



Written Contribution on the Situation  
of  
**Human Rights Defenders**  
to the  
4th CYCLE OF THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW  
of  
REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
10 October 2024

**Solidarity Network for Human Rights Defenders<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The report herein has been compiled by the Human Rights Defenders Solidarity Network (İnsan Hakları Savunucuları Dayanışma Ağı), established by human rights organisations from Türkiye, under the leadership of Truth Justice Memory Centre (Hafıza Merkezi). The information on the organisations that compiled the report is detailed in Annex 1.

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## A. Introduction

1. The activities of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Türkiye are systematically obstructed by prosecutorial and judicial mechanisms, such as courts and offices of judges and prosecutors that have lost their independence, as well as by administrative bodies, including boards, ministries, city and district governorships, all of which fall under the executive branch, directly led by the President of the Republic. The process follows a common pattern: It starts with public targeting and finger pointing campaigns, carried out sometimes by high-ranking politicians or bureaucrats<sup>1</sup> and sometimes by media organisations that are aligned with the government,<sup>2</sup> and then escalates into lawsuits in which laws, particularly the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) and the Anti-Terror Law, are used against rights defenders.<sup>3</sup> HRDs are routinely investigated, tried - sometimes in pre-trial detention- and convicted for their advocacy activities.<sup>4</sup> Although some of these trials result in acquittals, criminal investigations,<sup>5</sup> arrest warrants, detentions and trials<sup>6</sup> that lacks reasonable suspicion create a deterrent/chilling effect on the activities of HRDs. Türkiye's judicial system, lacking independence, has undermined the guarantees of the international conventions for HRDs by disregarding both these conventions and the decisions of regional mechanisms, such as the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Although Turkish authorities claim that HRDs are not being prosecuted for their activities, echoing similar statements made for dissident journalists and politicians, the questions asked during the interrogations and the evidence presented as the basis for convictions in these criminal proceedings reveal that defenders are criminalised for their human rights activities. Numerous warnings and statements on this phenomenon have also been issued by officials from both the UN and the Council of Europe (CoE).
2. The restrictive provisions of the legislation on associations, especially the amendments made to the Law on Associations under the pretext of FATF regulations, along with audits and inspections that have been turned into instruments of pressure on associations, and the fines imposed as a result, hinder the collective struggle for human rights.<sup>7</sup>
3. In its 3rd Cycle, out of the 17 recommendations made by Portugal, Argentina, Norway, New Zealand, Ireland, Finland, Finland, Uruguay, Austria, the United Kingdom, East Timor, Italy, Iceland, Luxembourg, Germany, Denmark, Canada, the Czech Republic, the Czech Republic and Chile<sup>8</sup>, some of which were noted and some accepted by

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/politics/2020/10/15/erdogan-targets-medical-group-critical-of-turkeys-covid-response-calls-its-chair-terrorist>

<https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/defender/turkish-medical-association>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/en/how-tarlabasi-community-center-became-a-target>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/taxonomy/term/618>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61218241>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/27/turkey-crackdown-social-media-posts>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ihop.org.tr/en/joint-press-statement-terminate-arbitrary-detention-of-hr-defenders/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs\\_turkey\\_report\\_administrative\\_harassment\\_june\\_2022.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs_turkey_report_administrative_harassment_june_2022.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> 45.181; 45.180; 45.179; 45.178; 45.177; 45.175; 45.174; 45.170; 45.165; 45.164; 45.163; 45.154; 45.147; 45.108; 45.100; 45.98; 45.97

Türkiye, there has been no progress on issues directly related to HRDs. These recommendations address the right of HRDs to freedom of expression and assembly; protection from sanctions for their expressions; non-obstruction by public authorities; effective investigation of allegations of reprisals against HRDs; and refraining from using anti-terrorism legislation as a weapon against HRDs. In addition, while fulfilment of general recommendations on freedom of assembly and freedom of expression could indirectly enable a free working environment for HRDs, no action has been taken on these issues.

4. The Solidarity Network for Human Rights Defenders (the Solidarity Network) submits that Republic of Türkiye should urgently comply with its international obligations, fulfil the rulings of the Constitutional Court and the ECtHR on violations, and fulfil the recommendations adopted in the 3rd Cycle.<sup>9</sup>

## **B. Methodology**

5. The data in this report is based on litigation, monitoring, reporting and research conducted by 33 member organisations of the Solidarity Network within the scope of human rights defence. Member organisations obtain this data through various methods such as media monitoring, research, and receiving applications. In addition, this data has been verified and supplemented by media research and cited in footnotes.
6. Following a brief analysis of public policies and the relevant legislation from the perspective of HRDs in Türkiye, state actions aimed at obstructing human rights defence are analysed under the section of judicial and administrative harassment. The submission also provides up-to-date information on cases closely monitored by the international community during the review period, as well as statements from UN mechanisms and CoE bodies on HRDs in Türkiye.

## **C. Legislation and Policy**

**Related 3rd Cycle Recommendations: 45.35 Switzerland; 45.90 Sweden; 45.92 Austria; 45.93 and 45.151 USA; 45.94 Uruguay; 45.95 Belgium; 45.96 Botswana; 45.97 Canada; 45.98 Denmark; 45.99 France; 45.100 Germany; 45.158 Slovenia; 45.159 Estonia; 45.164 United Kingdom; 45.170 Uruguay; 45.174 Finland; 46.6 Cyprus**

7. During the review period, legislative amendments and policies affecting individual and collective advocacy activities of HRDs have been adopted.
8. Citing the “Financial Action Task Force (FATF)”, amendments to the Law on Associations and the Law on Charitable Donations were adopted despite strong objections from civil society.<sup>10</sup> Four articles in the Law on Charitable Donations and

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<sup>9</sup>Cycle 3; 45,141 France; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>10</sup><https://bianet.org/haber/ngos-start-campaign-against-new-bill-threatening-civil-society-236433>  
<https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2020-12/on-the-prevention-of-the-financing-of-the-proliferation-of-weapons-of-mass-destruction.pdf>  
<https://bianet.org/haber/ngo-bill-will-lead-to-closure-of-many-associations-236450>

seven articles in the Law on Associations have been amended.<sup>11</sup> These legislative changes faced criticism not only from international rights defence organisations<sup>12</sup>; but also from the CoE, of which Türkiye is a member.<sup>13</sup> The CoE's Commissioner for Human Rights (the Commissioner) notified the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Interior, expressing their concerns regarding these amendments.<sup>14</sup>

9. With these amendments, the Anti-Terror Law, which has been deemed as vague and open to arbitrary interpretation by the ECtHR, has been linked to the Law on Associations.<sup>15</sup> The right to establish associations is restricted (Art. 3(3)); the principle of auditing and inspecting associations annually without any justification is introduced (Art. 19(2)). This article grants broad authority to the auditors and inspectors to directly include other associations that are in some way related to the audited association in the audit process (Art. 19(5)). While the amendment authorising the appointment of trustees by the Minister of Interior to and the temporary suspension of the activities of associations (Art. 30A) were annulled by the Constitutional Court, the amendments overall continue to have a detrimental impact on the activities of HRDs.<sup>16</sup>
10. Associations are audited and inspected based on 'risk' scoring and priority is given to 'high-risk' associations. The risk assessment is reportedly based on a table containing various indicators prepared by the Directorate General for Relations with Civil Society, the authorised public institution under the Ministry of Interior. Since this table is not disclosed to civil society, human rights associations are deprived of information on the issues they should focus on to remove themselves from the 'high-risk' category.
11. Although there is no legal definition of the term "charitable aid", collecting aid without authorisation of the Ministry of Interior and sending it abroad without notification are categorised as misdemeanours. This grants public officials very broad discretionary power to impose administrative fines related to regulations governing charitable aid.
12. HRDs cannot access public funds. Those who depend on foreign funding are criminalised because of this financial connection.<sup>17</sup> This criminalisation is sometimes carried out by government-sponsored media and sometimes directly by public officials.<sup>18</sup> It can also result in the inspection of these associations by the Ministry of Interior or Governorships.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://masak.hmb.gov.tr/law-no-7262-on-the-prevention-of-the-financing-of-proliferation-of-weapons-of-mass-destruction/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.omct.org/site-resources/files/Law-7262-further-threat-to-the-freedom-of-association\\_Eng.pdf](https://www.omct.org/site-resources/files/Law-7262-further-threat-to-the-freedom-of-association_Eng.pdf)

