

BİA MEDIA MONITORING 2013 / JULY – AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

Throughout the Gezi Resistance protests, police broke up demonstrators with tear gas and water cannons, rubber bullets as well as by dragging on the ground and assaulting. 48 journalists were injured while reporting news under these circumstances and at least 11 were detained.

Government policies during Gezi Resistance marked the prominent factor in the drafting of BIA Media Monitoring July-August-September 2013.

While journalists were targeted by policemen in urban squares, the Turkish government led by PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were giving directives towards media authorities.

Result: At least 10 journalists and 1 academician were forced to resignation because of their opinions on Gezi Resistance. At least 11 journalists and 6 academicians were laid off. In an environment where auto-censure ruled the media, editorial freedom and reader's right to be informed almost shot down.

Several authorities including domestic and international NGOs on journalism, as well as political parties, governments and EU institutions sent statements to AKP government officials for protest, warning and condemnation. Turkey maintained its position to receive criticism.

Majority from Kurdish media

66 journalists entered October 2013 behind bars in Turkey. 63 of 66 jailed journalists and 27 of 27 jailed publishers have been sent to prison for charges related with Turkey's Anti-Terror Act and Turkish Penal Code article on "illegal organizations". In addition to that, 37 of 66 jailed journalists and 26 of 27 jailed publishers are from Kurdish media.

Convictions

Between July and September 2013, 28 journalists, authors and media representatives were convicted of Anti-Terror Act-related sentences to a total of one life sentence, 329 years and 2 months of prison.

Around the same period in 2012, 75 journalists and 35 publishers were jailed in Turkey and Turkish courts have sentenced three defendants including 1 journalist and 1 publisher to a total of 20 years, 7 months and 15 days of prison.

Highlights from Media Monitoring

Topics from BIA Media Monitoring Report include "jailed journalists", "attacks, threats and impediments", "prosecutions, new-ongoing trials, verdicts", "Turkish Penal Code Articles 285-288", "defamation, personal rights and non-pecuniary damage demands", "banned,

closed, seized publications", "ECHR", "Turkish Radio and Television High Council" and "Gezi Resistance".

Even though Vice PM Beşir Atalay's remarks that they didn't wish to see have an international reputation where Turkey is full of jailed journalists, a series of democratic reforms (package) announced by PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on September 30 didn't include any regulations on the situation of journalists charged or convicted of Anti-Terror Act articles on "terror".

Jailed Journalists

Prosecutions and arrests on Turkey's journalists due to Turkish Penal Code and Anti-Terror Act resumed between July and September 2013. Some of the charges on journalists and publishers / media representatives included: "Being a member of an illegal and armed organization", "Committing a crime for an illegal organization without being a member", "Aiding an illegal organization willingly and knowingly without being a part of its hierarchy" and "founding, managing and commanding an illegal organization".

66 journalists and 27 publishers welcomed the month of July behind bars. 63 of journalists and all publishers were charged with "illegal organization" according to relevant Anti-Terror Act and Turkish Penal Code articles. Around the same period in 2012, 72 journalists and 35 publishers were jailed.

Turkey's 66 jailed journalists have been standing trial for the following cases: KCK, PKK and DYG (36), DHKP-C (12), Ergenekon (6), MLKP (4), OdaTV (1), IBDA-C (1), Direniş Hareket (1) and unknown organization case (2). While 2 journalists have been jailed due to sentences related to Gezi Resistance protests, another journalist is behind bars for "espionage".

The current judicial situation of jailed journalists are as follows: convicted (24), pending trial (27) and awaiting first trial day due to incomplete indictment (15).

Attacks, threats and impediments

In the period of July - September 2013, Turkey's journalists and media representatives faced at least 23 attacks, threats, impediments through verbal, physical, social media means. Various authorities barred 1 concert and 1 concert ticket selling organizations.

Around the same period in 2012, journalists faced 25 attacks, threats, impediments through verbal, physical, social media means.

Prosecutions, new-ongoing trials, verdicts

Between April and June 2013, 28 journalists, authors and media representatives were convicted to a total of one life sentence, 329 years and 2 months of prison.

Around the same period in 2012, 75 journalists and 35 publishers were jailed in Turkey and Turkish courts have sentenced three defendants including 1 journalist and 1 publisher to a total of 20 years, 7 months and 15 days of prison.

Kurdish politician cases

Various prosecutors across Turkey have launched investigations on 27 Kurdish politicians (of Peace and Democracy Party or non-affiliated). Around the same period in 2012, 24 out of 29 Kurdish deputies have been subjected to 75 investigation in a period of 3 months.

“Defamation”

Between April and June 2013, 2 journalists received a total of 11 months and 20 days of prison and 2,100 liras for insulting PM Erdogan.

Around the same period in 2012, 6 defendants (including 3 journalists) received a total of 5 years 5 months and 4 days of prison and 26,000 liras.

Bans, seized publications

Between July and September 2013, censure has been issued on the following publications: websites (6), postcard (1), clip (1), movies (6), association name (1). 3 TV networks and 7 newspapers faced accreditation measures.

In addition to that, various institutions prevented publications, movies shooting or newspaper distributions. 1 project was cancelled and 1 jailed journalist faced a visit ban. Facebook closed down websites of Kurdish politicians and 5 other websites.

Around the same period in 2012, In the third quarter, two newspapers and two magazines were seized, two films, one song, one painting and one contestant were censored on television channels, and the screening of a film was banned. The film, 'Innocence of Muslims' was banned on the Internet. The trial regarding the confiscation of the book 'Nurjuvazi' continued.

Seven newspapers could not get permission to follow the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) Congress. During the period, the Ministry of National Education blocked access to the website of the Education and Science Workers Union (Eğitim-Sen).

The photographs of a photographer were found to be harmful. Access of prisoners to two newspapers, three magazines, one book and one television channel was prevented. One prisoner was prohibited from communicating with the outside world. Halil Savda's March for Peace was thwarted on 28 September at the entrance of Osmaniye.

ECHR

Between July and September 2013, CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıku submitted an official inquiry to Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin regarding the number of cases on ECHR. It turned out that 50,249 applications were made to ECHR from Turkey between 2002 and 2012.

Convicted of various violations, the Turkish government was ordered to pay applicants a sum of 180,941,000 liras between May 2004 and February 2012.

Around the same period in 2012, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Turkey should pay a total of 17 thousand 911 euros (42,037 Turkish Liras) for violating Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which pertains to 'the freedom of thought, conscience and religion,' and Article 10, which pertains to 'freedom of expression,' in the cases of conscientious objector Mehmet Tarhan and of Eğitim-Sen.

RTÜK

Between July and September 2013, the Radio and Television Higher Board handed 79 warnings, 448 monetary fines to TV networks; and 75 warnings and 48 monetary fines on radios.

Around the same period in 2012, The Radio and Television Higher Board handed out 18 warnings and 34 monetary fines to television channels.

It suspended the broadcasts of GÜN TV (Day TV) for on grounds of 'praising terrorism.' The board handed out 47 warnings and five monetary fines to radios. (EG/BM)