2019-03-12

Turkey needs to respect foreign media outlets’ independence

Pressure on international media in Turkey is increasing. German journalists have been expelled from the country as their press accreditations were not renewed. International freedom of expression organisations urge Turkey’s authorities in a joint alert to revoke the decisions, to stop the expulsion of international journalists, to renew press cards to foreign media outlets, and to respect their independence.

Two German journalists were compelled to leave Turkey on Sunday, 10 March 2019, after their press accreditations were not renewed for 2019 without any explanation. Jörg Brase, a journalist working for Germany's *ZDF*public broadcaster, and Thomas Seibert, reporter at the *Tagesspiegel* newspaper, were long-term correspondents in the country. The Turkish embassy in Germany apparently tried in vain to make a deal to have the correspondents replaced, *Tagesspiegel*’s editor-in-chief reports. A third journalist, Halil Gülbeyaz, with *NDR TV* also had his accreditation refused and is not allowed return to Turkey.

Besides the recent and on-going intimidation, detention, and prosecution of local journalists, pressure against foreign media outlets has been growing in Turkey. These incidents are not isolated cases, but show a systematic approach to also silence and control foreign independent media coverage in the country. Several international journalists have faced intimidation or been forced to leave the country already over the past year after they fell out of favour with Turkey’s government. Others are still waiting for the renewal of their accreditations and might have to leave the country as well. Press cards are necessary work permits to receive a residence permit.

The latest incident yet again marks a strong and arbitrary affront against international press freedom and independent media outlets. It is especially worrying in the run-up to local elections at the end of March (and general elections in 2023).

The undersigned organisations call on the EU institutions for a meaningful response. Moreover, we urge Turkey’s authorities to revoke the decisions, to stop the expulsion of international journalists, to renew press cards to foreign media outlets, and to respect their independence.

Signed

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

Article 19

Articolo21

Association of European Journalists (AEJ)

Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI)

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Danish PEN

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

German PEN

Global Editors Network (GEN)

Human Rights Watch

International Press Institute (IPI)

Italian Press Federation

Norwegian PEN

OBC Transeuropa

PEN America

Platform for Independent Journalism (P24)

South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

Swedish PEN

World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA)

**UPDATE!**

**12 March, 4.30pm:**

Turkey corrects its decision and Jörg Brase (ZDF) will receive continued work permit, ZDF [reports](https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/heute/joerg-brase-erhaelt-doch-arbeitserlaubnis-fuer-tuerkei-100.html#xtor=CS5-62). He will return to Istanbul soon.