhood of Istanbul, **Elif Ince**, a reporter for the *Radikal* daily newspaper, freelance journalist **Berna Sahin**, *CNN International* reporter **Mohammed Jamhoom** and his cameraman, and a *CNN Türk* reporter were all hit by rubber bullets fired by the police.

**Ismnaz Ergün**, a reporter for the *ETHA* alternative news agency, was one of several journalists who had water cannon trained on them by police in riot trucks. His colleague, **Yildiz Tar**, was injured. According to the TGS, police repeatedly kicked *Vice News UK* photographer **Deniz Agah** and beat freelance reporter **Savash Porgham** with their batons.

*IMC* television reporter **Michelle Demishevich** was throttled by a police officer, who threatened to kill her. **Yusuf Durdu Emre**, a reporter for the *Aydinlik* daily newspaper, and **Safak Inan**, the editor of the [Sec Haber](#) news website, were briefly detained.

A week before that, two journalists – *BirGün* reporter **Elçin Yildiral** and **Songül Araç**, a reporter for the far-left newspaper *Özgür Gelecek* – were injured by police while covering a 22 December demonstration in the Kadıköy district of Istanbul. A teargas canister hit Yildiral in the arm, while Araç was hospitalized with cuts to his eye caused by a rubber bullet that shattered his glasses.

In Ankara, it was demonstrators who attacked **Rauf Maltas**, a reporter for the government news agency *Anatolia*, on 28 December. Believing him to be a plainclothes policeman, they beat him with sticks although he identified himself as a journalist. His camera and mobile phone were also damaged.

*(Photo: AFP / Bülent Kiliç)*

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