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EUR4442692021ENGLISH.pdf>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/18/joint-letter-hrvp-borrell-eu-turkey-relations>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2021\)023cor-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2021)023cor-e)

<sup>14</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-mr-suleyman-soylu-minister-of-interior-of-the-republic-of-tu/1680a18d4c>

<sup>15</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/?i=001-178506>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs\\_turkey\\_report\\_administrative\\_harassment\\_june\\_2022.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs_turkey_report_administrative_harassment_june_2022.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/interior-ministry-requests-administrative-sanction-against-11-funded-associations-254287>

<sup>18</sup> <https://x.com/icisleriSTi/status/1466687526467424260>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2024-01/chapter-i-freedom-of-association.pdf> ( Page 93. )

13. Media outlets that lead criminalisation campaigns against HRDs are heavily funded by state institutions.<sup>20</sup> It is known that the owners of at least eight of the ten most widely read news outlets and nine of the ten most popular TV channels in Türkiye have close ties to the government.<sup>21</sup>
14. On the other hand, the TPC's provisions on "provoking the public to hatred, hostility, or degrading" (Art. 216), "establishing an organisation with the aim of committing a crime" (Art. 220), "insulting the President of the Republic" (Art. 299), "degrading the symbols of the sovereignty of the State" (Art. 300), "degrading the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Türkiye, the institutions and organs of the State" (Art. 301 ), "offences against the Government" (Art. 312 ), and "membership in an armed organisation" (Art. 314), as well as the vague provisions of the Anti-Terror Law, particularly Articles 6 and 7, are used extensively in investigations and criminal cases against HRDs.<sup>22</sup> Article 217/A of the TPC titled "publicly disseminating misleading information" was added to this list with the amendment made in 2022. This situation reveals that, far from considering the recommendations noted in the 3rd Cycle,<sup>23</sup> the contrary practice has been institutionalised.<sup>24</sup>
15. The criminal provisions of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations, which regulates the right to assembly, are frequently used against HRDs participating in peaceful assemblies.<sup>25</sup>
16. The Law on Provincial Administration, which also includes regulations on the powers of governors, is used to prevent rights defenders from exercising their right to assemble or organise events.
17. In several public statements and memorandums, the Commissioner<sup>26</sup> has called on the Turkish authorities to end the practice of targeting HRDs and silencing them through administrative and judicial proceedings and lawsuits, as well as to end the hostile environment affecting them.<sup>27</sup> The Commissioner's memorandum dated 5 March 2024 (paras. 25 – 46) provides important assessments of the situation facing rights-based organisations. However, the Turkish authorities, including the highest-ranking officials, continue to regularly target HRDs and rights-based NGOs by labelling them as 'terrorists' and 'enemies of the people'.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-state-banks-sponsoring-pro-govt-newspapers-with-advertisements-starving-critical-media-of-revenues-news-57959>

<sup>21</sup> <https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/en/owners/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25482>

<sup>23</sup> Cycle 3; § 45.35 Switzerland, § 45.90 Sweden, § 45.92 Austria, § 45.93 USA, § 45.94 Uruguay, § 45.95 Belgium, § 45.96 Botswana, § 45.98 Denmark, § 45.99 France, § 45.100 Germany, § 45.158 Slovenia, § 45.159 Estonia, § 45.164 United Kingdom; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/06/turkey-stop-mis-using-law-detain-human-rights-defenders-urges-un-expert>

<sup>25</sup> <https://ihksda.org/en/2023/03/07/33-sivil-toplum-kurulusu-ve-barodan-avrupa-konseyi-bakanlar-komitesine-turkiyede-agir-tehdit-altinda-olan-bariscil-toplanma-ozgurlugu-hakkina-dair-kapsamli-bir-bildirim/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-the-visit-to-turkey-by-dunja-mijatovic-council-of-europe-com/168099823e>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.coe.int/az/web/commissioner/-/the-turkish-authorities-must-protect-democratic-freedoms>

<sup>28</sup> Especially Para 148 and 149 <https://rm.coe.int/memorandum-on-freedom-of-expression-and-of-the-media-human-rights-defe/1680aebf3d>

18. While ensuring a free and safe space for civil society, including HRDs, in full compliance with international human rights obligations is an officially acknowledged recommendation,<sup>29</sup> the concrete facts detailed below demonstrate that this safe space has never been established in Türkiye. The criminal law mechanisms are systemically used to intimidate HRDs. Although the recommendation to adopt comprehensive legislation for their protection, including investigations into violation allegations, intimidation and reprisals, is acknowledged,<sup>30</sup> there has been no progress in this either.

## D. Judicial Harassment

### D.1. Investigations and Criminal Cases

**Related 3rd Cycle Recommendations: 45.90 Sweden; 45.92 Austria; 45.93, 45.151 USA; 45.95 Belgium; 45.96 Botswana; 45.98 Denmark; 45.97 Canada; 45.99 France; 45.179 Peru; 45.164 United Kingdom; 45.108 Luxembourg; 45.100 Germany; 45.158 Slovenia; 45.159 Estonia; 46.6 Cyprus**

19. Advocacy activities of HRDs have been hindered by unpredictable application of criminal legislation.<sup>31</sup> In investigations targeting defenders, measures such as pre-trial detention, restrictions on leaving designated addresses, travel bans, and mandatory sign-ins at specific times have been regularly imposed.

20. In the report cited above, the Commissioner assessed that the biggest problem facing HRDs in Türkiye is the widespread pattern of judicial proceedings and criminal cases targeting them for their lawful and legitimate activities (para. 155).

21. A.E, one of the founders of **Kaos GL**, who was detained for five days due to his peaceful social media posts criticising Türkiye's military operation inside Syria, was released after a travel ban and mandatory regular reporting requirements at police stations.<sup>32</sup> These were imposed until 20 November 2021, when he was acquitted.

22. Environmental rights defender D.G, who was detained for opposing the deforestation for a coal mine, was banned from leaving the country and entering the district of Milas.<sup>33</sup>

23. The criminal case initiated after the detention of ten HRDs in a police raid during a meeting in **Büyükkada, Istanbul**, had a deterrent and chilling effect on the organisation of meetings of rights defence organisations for a long time.<sup>34</sup> Although the defendants were acquitted, the prosecutor's office appealed against the verdict concerning T.K,

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<sup>29</sup> Cycle 3; § 45.174 Finland A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>30</sup> Cycle 3, § 45.170 Uruguay, A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/freedom-of-expression-and-the-press-in-turkey-378/> and <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/freedom-of-expression-and-the-press-in-turkey-379/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/5-people-including-kaos-gl-founder-erol-reporter-tekin-released-194074>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-court-bans-three-from-milas-over-protests-in-akbelen-forest-news-62811>

<sup>34</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25400>

the former Chair of Amnesty Turkey, whose case was merged with this case.<sup>35</sup> While the trial was ongoing, ECtHR ruled against Türkiye in relation to T.K's application.<sup>36</sup>

24. E.K, co-chair of **the Human Rights Association (İHD)**, has been subjected to more than ten investigations, some of which have proceeded into criminal cases, due to her advocacy activities or statements.<sup>37</sup> Ö.T, the former co-chair of İHD, was also prosecuted twice for statements he made as part of his rights advocacy work.<sup>38</sup>

25. Bar associations were also targeted by judicial harassment. The executive board members of **the Izmir, Istanbul, Diyarbakir and Ankara Bar Associations** faced investigations and prosecutions in a heavy criminal court for their statements claiming that the Directorate of Religious Affairs' sermon dated 20 April 2020 constituted hate speech and violated human rights.<sup>39</sup> An investigation and subsequent criminal case was also opened against the Diyarbakir Bar Association for its statements regarding the Armenian Genocide.<sup>40</sup> On 25.04.2023, several lawyers, including members of Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD), a member of the network, were detained in a police operation in Diyarbakir. During the search, the statements and the report on rights violations and statements prepared by ÖHD, as well as newspapers were seized.<sup>41</sup> The deterrent effect of the criminal cases opened after this mass operation against lawyers cannot be ignored for lawyers, who are important actors in the field of human rights. The issue is also included in the notification issued by The Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers to the state party.<sup>42</sup>

26. On 25.04.2022, the Court of Cassation upheld the aggravated life sentence of O.K, who has been in detention since 01.11.2017 for "attempting to overthrow the government" by way of "leading the Gezi protests" and "participating in the 15.07.2016 coup attempt".<sup>43</sup> In the same case, the convictions and sentences of HRDs Ş.C.A, Ç.M.U, M.Ö, and T.K. for "aiding the act of attempting to overthrow the government" were also upheld.

