



2023 IN REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT

SOLIDARITY WITH OTHERS

FEB 2024
BELGIUM

2023 IN REVIEW

Annual Report

Overview of the Year

The year 2023 saw no substantial improvement in Turkey's human rights situation, continuing the concerning trends observed in 2022.

The authorities persisted in their mass detention and incarceration campaign, specifically targeting government critics associated with the Gülen movement and individuals who are involved in Kurdish political networks. This relentless crackdown disregarded Turkey's own laws and international legal standards.

Disturbingly, pregnant and post-party women, as well as critically ill inmates, remained incarcerated in violation of their rights and were deprived of necessary medical care. Tragically, some of these individuals lost their lives either behind bars or shortly after their belated release.

Turkish courts continued to abuse their power by prosecuting individuals for expressing their views on social media and participating in peaceful demonstrations. This ongoing suppression of dissent stifled freedom of expression and violated individuals' rights to voice their opinions without fear of reprisal.

State and government-sponsored hate speech directed at the Gulen Movement and its members persists without restraint. Individuals suspected of affiliation with the Gulen Movement face unwarranted arrests, devoid of legal evidence and in defiance of European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) decisions. In both mainstream and social media, where over ninety percent of Turkish outlets align with the government, a pervasive pattern emerges. This alarming trend underscores the urgent need for attention and intervention to safeguard human rights and uphold the principles of justice.

Another significant setback occurred in the violation of the implementation of decisions ruled by the European Court of Human Rights. Judgment by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the Yalçinkaya case highlights violations of Article 7, Article 6 § 1, and Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights by Turkey.

OUR REPORTS

[The Beginner's Guide to Human Rights in Turkey](#)

Ali Dincer – December 2023

The report explains the human rights violations in Turkey from its historical roots to present challenges. It uncovers the impact of nationalism, governance centralization, and unitarianism on minority rights, freedom of expression, media freedom, and judicial independence. Amidst these challenges, the report reveals the authoritarian turn post-2011, the two-year state of emergency post-2016, and the lasting effects on rights and freedoms.



[Managing the Humanitarian Crisis: Resettling Those in Need](#)

The report explains the collapse of the Dutch government on Friday, July 7, 2023, due to failure to reach an agreement on immigration restrictions. This report, first of all, provides background information regarding the situations between the parties after the collapse of the government and the necessary data regarding asylum applications and processes in the Netherlands. Afterwards, this situation is discussed under five headings in terms of “Humanitarian Imperative”, “Legal and Ethical Framework”, “Capacity and Resources”, “Integration and Assimilation” and lastly, “Diplomacy and Cooperation. Accordingly, the necessary strategies and principles that are complementary and guiding the Dutch Government's actions and attitudes regarding the asylum process are presented in a comprehensive manner.



[Turkey's Human Rights Conundrum: The ECtHR's Judgments, National Responses, and the Call for Solidarity](#)

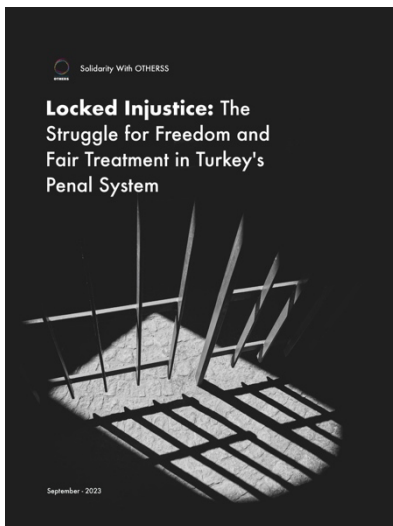
This report examines a pivotal Grand Chamber judgment on September 26, 2023, the European Court of Human Rights speaking out in "Yüksel Yalçınkaya v. Türkiye." The verdict underscores major concerns, notably violations of Article 7 (No Punishment Without Law), Article 6 § 1 (Right to a Fair Trial), and Article 11 (Freedom of Assembly and Association) highlighting critical issues in Turkey's approach to terror convictions. This judgment carries immense significance, extending beyond the individual case, and calls for urgent, systemic reforms.



[Politicizing Probation in Turkey - A Threat to Human Rights and Fair Treatment](#)

In this report, the focal point is the violation and abuse of the probation system by the government and politically motivated legal mechanisms against the Gulen movement.

The report underlines that probation is used as a method of arbitrary enforcement by legislative bodies and powers with political motivations in Turkey.



[Locked Injustice: The Struggle for Freedom and Fair Treatment in Turkey's Penal System](#)

The report primarily focuses on the discriminatory dimension of the Turkish penal system, with a particular emphasis on the denial of probation and conditional release experienced by individuals primarily associated with the Kurdish population and the Gülen movement.

