

## BİA MEDIA MONITORING 2014 / OCTOBER – NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

BIA October-November-December 2014 Media Monitoring Report reveals the contradictions regarding Turkish government's growing oppressive approach towards media, communication and freedom of speech and EU standards.

Newspaper distributor Kadri Bağdu has been murdered, reporter Sedef Kabaş's apartment has been stormed by the police after a tweet message. In the period of 3 months, dissident media websites showed resistance against media bans on parliament investigation commission and Yüksekova Incidents. EU and prominent professional unions backlashed the government on the issues of Hidayet Karaca's arrest, selected accreditations of journalists, impunity for policemen's acts during Gezi Resistance.

### **Highlights from Media Monitoring**

BİA Survey Report presents the July-August-September period with the headlines, “murdered journalists”, “incarcerated journalists”, “detentions”, “attacks, threats and bans”, “investigations, opened-ongoing lawsuits, verdicts”, “insults, personal rights and indemnity cases”, “interdictions, closures, withdrawals”, “Reporting”, “ECHR” and “RTÜK”.

### **Jailed journalists: Majority from Kurdish media**

For the period of 3 months, prosecutions against journalists for charges related to violating turkish Penal Code and Anti-Terror Act resumed. Some of the charges against journalists and publishers included “being a member of an illegal armed organization”, “aiding an illegal organization”, “forming or controlling an illegal organization”.

22 journalists and 10 distributors entered the year of 2015 behind bars. 21 out of 22 jailed journalists and all jailed publishers were jailed for reasons related to “illegal organizations” according to Turkish Penal Code (TCK) and Anti-Terror Act (TMK). Another journalist is jailed for “resisting the police”.

14 out of 22 jailed journalists and all jailed publishers were affiliated with the Kurdish media. Around the same period last year, 59 journalists and 23 publishers/media workers were in prison.

14 of the 22 journalists is incarcerated for the lawsuits, “Group of Communities in Kurdistan-Turkey” (KCK), “PKK” and “DYG”; others are for the cases of “Marxist Leninist Communist Party” (MLKP)(1); “The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front” (DHKP-C)(1); “The Resistance Movement”(1), “Communist/Leninist Labor Party of Turkey” (TKEP/L)(1); İBDA/C (1) and the “Parallel State” (1). Another is in jail for having linkages with Ergenekon Organization Mersin Branch, Türk İntikam Birliği Teşkilatı and İç Örgüt. 18 of 22 journalists are sentenced and the lawsuits of 3 are ongoing and another journalist is facing investigation.

In the period of October-December, 33 media representatives, 2 websites, 1 Twitter account has been attacked; 1 newspaper distributor has been killed. 2 verbal attacks took place, 4 journalists received threats; 43 journalists have been detained, 2 were assaulted while being detained. Around the same period in 2013, the number of verbal and physical attacks were 27, the number of detentions was 5.

### **Threats continue in “terror” trials**

In the period of October-December, 4 journalists have been charged with a combined sentence of 268.5 years according to TMK. 3 journalists have been convicted to 5 years of postponed jail sentence for “accusation” in their coverage related to Corruption Probe. While 3 journalists have been sued for “breaching confidentiality and influencing the jurisdiction”, another journalists has been sued over “accusation”.

Around the same period in 2013, 13 individuals including 4 journalists have been sentenced to a combined sentences of two life sentences 1,609 years and 4 months of prison and a fine of 2,526,640 liras.

### **Cases against Kurdish politicians “skyrocket”!**

In the period of October-December 2014, 68 investigations have been launched against Kurdish deputies affiliated with Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and independents. Around the same period in 2014, it was 3.

### **4 media bans in 3 months, 13 censors!**

13 censorship cases took place: 6 journalists, 2 websites, 2 Facebook pages, 1 book, 1 movie, 1 piano performance have been censored. 4 media bans have issued on the coverage related to parliamentary commission hearings on Corruption Probe, Gamze Özçelik case, killing of 3 Turkish soldiers in Yüksekova, killing of 2 policemen in Bingöl. At least 4 cases of accreditation discrimination have been reported. The number of censorship cases was 12 in the same period last year.

### **“Erdoğan” fines due to defamation**

Various courts ordered 2 journalists and 1 student to pay a judicial fine of total of 3,480 liras (1,740 with a suspension) and 23,000 liras for insulting President Erdoğan. Regarding the same charges, 13 journalists, 1 columnist and 1 caricaturists are still standing trial.

In addition, 9 journalists have been tried for insulting or violating the personal rights of then-PM and now President Erdoğan with 1 journalists convicted to pay 7,000 liras; 1 student to pay 6,080 liras. On the other hand, 1 academic has been convicted to a suspended jail sentence of 11 months and 20 days.

Around the same period last year, 1 journalists has been convicted to a postponed prison sentence of 13 months and 17 days with judicial controls; a newspaper (Birgün) has been convicted to pay 10,000 liras and 3 journalists have been ordered to stand trial.

### **3 convicted for “blasphemy”**

Following Pianist Fazıl Say’s conviction due to Twitter messages, İlker Yaşar, Bülent Yılmaz and Ufuk Çalışkan from BirGün newspaper has been convicted to 7 months and 17 days for “blasphemy” when they tweeted under the account “Tanrı (cc)”. While Yaşar and Yılmaz’s sentence has been commuted to a 4,500 lira fine, Çalışkan’s sentence has been postponed.

At least 47 journalists and media workers have been laid off / forced to leave post during the period. Around the same period last year, it was 23.

### **ECHR issued 3 convictions**

In the same periods, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) found Turkey guilty of Convention Article 10 on freedom of expression and not making a fair tribunal on two cases, ordering the Turkish state to pay three individuals a combined fine of 28,800 euros as pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages.

Around the same period last year, the court ordered the Turkish state to pay 24 individuals and 2 media organizations a combined 113,885 euros for damages.

### **RTÜK worked hard too!**

Turkey’s Higher Board of Radio and Television (RTÜK) issued 8 warnings, 46 monetary fines on TVs and 1 warning and 2 monetary fines to radios in the period of October-December 2014. The combined fines were 2,400,015 liras

Around the same period in 2013, RTÜK issued 31 warnings, 24 monetary fines on TVs and 1 warning and 5 monetary fines to radios. (EÖ/BM)