27. The ECtHR established that O.K had been detained since November 2017 due to his human rights activities.<sup>44</sup> In the judgment, the Court concluded that O.K had been *"specifically targeted because of his activities as a human-rights defender and that his pre-trial detention and its extension had pursued an ulterior purpose, namely to silence him as an NGO activist and human-rights defender, to dissuade others from taking part in such activities and to paralyse Turkey's civil society"* (para. 216).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/07/turkey-un-expert-alarmed-prosecutions-call-guilty-verdict-istanbul-10-and>

<sup>36</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-217625>

<sup>37</sup> <https://ihd.org.tr/en/obs-urgent-appeal-ongoing-judicial-harassment-of-human-rights-lawyer-eren-keskin/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://srdefenders.org/turkey-ozturk-turkdogan-facing-multiple-criminal-proceedings-joint-communication/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://ihsda.org/en/2020/04/30/lgbtilara-karsi-nefret-soylemini-elestiren-orgutlere-yonelik-hedef-gosterme-ve-sorusturmalar-son-bulmalil/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/tr/diyarbakir-barosuna-tck-301den-6-yilda-7-sorusturma-3-dava-acildi>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.diyarbakirbarosu.org.tr/public/uploads/files/Rapor2.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29191>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.turkeylitigationssupport.com/blog/2023/10/10/turkey-top-court-upholds-rights-defenders-life-term>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.turkeylitigationssupport.com/blog/2022/7/11/historic-judgment-against-trkiye-for-failing-to-implement-judgment-of-the-european-court-kavala-v-trkiye>

<sup>45</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/tur?i=001-199515>



28. In a subsequent application concerning the non-implementation of its previous judgment, in which the Commissioner intervened,<sup>46</sup> the ECtHR reiterated its assessment that *"the charges brought against Mr Kavala were not based on reasonable suspicions and the actual purpose of the impugned measures was to silence him and to dissuade other human-rights defenders"* (para. 136).<sup>47</sup>
29. O.K remains imprisoned despite the ECtHR's judgment,<sup>48</sup> which is being monitored by the CoE's Committee of Ministers for implementation.<sup>49</sup> The ECtHR has also communicated a further application from Mr Kavala following the finalisation of his conviction.<sup>50</sup>
30. Similarly, **Ş.C.A.**, another convict of the Gezi Trial, remains imprisoned despite the Constitutional Court's ruling finding a violation of his rights.
31. Since 27.05.1995, **Saturday Mothers** have been gathering to demand the whereabouts of their forcibly disappeared relatives, to find and prosecute the perpetrators and to prevent future enforced disappearances. During their 700th peaceful gathering on 25.08.2018, they were violently arrested,<sup>51</sup> and a criminal case was initiated against them on 18.11.2020 in connection with this event.<sup>52</sup>
32. The Constitutional Court later ruled that human rights were violated in two separate individual applications regarding the protests of Saturday Mothers.
33. The gatherings of Saturday Mothers after the 700th meeting were continued to be prevented by frequent police violence. A separate lawsuit was filed against the group.<sup>53</sup>
34. Ş.K.F, former president of **the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey**, remains on trial for participating in a solidarity campaign with the Özgür Gündem newspaper, a pro-Kurdish rights outlet, on 20.06.2016. Notably, one of the three judges presiding over Ş.K.F's case had previously applied to be elected as an MP from the ruling party, AKP.
35. In a separate case, Ş.K.F was sentenced to a fine for a social media post criticising President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

<sup>46</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/submission-by-the-council-of-europe-commissioner-for-human-rights-in-p/1680a6266a>

<sup>47</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/tur?i=001-218516>

<sup>48</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=23423>

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=26418>

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=27559>

<sup>49</sup> <https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=004-55162i>; Cycle 3, § 45.108 Luxembourg; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>50</sup> <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-233151>

<sup>51</sup> <https://ihsda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Turkey-Stop-Judicial-Harassment-of-Saturday-Mothers.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> <https://ihsda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Turkey-Stop-Judicial-Harassment-of-Saturday-Mothers.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/europe-central-asia/turkey/turkey-first-hearing-in-latest-trial-against-saturday-mothers-people>

36. In another case, Ş.K.F was tried while in pre-trial detention and sentenced for expressing the suspicion that chemical gas might have been used by Turkish military in a video showing the final moments of PKK militants killed during an operation.<sup>54</sup>
37. The executives and members of **the Rosa Women's Association**, which primarily works to combat violence against women in the predominantly Kurdish Southeast and who is part of the Solidarity Network, have been arrested and detained in successive police raids starting in May 2020. During the interrogations, they were subjected to questions about their rights defence activities.<sup>55</sup>
38. A lawsuit was filed against **the Rosa Women's Association's** founders and board members on charges of "membership in an armed terrorist organisation".<sup>56</sup> Due to its activities during the February 2023 earthquakes, the association was targeted by R.S.K., Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Children's Rights of the Human Rights Inquiry Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, who labelled it as "an advocate of the PKK terrorist organisation and the LGBT".<sup>57</sup>
39. On similar grounds, the chairperson of **Women's Time Association**, also a member of the Solidarity Network, and a number of women activists were detained in the early hours of 16 January 2024 by anti-terror police who raided their homes.<sup>58</sup>
40. On the other hand, crimes committed against HRDs continue to go unpunished. In June 2024, the police officers accused of killing **human rights lawyer Tahir ELÇİ** were acquitted, despite clear evidence of their responsibility.<sup>59</sup>

## D.2. Denial of the Right to Organise <sup>60</sup>

**Related 3rd Cycle Recommendations: 45.147 Iceland; 45.154 Italy; 45.163 East Timor; 45.165 Austria; 45.170 Uruguay; 45.174 Finland; 45.181 Portugal**

41. The Tarlabası Community Support Association, also known as **the Tarlabası Community Centre**, has faced an intense smear campaign followed by administrative and judicial harassment regarding its work involving LGBTI+ children and forcibly displaced Kurdish children.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/turkiye-un-experts-call-release-and-end-judicial-harassment-anti-torture>;  
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=27657>

<sup>55</sup> <https://ihsda.org/en/2023/03/07/33-sivil-toplum-kurulusu-ve-barodan-avrupa-konsevi-bakanlar-komitesine-turkiyede-agir-tehdit-altinda-olan-bariscil-toplanma-ozgurlugu-hakkina-dair-kapsamli-bir-bildirim/and>  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b8bbe8c89c172835f9455fe/t/628262e7564a201732aceecc/1652712168017/UN+Urgent+ActionLetter+concerning+women+HRDs+in+Turkey+to+share.pdf> and  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b8bbe8c89c172835f9455fe/t/5efb4316d7cc3328f6cd50b3/1593525017984/Rosa+Wom+en+Association.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> <https://sessizkalma.org/en/defender/rosa-womens-association>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/meclis-alt-komisyonu-deprem-bolgesinde-cocuklara-zarar-veren-yapilara-iliskin-tespitlerde-bulundu/3280514>

<sup>58</sup> <https://ihsda.org/2024/01/16/kadin-hak-savunucularina-gozaltilar-kabul-edilemez/>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/06/turkiye-acquittal-of-three-police-officers-for-involvement-in-killing-of-human-rights-lawyer-a-huge-blow-to-justice/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://en.tihv.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TurquieOBS2023-ENG.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/en/how-tarlabasi-community-center-became-a-target>