This disparity in treatment within the penal system is a critical concern and raises questions about fairness and international human rights standards.

[Pressure on the Media in Turkey: Violation of the Presumption of Innocence](#)

The article discusses the concerning state of media freedom and the legal principle of presumption of innocence in Turkey. It provides a critical analysis of the Turkish government's actions, highlighting how it has systematically stifled independent journalism and silenced dissenting voices through various means, including arrests, censorship, and legal harassment of journalists.

The article argues that this crackdown not only undermines the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights but also poses a significant threat to the fair administration of justice by prejudicing public opinion against those facing criminal charges.

Echoes of Freedom: Striving for Justice in the Face of Human Rights Violations against the Gülen Movement

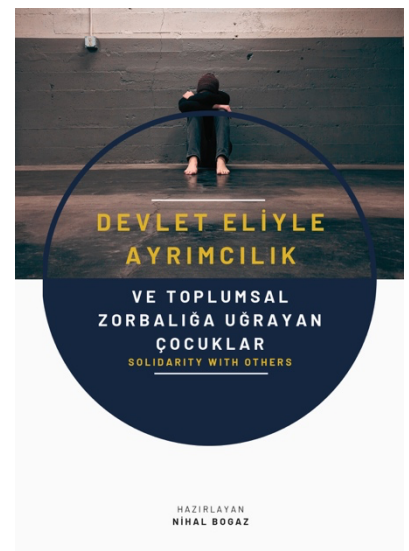
The report examines human rights violations against the Gülen Movement, the cross-border scope of the government's repressive tactics, the organizational resilience of the Gülen Movement, and the response from international bodies such as the United Nations.

The report concludes with recommendations and challenges for reconciliation, justice, and better protection of human rights.



Children Exposed to Discrimination and Social Bullying by the State

This report examines the reflection of the state's systematic discrimination against a group of people in society and the children who are condemned to be the other because of themselves or their families.



The Impact of Hate Speech Used by the Media with Special Reference to Turkish Media and Hate Speech Against Gulen Movement

Media's framing of minorities, particularly the Gülen Movement, as disloyal and traitorous fosters social division, normalizing a harmful narrative. Research on this issue not only provides crucial data but also supports those affected by targeted hate speech, while highlighting its destructive impact on social harmony for broader awareness and societal intervention.

Moreover, the mass media's propagation of hate speech transcends ethics, constituting a human rights violation. To counter this, there is an urgent need to educate journalists, enforce ethical codes, and integrate hate speech, human rights-based journalism, and peace journalism into university curricula.



Hate Speech of The Erdogan Regime : "FETO(!)"

The Erdogan Regime's hate speech, encapsulated in the term "Fetö(!)," requires a critical analysis to understand its role in the government's relentless witch hunt against the Gülen Movement. Over the past decade, this discourse has not only fueled numerous hate crimes nationwide but has also spurred an unprecedented witch hunt. The political authority driving this narrative has actively utilized media and bureaucracy to disseminate the hate speech extensively. To permeate society at its core, the government and its components have strategically coded negative content for widespread consumption. Despite the current political climate in Turkey indicating a sustained discourse, it is inevitable that, much like post-it notes peeling off a wall, the repeated words of hate will gradually lose their impact over time.



'FETÖ' HATE SPEECH

The term "Fetö" has become a potent tool of hate speech, fueling discrimination and stigmatization against the Gülen Movement. This rhetoric, marked by misinformation and conspiracy theories, has instigated prejudice, violence, and arbitrary actions such as arrests without due process, resulting in widespread human rights abuses. "Fetö" has not only undermined the rule of law and restricted freedoms but has also perpetuated a culture of impunity for hate crimes. Its impact extends beyond direct targets, eroding social cohesion, democratic principles, and fundamental human rights. Combating hate speech, including the use of "Fetö," requires promoting accurate information, fostering dialogue, and upholding principles of fairness and justice. Safeguarding human rights for all, regardless of affiliations, and rejecting discrimination and violence is crucial for building inclusive, just, and democratic societies where everyone is treated with dignity and equality.



From Marginalization to Persecution: Hate Speech and Hate Crime Against the Gulen Movement in Turkish Media

This report examines hate speech and hate crimes against the Gulen Movement in Turkish media. The Gulen Movement is a religious and social organization founded by Fethullah Gulen in the 1960s. The Turkish government has targeted the movement and charged it with trying to topple the government. Therefore, there has been an increase in hate speech and hate crimes directed at members of the Gulen Movement, especially in Turkish media.

