

Press for Freedom May report released

In the first five months of the year the number of journalists who have lost their jobs has risen to 898 Internet access restriction record reaches new heights

The Press for Freedom / Strengthening Media Freedom project of the Journalists Association has released its May report on violations of freedom of expression and of media freedom. The report underlined that number of journalists who have lost their jobs since the start of the year has risen to 898 and the number of websites to which access is restricted has increased to 105,119.

The report was prepared based on the information gathered by the Pff / Strengthening Media Freedom project team and draws attention to the increase in internet access restrictions, also underlining that 216 cases of censorship, including the accreditation practice, have occurred. The report mentions that the use of auto censorship, the self-restriction of the media, cannot be documented and therefore is not included in these figures, adding “the deepening atmosphere of fear prevalent in the country, the increasing polarization and fears of job security have caused an increase in auto-censorship, also affecting democratic life as these developments have prevented the public from making informed decisions, a requirement of democracy.

The report draws attention to the fact that 39 judicial proceedings were brought against journalists in the month of May, commenting that “the existence of media organizations under pressure through the custody, arrest and sentencing of journalists is living proof the Turkey is passing through an extraordinary period”. 37 journalists spent the month of May in prison, 18 having been arrested and 19 serving a sentence.

The Press for Freedom / Strengthening Media Freedom report also touched upon the international reflections of issues experienced in the press, expressing that worrying conclusions had been drawn regarding the Turkish press in the EU progress report and country report prepared by the US Department of State. Furthermore, international organizations such as Freedom House and Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF) have also reported serious issues in regard to press freedom in Turkey. RSF reports show that Turkey is ranked 151st out of 180 countries in terms of press freedom, and the Turkish media was classified “Not Free” by Freedom House.

The monthly reports prepared by the Journalists Association Press for Freedom / Strengthening Media Freedom project are funded since April by the Bilateral Cooperation Program of the British Embassy. Press for Freedom / Strengthening Media Freedom project’s May report and other reports are available at www.pressforfreedom.org

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Strengthening Media Freedom