42. Although the lawsuit filed by the Istanbul Governorate on 15 October 2021 in order to declare the association "null and void" was rejected, the Governorate appealed the decision.
43. On 7 February 2022, based on the report prepared by the Governorate auditors the Istanbul Prosecutor's Office filed a lawsuit for the dissolution of the association and the suspension of its activities until the case is concluded. The association was accused of "influencing the sexual identity of children by normalising the sexual tendencies of people known as LGBTI".<sup>62</sup> The activities of the association were temporarily suspended for two months, and the trial process is still ongoing.
44. Istanbul Governor's Office filed another similar lawsuit for the dissolution of the **We Will Stop Femicides Platform**, which reports data on femicide on a monthly basis, monitors cases of violence against women and LGBTI+ persons and advocates for women's and LGBTI+ rights. The lawsuit makes references to issues directly related to advocacy. Although the lawsuit was rejected, its grounds served as intimidation to civil society.<sup>63</sup>
45. The İstanbul Prosecutor's Office filed a further lawsuit for the dissolution of the **Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER)**, which was established to promote social solidarity among forced migrants, advocate for their demands for a humane life, and prepare observation reports. In this lawsuit, the prosecutor requested the suspension of the association's activities until the case is concluded.
46. The main grounds of the case filed by the prosecutor were a criminal case against the members and executives of the association for the allegations that they were operating in line with the 'aims and objectives of an armed terrorist organisation'. In the indictment of this case, it was alleged that GÖÇİZDER had made "terrorist propaganda" in its reports documenting rights violations during the forced displacement of numerous majority Kurdish villages in the Southeast in 1990s, based on quotes from those forcibly displaced and interviewed in the reports.<sup>64</sup> The indictment also alleged that EU funds were used by the association to organise seminars, publish reports 'insulting the state', and send money to the families of PKK members.<sup>65</sup> Those charged in the criminal case were acquitted.
47. Despite the final judgments of acquittal, the assets of the association have been frozen by a joint decree of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury in September 2024.<sup>66</sup>
48. For many years, **Amnesty Turkey** has been denied the approval required by the Ministry of the Interior for the use of its statutes in transactions with third parties. In

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/defender/tarlabasi-community-center>

<sup>63</sup> <https://sessizkalma.org/en/defender/we-will-stop-femicide-platform>

<sup>64</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=27443>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.omct.org/site-resources/files/TurquieOBS2023-ENG.pdf> ( Pg 11 )

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.mlsaturkey.com/en/assets-of-goec-iz-der-frozen-over-alleged-links-to-pkk-kck-members-previously-acquitted-of-terrorism-charges>

2021, Amnesty Turkey amended the section's statute and submitted it to the Ministry, which refused to approve it. The Ministry claims that Amnesty Turkey can only have an activity certificate, not a statute, for foreign associations. This will make impossible for Amnesty Turkey to establish its mandatory organs and carry out advocacy activities, such as distributing newsletters. Amnesty Turkey's administrative case against the Ministry of Interior is currently pending.

49. LGBTI+ clubs established to advocate for rights at universities also face intense restrictions. At least two universities have closed their LGBTI+ advocacy clubs.<sup>67</sup> According to information from activists, attempts by LGBTI+ rights defenders at Ege University to establish a club were also rejected, and the administrative case they filed was also dismissed. Similarly, the demands of HRDs from Middle East Technical University to establish an LGBTI+ club have also been rejected.

### D.3. Civil Cases Constituting Abuse of Rights

#### Related 3rd Cycle Recommendations: 45.88 Fiji, 45.14 Bahamas

50. Nine SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) cases have been filed against environmental rights defenders in the last five years.<sup>68</sup>
51. Compensation lawsuits, especially against environmental rights defenders, make human rights defence more "costly" for them. Large companies, which can easily manage the costs of legal proceedings and lawyers' fees by using their tax advantages, file compensation claims against environmental rights defenders.
52. A lawsuit was brought against H.Ş., **one of the spokespersons of the Muğla Environment Platform**, seeking 300.000 Turkish Liras in damages due to her statements criticising the construction of a hotel and timeshare property by a company, Sinpaş REIT.<sup>69</sup>
53. A company carrying out a construction project opposed by the "Teşvikiye Residents Initiative" sought to hinder their advocacy efforts by filing a compensation lawsuit against the founder and two members of the initiative.<sup>70</sup>
54. These lawsuits for damages<sup>71</sup> demonstrate that companies abuse the legal system to intimidate HRDs and undermine their freedom to seek protection of rights.
55. On the other hand, in environmental cases examined by administrative courts, the high legal costs and attorney's fees awarded in cases brought by environmental rights

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<sup>67</sup> <https://x.com/fahrettinaltun/status/1356376069557907456>; <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/news/turkish-university-shuts-down-decade-old-lgbti-student-club-bogus-charges>

<sup>68</sup> [https://mekandaadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/MAD\\_SLAPP\\_rapor.pdf](https://mekandaadalet.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/MAD_SLAPP_rapor.pdf) ( Pg 24 )

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/defender/halime-saman>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/defender/tolga-bektas>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/taxonomy/term/622>

defenders undermine the guarantees under the Rio Declaration<sup>72</sup> and the Aarhus Convention.<sup>73</sup>

56. In a monitoring study report on the issue, it was observed that associations defending environmental rights in the Kaz Mountains region of Western Türkiye struggle to pay the judgment, expert witness, and inspection fees imposed in administrative cases.<sup>74</sup> They face the threat of asset seizure through legal enforcement proceedings and those associations that can cover these expenses are often forced to abandon other work or activities, allocating a large portion of their resources to these costs.

57. The restrictions on environmental rights defenders also contradict the climate crisis-themed recommendations in the 3rd Cycle.<sup>75</sup>

## E. Administrative Harassment

### E.1. Prohibitions on Events/Meetings

**Related 3rd Cycle Recommendations: 45.18 Egypt; 45.38 Estonia; 45.75 Canada; 45.77 Luxembourg; 45.79 Malta; 45.81 Mexico; 45.99 France; 45.104 Netherlands; 45.150 Austria; 45.154 Italy; 45.156 New Zealand; 45.160 Australia; 45.168 Costa Rica; 45.172 Czech Republic; 45.173 Finland; 45.178 Norway; 45.183 Germany;**

58. Recommendations to guarantee citizens' right to freedom of assembly<sup>76</sup> and to ensure that laws on freedoms of assembly, expression and association fully comply with international human rights obligations and are fully implemented<sup>77</sup> were not taken into consideration. Although freedom of assembly is addressed in another recommendation in the context of HRDs,<sup>78</sup> data indicates that the current situation is worse than the previous period.

59. Provincial and District Governors have used banning orders to prevent the activities, events, or meetings of HRDs.<sup>79</sup> Although some of these banning orders were nullified by the courts, such decisions did not change the attitude of public officials, and banning orders have continued to be issued. Furthermore, these cases have been used as justification for new targeting and finger pointing campaigns by government-backed media.<sup>80</sup>

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[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_CONF.151\\_26\\_Vol.I\\_Declaration.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf)

73 <https://unece.org/DAM/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf>

74 [https://gulpinardere.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/gulpinar\\_hr\\_report\\_eng.pdf](https://gulpinardere.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/gulpinar_hr_report_eng.pdf) ( Pg 6 )

75 Cycle 3; § 45.88 Fiji, 45.14 Bahamas ; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

76 Cycle 3; § 45.150 Austria ; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

77 Cycle 3; § 45.173 Finland ; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

78 Cycle 3; § 45.178 Norway; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

79 <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/the-governorate-of-istanbul-banned-the-pride-march-lgbti-s-will-be-at-taksim-despite-the-ban>

80 <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/onursuzlar-rahat-durmuyor-yasaklanan-yuruyuslerini-yargiya-tasidilar-1667369.html>;  
<https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/ neither-our-picnic-nor-our-march-or-our-existence-can-be-banned>; <https://bianet.org/haber/5-year-demonstration-ban-in-van-extended-again-243444>