The report gives a general summary of the Gulen Movement's background and interactions with the Turkish government. The character and scope of hate speech and hate offenses against movement members are then examined. The effect of this hate speech and hate crime on Gulen Movement participants is also examined in the study. The report concludes that hate speech and hate crimes against the Gulen Movement in Turkiye cause serious violations of human rights.



[Human Rights in Turkey in 2022](#)

The 2022 human rights report on Turkey was published on the basis of the newsletter, which compiles, based on open-source information, the week's major human rights developments in Turkey or in connection with Turkey and presents them in a thematic order.

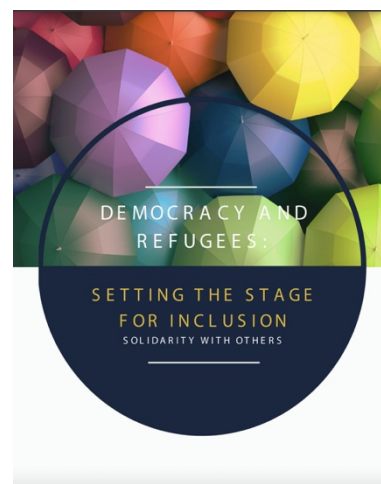
[Between Change and Continuity - Rethinking the Refugee Situation in Türkiye post-Presidential Elections](#)

The report explains that increased political upheaval and instability in Türkiye, as well as the inability to resolve the Syrian crisis, have raised concerns about the integration and housing of millions of refugees. The Turkish government is unsure how far it wants to integrate Syrian refugees into the country. Locals in Türkiye continue to regard Syrians as a demographic threat and a competitor for public services.

[Democracy and Refugees: Setting the Stage for Inclusion](#)

This report aims to outline general and major problems with the inclusion of refugees. In this regard, it first provides brief definitions of the concepts of democracy and refugee. Then, it discusses the challenges that refugees create and face in society.

Next, the report outlines in which ways refugees can be beneficial to democratic societies. The report concludes with four ways to combat challenges to including and integrating refugees.

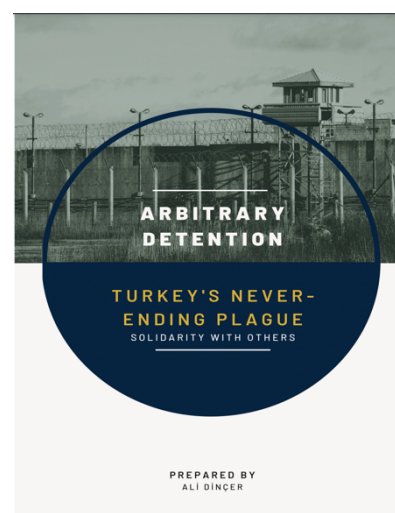


[Betrayal of Justice: The Unlawful Persecution of the Gülen Movement in Turkey](#)

The report examines how the investigations against the Gülen movement in Turkey contravene legal principles and infringe on the rights of defendants.


Arbitrary Detention: Turkey's Never-Ending Plague

This report was prepared based on a contribution that our association made to a mid-term report for Turkey's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in the UN Geneva office. It aims to present an overview of the arbitrary detention issue in the country since its last UPR in January 2020 with concrete cases.



Contribution to UN Report on Impact of Counter-Terrorism on Civil Society

The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, Fionnuala D. Ní Aoláin, announced that the first global study on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on civil society and civic space will be conducted in 2023, and called on civil society to contribute to the study by submitting relevant data and reports to the rapporteur's office. As Solidarity with OTHERS, we contributed to this call with 5 different reports.


**Input to the
Global Study on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Civil Society
and Civic Space**

Name of organisation, entity, or Member State: OTHERS AISBL, Belgium
Contact name: Ali Dincer
Title: Secretary General
Email address (please note that this information will be removed if the inputs are published online): info@solidaritywithothers.com , a.dincer@solidaritywithothers.com
Please indicate whether your organisation or entity would like your inputs to be published online (Yes/No): Yes
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN TURKEY: NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPRESSION ON TURKISH DISSIDENTS This report aims to shed light on the Turkish government's use of the fight against terrorism financing as a pretext to silence both domestic dissent and critical voices abroad. After a military coup attempt in July 2016, more than 120,000 public sector workers were summarily dismissed from their jobs by emergency decree-laws issued between 2016 and 2018 ¹ . More than 2 million people faced criminal investigation for terrorism ² . Since 2018, the Turkish government has been financially targeting dissidents abroad, particularly members of the Gülen movement, and assaulting financial freedoms and privacy under the guise of combating the financing of terrorism ³ . Domestic Financial Repression

