

ISSUE 38



# LAST WEEK IN TÜRKİYE

BY

MARCH 19 PLATFORM

JANUARY 16, 2026



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# BLOCKING THE BALLOT THROUGH THE COURTS

*DIPLOMA ANNULMENT, PRISON, AND THE EROSION OF  
DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKIYE*



From Marmara Prison, Ekrem İmamoğlu says the retroactive annulment of his decades-old university diploma under prosecutorial pressure and his continued imprisonment show how the judiciary is being used to bar the opposition's presidential candidate in Türkiye, turning any election without him into a referendum on repression rather than democratic choice.



JANUARY 16, 2026

# BACK TO PRISON 48 HOURS AFTER SURGERY

*DETAINED MAYOR MURAT ÇALIK SENT BACK TO PRISON DESPITE HEALTH RISKS*



Murat Çalık, the jailed mayor of İstanbul's Beylikdüzü district, was sent back to prison immediately after a three-hour surgery near his carotid artery despite a documented cancer history, as opposition figures warn that continued detention poses serious risks to his health amid a broad investigation targeting CHP-run municipalities.



JANUARY 16, 2026

# ATTEMPTED FEMICIDE IN THE COURTHOUSE

*WHETHER YOU ARE A JUDGE OR A CITIZEN, AS LONG AS  
YOU ARE A WOMAN...*



A male public prosecutor shot Aslı Kahraman, a female judge, inside an İstanbul courthouse, an attempted femicide showing that violence against women in Türkiye persists even within the justice system itself.

Women's rights groups point to Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention as a key factor in the normalization and escalation of such violence.



JANUARY 16, 2026

# İMAMOĐLU AWARDED WHILE IN CUSTODY

*EKREM İMAMOĐLU RECEIVES THE PAWEŁ  
ADAMOWICZ AWARD FOR LOCAL DEMOCRACY*



ICORN.ORG

While imprisoned in Türkiye, Ekrem İmamođlu was awarded the 2026 Paweł Adamowicz Award by European institutions for defending democracy and local self-government, exposing the stark contrast between international recognition of democratic values and their repression by the current government at home.





JANUARY 16, 2026

# REGULATING MORALITY?

Turkey's media watchdog, RTÜK, fined three national TV stations for allegedly undermining "family values" and normalizing "distorted relationships," reinforcing long-standing concerns that morality-based regulations are being used to censor content and restrict LGBTQ+ visibility in Türkiye.



ANADOLUAGENCY

BIANET.ORG



While imposing these sanctions, the state broadcaster TRT announced the release of an openly anti-LGBTQ+ documentary portraying LGBTQ+ existence as a threat to children and society, drawing criticism for using public funds to legitimize stigmatization and hate.



JANUARY 16, 2026

# WORK KILLS

*RECORD WORKPLACE DEATHS REVEAL THE COST OF  
LAX SAFETY IN TÜRKIYE*



TURKISHMINUTE.COM

At least 2,105 workers were killed in workplace “accidents” in Türkiye in 2025—an 11 percent increase and the highest toll in a decade—according to Health and Safety Labor Watch, underscoring chronic failures in enforcement that continue to claim workers’ lives, including children and migrants.



JANUARY 16, 2026

# THE ARCHITECTURE OF SILENCE

*FROM NEWSROOMS TO COURTROOMS TO PLATFORMS, HOW EXPRESSION IS CONTAINED IN TÜRKIYE*



In 2025, journalism in Türkiye faced mass detentions, arrests, and sentencing, with legal pressure, police obstruction, and economic sanctions accelerating the collapse of press freedom. This repression intensified in late 2025 through prolonged detentions, heavy prison sentences, RTÜK fines, access bans, and trustee appointments targeting critical media

Türkiye ranked near the bottom of the World Happiness Report 2025, reflecting deep limits on freedom and trust.



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# CELLS BEYOND CAPACITY

*PRISON OVERCROWDING PERSISTS DESPITE FALLING  
INMATE NUMBERS IN TÜRKIYE*



Turkey's prisons are operating at about 131.7% capacity, holding nearly 100,000 more inmates than they were built for, even though the total prison population recently fell slightly, in part due to judicial reform measures aimed at reducing overcrowding. The overcrowding still affects all types of facilities and includes children and pre-trial detainees, highlighting the ongoing strain in the penal system.



# OUR NEXT PANEL WITH CAN DÜNDAR

*LIVESTREAMED ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL  
AT 12:00 PM EST. ON JANUARY 25, 2026*



March 19 Platform

CAN DÜNDAR'IN KATILIMIYLA

25 Ocak 2026 Pazar

09.00-10.00 PST  
12.00-13.00 EST  
20.00-21.00 TSİ

Youtube Canlı Yayını

[www.youtube.com/@March19Platform](http://www.youtube.com/@March19Platform)

CAN DÜNDAR  
Gazeteci

Can Dündar is an investigative journalist, writer, and documentary filmmaker known for his work on Türkiye's recent history, politics, and popular culture, including the acclaimed 1993 documentary *Sarı Zeybek*.

After serving as editor-in-chief of *Cumhuriyet* in 2015 and facing judicial pressure, he went into exile in Germany. Despite an arrest warrant in Türkiye, he continues his journalism and advocacy for press freedom, democracy, and human rights through the independent platform #ÖZGÜRÜZ.