60. The solidarity call made by human rights defence organisations for the hearing in the trial of HRD Ş.K.F was obstructed by a one-day ban issued by the Kağıthane District Governorate.<sup>81</sup> Similar bans have been imposed multiple times in Kağıthane, which is within the administrative boundaries of the Istanbul Courthouse.<sup>82</sup> These administrative banning orders have been frequently applied against Saturday Mothers<sup>83</sup>; defenders of Kurdish and minority rights<sup>84</sup>; women's rights defenders<sup>85</sup>; and events organised by LGBTI+ rights organisations.<sup>86</sup>
61. Since 2015, Pride Marches organised by LGBTI+ communities in Türkiye have been systematically banned; even lawyers providing legal support to LGBTI+ persons and documenting violations have been arrested and criminal cases have been filed against them.<sup>87</sup> Women rights defenders were prevented by systematic police violence on 25 November - International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.<sup>88</sup>
62. In 2021,<sup>89</sup> 2022,<sup>90</sup> 2023,<sup>91</sup> and 2024,<sup>92</sup> all Pride Marches called for in Istanbul were banned, and HRDs who responded to these calls were faced violent arrests. In 2022 alone, 373 rights defenders were arrested during the 2022 Istanbul Pride March.<sup>93</sup> These HRDs were later tried in criminal courts.
63. The Republic of Türkiye has obstructed LGBTI+ rights defence at every level. Trans marches, 8 March marches, and 17 May International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia are systematically banned every year.
64. In parallel, LGBTI+ rights advocacy groups at universities face judicial and administrative harassment.<sup>94</sup> Scholarships of students who participate in Pride Marches have been revoked, and an administrative investigation was launched against<sup>95</sup> a Solidarity Network member UniKuir activist simply for participating in the Pride March. Additionally, students have been expelled from dormitories on similar grounds as an administrative sanction.<sup>96</sup> The recommendation from the 3rd Cycle to establish independent mechanisms for reporting and investigating allegations of

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.kagithane.gov.tr/yasaklama-karari-hakinda-9>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.kagithane.gov.tr/yasaklama-karari-hk-18082022>

<sup>83</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/preventing-saturday-mothers-people-gathering-not-lawful-rules-top-court-274712>

<sup>84</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/istanbul-governors-office-bans-lawyers-march-for-kurdish-language-on-centennial-of-lausanne-treaty-news-62790>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64897655>

<sup>86</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/istanbul-district-governors-offices-ban-pride-week-events-news-60951>

<sup>87</sup> <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/normalizing-subsequent-rights-violations-causes-impunity>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.duvarenglish.com/protesters-take-streets-in-turkey-on-international-day-for-eliminating-violence-against-women-news-63393>

<https://www.duvarenglish.com/police-crack-down-on-womens-rights-marches-in-turkey-news-61574>

<sup>89</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/lgbti-activist-acquitted-in-2021-pride-week-case-274608>

<sup>90</sup> <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/06/27/turkey-frees-373-detained-at-banned-istanbul-pride-march/>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/istanbul-lgbtq-community-tries-to-hold-pride-amid-arrests/a-66027403>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-arrests-at-least-15-protesters-at-pride-rally/7678649.html>

<sup>93</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/istanbul-pride-parade-detained-and-tortured-373-people-released-263805>

<sup>94</sup> <https://bianet.org/haber/seventy-students-on-trial-for-bogazici-pride-participation-amid-torture-allegations-279628>

<https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-police-batter-detain-lgbti-pride-marchers-at-odtu-campus-news-60918>

<sup>95</sup> <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/metu-pride-march-trials-our-students-were-beaten-but-now-they-are-on-trial>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2021/09/29/ents-evicted-from-dormitories-deprived-of-scholarships-for-attending-lgbti-parade/>

unlawful detention, torture and inhuman treatment by police and security forces has also not been implemented.<sup>97</sup>

65. All criminal cases against Saturday Mothers are closely related to the police interventions and arrests following the banning of their peaceful advocacy activities by the District Governorships and City Governorships.<sup>98</sup> In two separate judgments, the Constitutional Court ruled that the administrative decision to ban the gatherings of Saturday Mothers constituted a violation of rights.<sup>99</sup> However, the City and District Governorships disregarded these Constitutional Court rulings, continuing to enforce bans every week.<sup>100</sup>

## E.2. Inspections, Audits and Related Fines<sup>101</sup>

66. A practice has been introduced whereby the Ministry of Interior conducts audits and inspections of associations without prior grounds.

67. Not all auditors are experts on associations. Public officials who have completed training organised by the Directorate General for Relations with Civil Society, based on a training module developed without consultation with civil society, are allowed to take part in audits on associations. These officials often have expertise in unrelated fields and are unfamiliar with the case law of the ECtHR or the Constitutional Court on freedom of association.

68. There is no restriction preventing re-auditing of a previously audited association without justification. An activity that was not considered as a misdemeanour in an earlier audit for the same period may later be classified as a misdemeanour, leading to the imposition of administrative fines.

69. The lack of transparency in the risk assessments that trigger these audits; the automatic designation of rights defence associations as 'risky'; the auditors' narrow interpretation of legislation limiting the scope of rights; the disregard for the Constitutional Court and the ECtHR jurisprudence on freedom of association; the transformation of audits into a punitive process (independent of administrative fines imposed at the end of the process); and the arbitrary actions of the Ministry auditors have turned these audits into a tool to stifle human rights defence.

70. From the effective date of the law until the report date, **Kaos GL**, a member of the Solidarity Network, was audited four times; **Truth Justice Memory Centre** and **UniKuir** were audited three times; **Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association**, **Amnesty Turkey**, **Life Memory Freedom**

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<sup>97</sup> Cycle 3; § 45.38 Estonia; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.sessizkalma.org/en/defender/saturday-motherspeople>

<sup>99</sup> <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2019/21721>

<https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2020/7092>

<sup>100</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?qId=28682>;

<https://srdefenders.org/turkiye-continued-judicial-harassment-against-members-of-saturday-mothers-people-and-violent-police-interference-in-their-vigils-joint-communication/>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2024-01/chapter-i-freedom-of-association.pdf>

**Association** were audited twice; **Democracy and Memory Research Association** (fine for the support received from Research Institute on Turkey) and **May 17 Association** were audited once. Some of these organisations were subjected to administrative fines without being given an opportunity to review and correct actions deemed violations of regulations, or for first-time 'misdemeanours'. Some of these are ( **Kaos GL**, **May 17**, **SPoD** ) being audited at the time of writing.

71. As a result of the audits, **Kaos GL** and **May 17 Association** were fined for allegedly providing irregular charitable aid outside the country. The payments described as aid were actually dues payments to international umbrella organisations and royalty payments of foreign universities. Administrative fines were imposed on four different chairpersons of these associations. One of the appeals by the **May 17 Association** has been accepted, while no decision has been made regarding the other.
72. As a result of the campaign against **Tarlabası Community Center**, started after a pro-government journalist targeted an LGBTI+ rights-themed event scheduled for June 2021, the organisation was audited and inspected by the Provincial Directorate of Civil Society Relations for two full days. Its chairperson was fined approximately USD 8,350. On October 8, 2024, the headquarters of the association was officially locked up and affixed a seal to it, the entry was banned.<sup>102</sup>
73. Audits and inspections, which should focus on strengthening the capacity of associations and making them more transparent and accountable, have largely become sanction mechanisms, resulting in administrative fines for association chairperson. Since these fines are collected from the personal assets of the chairpersons by law, they cannot be paid from the association's budget, which may deter individuals from taking on such leadership roles.