¹ The Inquiry Commission on the State of Emergency, <https://soe.tecb.gov.tr>
² "Terror Crime Statistics," Solidarity with OTHERS, <https://www.solidaritywithothers.com/terror-crime-statistics>
³ "Turkey to target financing of Gülen followers abroad, Erdogan says," Reuters December 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-idUSKBN1OC1EL>

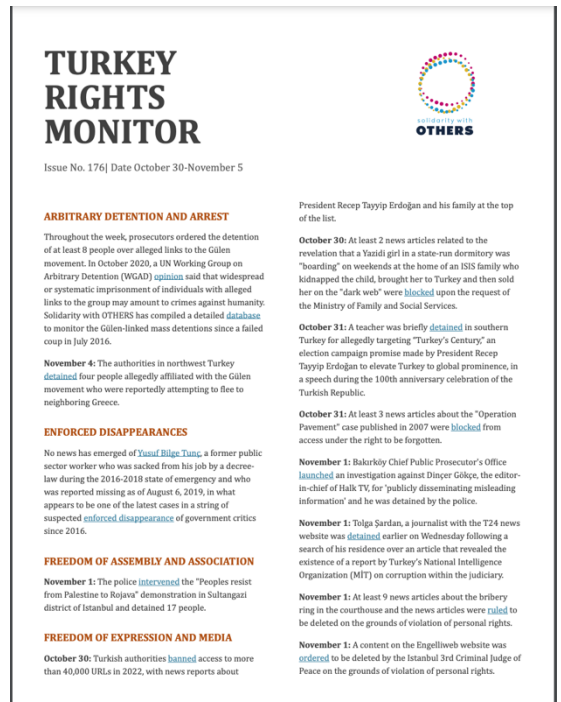
Joint NGO Statement on International Women's Day

With different 25 NGOs, we published a joint NGO statement on International Women's Day. We underlined that women's equity is not a privilege, but a fundamental human right and we cannot achieve gender equality without eradicating gender-based violence.



Turkey Rights Monitor

Our weekly newsletter covering human rights issues in Turkey is published weekly in different four languages, which are English, French, Dutch, and Turkish.



EVENTS

Crimes Against Humanity in 21st Century

This conference was organized to bring together leading experts, scholars, and practitioners from around the world to discuss and address the issue of crime against humanity, which has become a major concern for the international community. The conference will specifically look at the role of international organizations in 21st century.



The OSCE Warsaw Human Rights Dimension Conference

We highlighted the pivotal European Court of Human Rights judgment on Yüksel Yalçinkaya's case, emphasizing the need for justice and human rights in Turkey at the OSCE Warsaw Human Rights Dimension Conference

We called on the Turkish Government to respect the recent judgment by the European Court of Human Rights and ensure justice for millions of wrongly prosecuted individuals.



Demonstration in Strasbourg

In June 2023, we participated in a demonstration held in front of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. We were also involved in the organization of the demonstration as part of the Peaceful Actions Platform.



International Women's Day Demonstration

Our members and volunteers joined a nationwide demonstration in Brussels on the occasion of the #InternationalWomensDay to draw attention to the plight of women in Turkey.



Commemoration Event for Earthquake Victims



Our members and volunteers were in front of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to join a demonstration initiated by 11.11.11 to demand more solidarity with the victims of the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey.

Voices of Life

With the "Voices of Life" project, we are taking note of history with the lives and experiences of people due to unlawful practices in Turkey.



Workshop with Members

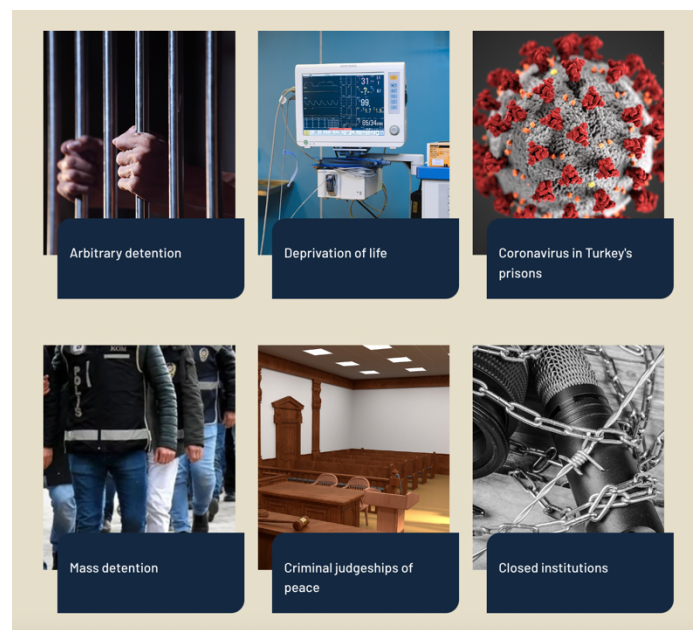
With the active participation of our dedicated members and enthusiastic volunteers, we convened a dynamic workshop aimed at fostering collaboration and creativity. During this engaging session, we delved into in-depth discussions about potential project ideas and upcoming events, leveraging the diverse perspectives and expertise within our organization.