## F. Recommendations

Considering the preceding analysis, the Republic of Türkiye must:

74. Immediately implement judgments from the Constitutional Court and the ECtHR that found violations in cases involving HRDs,
75. Immediately end the systematic banning of LGBTI+ rights defenders' gatherings such as the Pride March, the 17th of May March and the right to assembly of groups like Saturday Mothers,
76. Immediately cease administrative and judicial harassment of HRDs for their statements or advocacy activities, and introduce legislative and policy measures to punish crimes against them and create a safe, enabling environment for their work,
77. Immediately start a legislative review process allowing a broad and inclusive consultation process with civil society and relevant stakeholders to identify, repeal or amend laws used to hinder HRDs' activities, which should include the following:

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<sup>102</sup> <https://x.com/TarlabasiTM/status/1844015986959388691>



**78. Amend the Law on Associations within one year, and,**

- a. Narrow its scope, aligning it with the ICCPR and ECHR and ensuring that any restrictions on associations pursue a legitimate aim, are prescribed by law, and necessary and proportionate,
- b. Clarify ambiguous provisions related to aid collection and online fundraising to avoid arbitrary enforcement,
- c. Define "assistance" in Article 2 to ensure clarity and accessibility for advocacy organisations,
- d. Establish clear and objective criteria for audits and "risk assessments" in Article 19 avoiding indiscriminate targeting of civil society organizations,
- e. Strengthen transparency in audit processes by establishing clear criteria and giving associations adequate time and opportunities to correct any administrative irregularities before imposing sanctions,
- f. Restrict administrative powers granted to inspectors, limiting audit-related information requests to relevant activities and respecting privacy rights,
- g. Limit association suspensions or dissolutions to exceptional cases, with full judicial oversight and adherence to international standards,
- h. Ensure compliance with human rights standards for any sanctions or fines resulting from audits, and allow adequate judicial review,
- i. Introduce appeal mechanisms to the Regional Court of Appeals for rejected objections to administrative fines,

**79. Amend the TPC within a year, and**

- a. Implement recommendations from international oversight mechanisms, including the Venice Commission, on overbroad and vaguely worded articles of the TPC and Anti-Terror Law,
- b. Repeal Article 299 of the TPC to decriminalize "insulting the President," recognize that the Presidency is a political, not symbolic office,
- c. Repeal or redraft other problematic articles of the TPC, including Articles 216, 217/a, 220, 300, 301, 312, 314, frequently used to obstruct HRD activities,

**80. Within one year, repeal or amend Articles 6 and 7 of the Anti-Terror Law to ensure its clarity, predictability and conformity with international standards,**

81. **Within one year**, repeal Article 6 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations, which grants sole authority to determine the route of a march to the Provincial and District Governors, and other restrictive articles that contradicts Article 21 of the ICCPR, to ensure that public institutions cannot arbitrarily ban or postpone peaceful marches,
82. **Within one year**, repeal Article 11/c of the Provincial Administration Law, which grants broad powers to Provincial and District Governors to ban events,
83. **Within one year**, amend the Law on Administrative Procedure to ensure that when environmental rights defender associations lose the lawsuits, the attorney's fees and litigation costs are covered from the legal aid budget.

Organizations Name Turkish - English	Bio
Sivil Alan Arařtırmaları Derneđi - Civic Space Studies Association	Civic Space Research Association is an independent human rights organization founded in October 2018 by a group of young human rights defenders with the main goal of protecting and expanding civic space. It aims to combat all kinds of discrimination against race, language, religion, color, gender, age, sexual identity, sexual orientation, physical diversity and disability. It especially encourages women, LGBTIQ+ individuals and young people to be the priority subjects and participants of these studies. As much as we aim to carry out projects to defend freedom of expression, assembly and organization, we also aim to carry out studies to access public space and produce artistic and cultural works. In this direction, we conduct research (data collection, mapping, field research, surveys, reports); organize seminars, workshops, conferences, panels; conduct campaigns and aim to use all kinds of advocacy tools. We are always open to cooperating and developing projects with all non-governmental organizations, platforms, networks and associations working in the field of human rights in line with our association's charter and goals. Instead of producing a new project, we prefer to support and contribute to the work being done in the same field for the efficient use of resources.
Civil Rights Defenders	Civil Rights Defenders is a Sweden-based international human rights organization. It works for and together with human rights defenders fighting for democracy and civil and political rights across the world. Through advocacy, litigation, and public campaigns, CRD defends human rights. CRD partners with and support human rights defenders in more than 300 organisations in 50 countries on four continents.

<p>İnsan Hakları Gündemi Derneği (İHGĐ) Human Rights Agenda Association</p>	<p>The Human Rights Agenda Association (HRAA) was established in 2003 in İzmir with the participation of human rights defenders from different regions of Turkey in order to have activities in human rights field at national and international level. The HRAA accepts that human rights as a value is above all political ideologies and worldviews, and believes that rights can only be improved by developing an approach to get into the very sources of issues and by using appropriate tactics and strategies to translate concrete proposal into real life. The HRAA categorically denounces all forms of violence, and while acknowledging that the state is the main agent of human rights violations, it equally objects the human rights violations committed by the armed dissident groups. The HRAA with its independent and impartial stance, is sensitizing the public conscience towards human rights violations and aim at developing a model for the society with its approach to human rights violations which pays no attention to the identity of the author or the victims of human rights violations.</p>
<p>İnsan Hakları Derneği-İHD İstanbul Human Rights Association (İHD İstanbul)</p>	<p>İHD is the oldest and largest human rights organization in Turkey. It strives for the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms regardless of race, ethnic origin, language, religion or sect and belief, color, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, political affiliation. Headquartered in Ankara, İHD has 26 branches, 10 representative offices and 7,910 members. İHD is also among the founders of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), the Human Rights Joint Platform and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court. İHD is also a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), EuroMed Rights and the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT).</p>
<p>Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı (TİHV) - Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)</p>	<p>Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) has been providing treatment and rehabilitation services to torture survivors and their relatives and has been working to prevent torture since 1990. HRFT, which has treatment centers in Ankara, İzmir, İstanbul, Diyarbakır and Van, has provided treatment and rehabilitation services to approximately 22,000 people who have been subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. In addition to its pioneering role in the preparation of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (İstanbul Protocol), which was completed in 1999 and submitted to the relevant UN bodies, HRFT is also one of the four non-governmental organizations that contributed to the preparation of the 2022 edition of the İstanbul Protocol.</p>

<p>Kaos GL Derneği - Kaos GL ( Kaos Gay and Lesbian Culturel Research and Solidarity Association )</p>	<p>On September 20, 1994, the organization joined the field of advocacy as “Kaos GL” magazine; in 2005, it applied to the Governorate of Ankara and gained the status of an association. It fights for the human rights of LGBTI+ persons. It carries out its activities through human rights, media and communication, refugee rights, academic and cultural rights programs. It engages in advocacy, lobbying, human rights monitoring and reporting, journalism, cultural and academic journal publishing.</p>
<p>Lambda İstanbul LGBTİ+ Dayanışma Derneği - Lambda istanbul LGBTI+ Solidarity Association</p>	<p>Lambdaistanbul LGBTİ+ was established in 1993 and officially recognized as an association in 2006 under the name Lambda İstanbul Lezbiyen, Gey, Biseksüel, Travesti, Transeksüel Kadın ve Erkekler Arası Dayanışma Derneği. The organization is dedicated to advocating for the rights of LGBTİ+ individuals in Turkey. Its mission includes combating discrimination faced by LGBTİ+ individuals while enhancing their visibility in society and promoting awareness of human rights. Lambdaistanbul conducts training sessions to raise awareness about LGBTİ+ rights, fosters solidarity by bringing people together, and organizes artistic and social events to further increase visibility.</p>
<p>Yaşam Bellek Özgürlük Derneği - Life Memory and Freedom Association</p>	<p>The Life Memory Freedom Association (Yaşam Bellek Özgürlük Derneği) is an independent civil society organization specializing in the defence and promotion of human rights in Turkey. Founded in 2008, it operates as a legal entity. The association has a wide range of activities from trial monitoring to preparing thematic or individual case reports on human rights violations and Rule 9.2 submissions to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe . Apart from its other human rights activities, the association provides legal support for applications to the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and prepares reports on the decisions issued.</p>
<p>17 Mayıs Derneği - May 17 Association</p>	<p>"About May 17 Association: The May 17 Association is an LGBTI+ civil society organization, founded on 2 September 2019, in Ankara, Türkiye, by a group of experienced LGBTI+ human rights defenders and professionals working in the field. The association derives its name from the globally recognized Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. The main goals of the May 17 Association are ensuring the well-being of LGBTI+ rights holders and building their capacity to advocate for their rights, respond to the needs of the LGBTI+ community, and support LGBTI+ activism in Türkiye."</p>