DATABASE

We have been updating our database about Turkey on

- Arbitrary detention
- Deprivation of life
- Mass detention
- Criminal judgements of peace
- Closed institutions
- Violations of social and economic rights
- Dismissal and disbarments
- Unlawful deportations and extraditions
- Rights violations in prisons
- Terror crime statistics



WEBINARS



Conducting webinars with a diverse panel of experts, including academics, former judges and prosecutors, human rights activists, and lawyers, on the subject of 'Hate Speech: FETO,' provides a comprehensive approach to understanding and combatting this specific form of discrimination. Academic experts delved into the historical and sociopolitical context offering nuanced perspectives. Former judges and prosecutors brought legal insights, discussing the challenges and potential legal measures to counteract hate speech.

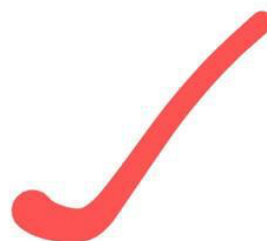
Human rights activists contributed firsthand experiences and advocacy strategies to highlight the real-world impact. Lawyers specializing in freedom of expression and human rights provided practical guidance on legal frameworks and international standards. By bringing together this diverse expertise, the webinars aim to deepen participants' understanding, equip them with actionable knowledge, and foster collaborative strategies to address hate speech targeting the Gülen Movement under the label 'FETO.'

HASHTAG CAMPAIGNS

9 · Trending

NefretSöylemine HAYIR

2,184 Tweets



Initiating hashtag campaigns such as English : **#NoToHateSpeech** Turkish : **NefretSöylemine HAYIR** is a powerful and effective way to raise awareness, promote inclusivity, and mobilize a collective stance against hate speech. This campaign could encourage individuals, organizations, and influencers to use the hashtag across various social media platforms when sharing content that denounces or counters hate speech targeting the Gülen Movement or any other affected group. The hashtag serves as a unifying symbol, creating a digital space where diverse voices can converge to express solidarity and amplify messages of tolerance. Additionally, incorporating informative and educational content within the campaign can contribute to dispelling misconceptions, fostering understanding, and encouraging open dialogue. A well-executed #NoToHateSpeech campaign has the potential to not only combat negative narratives but also create a supportive online community advocating for respect, empathy, and diversity.

Interviews

Daniel Heller - CEJI

Our guest is Daniel Heller, Junior Network Coordinator for the Facing Facts Network, from A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe (CEJI). We have discussed hate speech and hate crime in Europe.



INTERVIEWS WITH THE VICTIMS OF HATE SPEECH



These interviews serve to comprehensively document human rights violations stemming from hate speech, offering a profound understanding of the impact on both members of Gulen movement and on the movement. By gathering firsthand accounts, we aim to raise awareness about the tangible consequences of hate speech, fostering empathy and understanding within society.

The collected narratives also play a crucial role in advocating for legal actions against perpetrators and influencing policy changes to effectively counteract hate speech. Understanding the unique challenges faced by victims enables us to tailor support programs, including legal assistance, to address specific needs. Additionally, the insights gained from these interviews contribute valuable data to research initiatives, shedding light on the patterns and prevalence of hate speech.

The victims of hate speech targeting the Gülen Movement encompass a diverse range of individuals, reflecting a broad cross-section of society. This includes journalists and teachers, two pivotal groups that play crucial roles in shaping public discourse and educating future generations. Journalists, as



guardians of free speech, often find themselves at the forefront of such attacks, facing stigmatization and even legal repercussions. On the other hand, teachers, particularly those affiliated with the Gülen Movement, endure a challenging social landscape marked by suspicion and discrimination. The victimization of these professionals not only erodes the fabric of a democratic society but also undermines the principles

of free expression and education. The social status of these victims, spanning across professions vital for societal progress, underscores the pervasive nature of hate speech and its detrimental impact on diverse segments of the community.

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2024

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