<p>Medya ve Hukuk Çalışmaları Derneği - Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)</p>	<p>About Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) is a human rights organization committed to protecting freedom of expression, press freedom, the right to assemble and protest, and access to information in Turkey. It serves as a vital platform where journalism and legal expertise merge to safeguard these freedoms, particularly for journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders facing increasing challenges.</p>
<p>Şiddetsizlik Eğitim ve Araştırma Derneği - Nonviolence Education and Research Center (Nonviolence Center)</p>	<p>"Nonviolence Education and Research Association, established in 2015, continues its work with the vision of creating a nonviolent world. This vision is defined as a world where rights and freedoms are protected, and where peace and democracy are realized. In line with this, the organization develops programs aimed at empowering human rights defenders and grassroots organizations, enabling them to adopt and effectively utilize nonviolent methods.</p> <p>To date, Nonviolence Center has carried out awareness-raising, skill and capacity building activities in fields such as LGBTQ+ rights, women's rights, environmental struggles, peacebuilding, and human rights. Its work is structured around three main programs: Nonviolence, Nonviolent Organizing, and Organizational Well-being. Additionally, the Nonviolence Center is a member of the Human Rights Defenders Network and CIVICUS, working in solidarity and cooperation with other rights organizations both nationally and internationally."</p>
<p>P24 Bağımsız Gazetecilik Derneği - P24 Independent Journalism Association</p>	<p>P24 Platform for Independent Journalism (P24) is a leading Turkish civil society organization with a mission to work for the protection and promotion of freedom of expression. It was founded in the aftermath of the Gezi Protests in 2013 by prominent journalists, including three former national editors-of-chief, to support independent media in Turkey in the face of a collusion of state and corporate interests and an increasing political interference in the editorial policies. The organization's initial mission to support journalistic integrity evolved (particularly after the declaration of a state of emergency in 2016 following a failed coup attempt) into a broader portfolio designed to defend freedom of expression in general. Today, P24 runs several programs with the aim of preserving debate, opening space for public discussion, fighting censorship and self-censorship, and defending in court and advocate on behalf of those who face prosecution as a result of exercising a legitimate right of free expression.</p>

<p>RIT - Research Institute on Turkey</p>	<p>Research Institute on Turkey is a non-profit organization with an interdisciplinary group of researchers, artists, writers, architects, scientists and activists who explore and engage in commonization practices for social change. Our goal is to contribute to a pluralistic, egalitarian, and democratic Turkey with an emphasis on human rights, social and economic justice, gender equality, sexual rights, cultural and political recognition and ecological sustainability from a critical historical perspective. We develop in-situ embodied knowledge through in-depth, focused research and policy analysis, creative public engagement, collective learning activities, solidarity campaigns and network collaborations.</p>
<p>Sosyal Politika, Cinsiyet Kimliği ve Cinsel Yönelim Çalışmaları Derneği (SPoD) - Social Policy, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association</p>	<p>Setting out in 2011 with the dream of a fair, equal and free world under the rainbow, it contributes to the production of social policies necessary for a life in which LGBTI+ individuals in Turkey will not feel oppressed regarding their gender identity and sexual orientation.</p>
<p>Hakikat Adalet ve Hafıza Çalışmaları Derneği (Hafıza)</p>	<p>Truth Justice Memory Center (Hafıza Merkezi) was established in November 2011 by a group of lawyers, journalists, academicians, and human rights activists based in Istanbul. Hafıza Merkezi initially focused on enforced disappearances and identified the documentation of gross human rights violations in universal standards, monitoring and documenting precedent-setting cases, and conveying the truths related to all of these gross violations to the wider society, as the main axis of its activities. In parallel to these, Hafıza Merkezi also defined peace as a field of work during the peace process between 2013-2015 and after. In order to respond to the current needs brought about by the developments in Turkey in 2015 and after, Hafıza Merkezi added recent gross human rights violations to its monitoring and documentation activities. In this context, it began to describe its activities to support human rights organizations and human rights defenders who have been suppressed in various ways as a new field. Hafıza Merkezi carries out several activities seeking accountability for human rights violations varying from documentation, analysis, and publications, third party interventions to the cases before national and regional human rights courts and bodies, such as amicus curiae, Rule 9.2 Communications, and Urgent Appeals to the UN Special Procedures.</p>

<p>Türkiye İnsan Hakları Davalarına Destek Projesi (TLSP) - Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project</p>	<p>The Turkey Litigation Support Project (TLSP) conducts research on Türkiye's evolving human rights crisis, providing expertise and support to initiate effective legal actions in response. Comprising leading academics, human rights lawyers, and researchers both within Türkiye and internationally, the TLSP engages in and supports litigation, research, advocacy, and capacity building. It collaborates closely with lawyers, Bar Associations, civil society actors, and national and international experts. Notable cases in which the TLSP has provided support or intervened include domestic cases concerning Ayşe Çelik (known as the “Ayşe teacher” case) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) before the Constitutional Court, and the Tunç and Yerbasan, Kavala, and Demirtaş cases before the ECtHR.</p>
<p>Üniversiteli Kuir Araştırmaları ve LGBTİ+ Dayanışma Derneği (ÜniKuir) - University Queer Research and LGBTI+ Solidarity Association</p>	<p>University Queer Research and LGBT+ Solidarity Association (UniKuir): Founded on February 14, 2020, in Ankara, Türkiye, the UniKuir is a rights-based civil society organization working at the intersection of LGBT+ and youth rights. Together with its volunteers, employees, and governing bodies, UniKuir aims to strengthen self-organizing efforts of university and young LGBT+ individuals both on campuses and in cities, create safe and inclusive spaces, develop practices that highlight the right to and access to education for LGBT+ individuals, combat discrimination, violence, and hate on campuses, make the ongoing struggles visible, contribute to anti-discrimination policy-making, advocate for LGBT+ rights at national and international levels, and ensure media visibility of the university LGBT+ movement. The Association frequently employs advocacy methods such as monitoring, reporting, campaigning, and capacity-building activities to achieve these goals.</p>



<p>Kadın Kültür Sanat Edebiyat Derneği (KASED) - Women Culture Art and Literature Association</p>	<p>Kadın Kültür Sanat Edebiyat Derneği (KASED), kadınların kültür sanat alanında anadilde üretim yapmalarını destekleyerek kültürel haklara erişimlerini sağlamayı hedefleyen bir kadın derneğidir. Ayrımcılığa karşı durarak toplumsal barışın sağlanmasına katkıda bulunan KASED, kadınların, gençlerin ve çocukların kültür sanat çalışmalarına katılımını artırmayı amaçlamakta; bu bağlamda sanatsal eğitimlerle kadınların beceri ve kapasite inşasını güçlendirerek, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini sağlamak için çeşitli faaliyetler yürütmektedir. Dernek, kültürel çeşitliliği kadın bakış açısıyla değerlendirerek, kadınların bireysel ve kolektif üretimlerini görünür kılma çabası içindedir.</p> <p>Women Culture Art and Literature Association(KASED) is a women's association that aims to ensure women's access to cultural rights by supporting their production in their mother tongue in the field of culture and arts. Contributing to social peace by standing against discrimination, KASED aims to increase the participation of women, youth and children in culture and arts; in this context, it carries out various activities to ensure gender equality by strengthening women's skills and capacity building through artistic trainings. By evaluating cultural diversity from a female perspective, the association endeavors to make women's individual and collective productions visible.</p>
<p>Rosa Kadın Derneği - Rosa Women's Association</p>	<p>Rosa Women's Association: Founded in late 2018 in Diyarbakır, Rosa Kadın Derneği continues its work to combat all forms of social, political, social, cultural, economic, sexual, psychological violence against women, to carry out activities to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, to develop and implement projects to promote gender equality, to work towards strengthening civil society and women's organizations, to protect nature and natural life, to build an ecological life, and to spread the culture of democracy and peace.</p> <p>The association's rights-based activities include lobbying relevant institutions and organizations for the implementation of positive discrimination in laws and practices related to women's issues, especially legal regulations that directly affect women; building civil power and doing advocacy for the implementation of regulations that will prevent victimization of women and/or violation of women's rights by laws and practices; and conducting studies on women's rights.</p>
<p>Kadın Zamanı Derneği - Women's Time Association</p>	<p>Kadın Zamanı Derneği (Women's Time Association), established in July 2020, is dedicated to eradicating all forms of discrimination against women and empowering women from diverse societal backgrounds. It specifically addressed women facing dual discrimination due to both gender and ethnic identities, stemming from patriarchy.</p>

<p>Göç İzleme Derneği (GÖÇİZDER) - Migration Monitorin Association</p>	<p>Migration Monitoring Association was established in Istanbul in 2016. At the time of its establishment, it carried out activities especially in the field of forced migration/migration within the country, but over time, it has started to carry out activities in the field of migration between countries due to compulsory reasons such as migration for economic reasons, seasonal migration and war. It carries out monitoring, reporting and sharing with the public the causes of migration, migration routes and migration process as well as the living conditions in the places of migration. Migration Monitoring Association carries out its activities with a human-oriented and human rights index. Migration Monitoring Association was established in Istanbul in 2016. At the time of its establishment, it carried out activities especially in the field of forced migration/migration within the country, but over time, it has started to carry out activities in the field of migration between countries due to compulsory reasons such as migration for economic reasons, seasonal migration and war. It carries out monitoring, reporting and sharing with the public the causes of migration, migration routes and migration process as well as the living conditions in the places of migration. Migration Monitoring Association carries out its activities with a human-oriented and human rights index.</p>
<p>Romani Godi, Roman Hafıza Çalışmaları Derneği - Roma Memory Studies Association - Romani Godi</p>	<p>Romani Godi-Roman Memory Studies Association is a civil society organization advocating for equal rights for Roma. Recognizing the language, history, and culture of the Roma as a crucial part of collective memory, Romani Godi aims to combat anti-Roma discrimination and build social peace. Focusing on monitoring, research, and reporting, the association works to create rights-based solutions, emphasizing youth participation and cultural rights while highlighting the discrimination and human rights violations faced by the Roma community. Romani Godi operates across various thematic areas, aiming to be a reliable source of information about the Roma and supporting all those interested in engaging in rights-based work for the Roma community.</p>
<p>Hak İnisiyatifi Derneği - Rights Initiative Association</p>	<p>The Rights Initiative Association is a human rights organization founded in 2017. The Association is active in various fields on identifying and bringing rights violations to the agenda, informing the public about them, reporting and monitoring human rights practices in the country and around the world. At the same time the raising awareness of human rights in individual is among the missions of the association.</p>

<p>Kadının İnsan Hakları Derneği (KİH) - Women for Women's Human Rights(WWHR)</p>	<p>Women for Women's Human Rights(WWHR) is an independent women's organization that advocates for women's human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination in Turkey and on the international level. It was founded in 1993 with the aim of promoting women's human rights in Turkey and around the globe. WWHR supports the active and widespread participation of women in the establishment and maintenance of a democratic, egalitarian and peaceful social order on both the national and international level. WWHR has contributed to numerous legal reforms, as well as working for the advancement of sexual and bodily rights in Muslim societies, and promoting women's human rights at the United Nations (UN) level: <a href="https://kadinininsanhaklari.org/">https://kadinininsanhaklari.org/</a></p>
<p>Eşit Haklar İçin İzleme Derneği (ESHİD) - Association for Monitoring Equal Rights</p>	<p>The Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER) (ESHID in Turkish) is committed to the advancement of human rights and freedoms for all individuals, with equal opportunities for all. The objective of ESHID is to facilitate the dissemination of information regarding human rights violations through monitoring. This is with a view to establishing the current state of people's rights and freedoms, and subsequently developing and claiming remedial policies. The organisation's activities are concentrated on case monitoring, election monitoring and reporting on various rights violations. The core methods used by ESHID are advocacy, monitoring and support in the field of human rights. For more on our work: <a href="http://www.esithaklar.org">www.esithaklar.org</a></p>
<p>Yurttaşlık Derneği - Citizens' Assembly</p>	<p>"Citizens' Assembly (formerly Helsinki Citizens' Assembly) is a civil society organization working on fundamental rights and freedoms, peace, democracy and pluralism. The Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Turkey started its activities in 1990 in parallel with the initiative of the international Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and was established in Istanbul in 1993 as a non-governmental organization, recognized as an internationally operating organization by the Council of Ministers. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly was renamed as Citizens' Assembly with the decision of the General Assembly held in 2016. The Assembly works on fundamental rights and freedoms, peace, pluralism, citizenship and democratization. It aims to introduce - into daily life - values such as life with dignity, the rule of law and justice, accountable, transparent and participatory public administration, gender equality as enshrined in international conventions; an economy which does not destroy the social texture and peace, cities and the planet; resolution of conflicts and problems through peaceful negotiations, consultation and dialogue and to ensure that these values be concretely reflected and spread on a civic basis</p>

## Annex 2 - UPR Recommendations to Türkiye - Human Rights Defenders

Session	Country	Support status	Recommendations	Implementation status and other notes
35	Portugal	Supported	Allow journalists, human rights defenders and all non-governmental organizations to freely exercise their right to freedom of expression and opinion	No progress
35	Argentina	Supported	Adopt all measures aimed at guaranteeing the freedom of expression of journalists and human rights defenders	No progress
35	Peru	Supported	Ensure that human rights defenders, academics and journalists continue to enjoy fully the right to freedom of expression	No progress
35	Norway	Supported	Fully respect the right to assembly and create a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders	No progress
35	New Zealand	Supported	Ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are not subjected to intimidation or arbitrary arrest in undertaking their work	No progress
35	Ireland	Supported	Ensure the creation of a safe, enabling environment for journalists, human rights defenders and civil society, both online and offline	No progress
35	Finland	Supported	Ensure free and safe space for civil society, including human rights defenders, in full accordance with international human rights obligations	No progress
35	Uruguay	Noted	Adopt comprehensive legislation for the protection of human rights defenders that includes the investigation of allegations of presumed violations, acts of intimidation and reprisals	No progress
35	Austria	Supported	Ensure that human rights defenders and journalists can exercise their tasks without fear of reprisals, including through bringing those responsible for attacks and harassment of journalists to justice	No progress
35	United Kingdom	Noted	Protect freedom of expression, including for journalists and human rights defenders, by decriminalizing defamation	No progress
35	Timor-Leste	Supported	Protect the exercise of the right to freedom of expression of journalists, human rights	No progress

			defenders and all non-governmental organizations	
35	Italy	Supported	Take appropriate measures to protect freedom of expression, assembly and association, as well as to guarantee a safe and enabling environment for civil society organizations, human rights defenders and journalists, including by defining the limitations to fundamental freedoms in compliance with international obligations	No progress
35	Iceland	Supported	Guarantee the freedom of thought and religion, and the rights to freedom of information and freedom of expression, and ensure that human rights defenders and journalists can carry out their legitimate and peaceful activities without fear of attack or reprisal	No progress
35	Luxembourg	Noted	Put an end to the arbitrary and prolonged detentions of journalists, writers and representatives of civil society, including Mr. Osman Kavala	No progress
35	Germany	Noted	Amend article 7 (2) of the Anti-Terrorism Law to ensure that only incitement to violence is prohibited. Align counter-terrorism laws with international human rights standards. End excessive prosecution of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society representatives under the pretext of fighting terrorism	No progress
35	Denmark	Noted	Bring the Anti-Terrorism Law in line with international human rights standards and prevent the prosecution of journalists and human rights defenders for peacefully exercising their human rights	No progress
35	Canada	Supported	Ensure that anti-terrorism and defamation legislation do not interfere with freedom of opinion and expression to enable the work of journalists, artists, academics and human rights defenders	No progress
21	Czechia	Noted	Amend the provisions on libel and defamation so that they cannot be abused to prosecute human rights defenders and journalists	No progress
8	Norway	Supported	Consider inviting the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders to visit the country in the near future	No progress
8	Chile	Supported	Investigate all complaints of harassment and persecution against human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations, and sanction those responsible	No progress