

IPI and 17 press freedom organisations, rights groups call for the release of journalist Furkan Karabay

The International Press Institute (IPI) and the undersigned organisations strongly condemn the elongated pretrial detention of journalist Furkan Karabay, who faces a prison sentence of 6 to 15 years and call for his immediate release. Karabay has now spent 117 days in prison over his journalistic commentary.

Karabay, who has previously worked as an editor and reporter for news portals outlets such as Gerçek Gündem and 10Haber, has been [held in pretrial detention](#) for over 100 days and his indictment was [prepared](#) on September 5. He is charged with “making targets of those who were tasked to combat terrorism” and “insulting the Turkish President” over his journalistic reporting and social media commentary. Karabay was taken into custody during a police raid on his home in Istanbul and sent to prison the same day. Since then, multiple appeals submitted by his legal team for his release have been rejected, with judicial authorities citing a purported “risk of flight” as justification for prolonging his detention without an indictment for 114 days.

The [accusations stem from](#) Karabay’s reference to the names and photos of judicial officials in his reporting on the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality investigations, which prosecutors claim amounted to “making them potential targets” for terrorist organizations. The second charge, “insulting the president,” [is based on](#) Karabay’s public recall of past remarks by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in the context of a local official’s deteriorating health. Karabay [denied](#) any wrongdoing, emphasizing that all the information he shared was already in the public domain.

Karabay has been previously [targeted](#) for his journalistic work, with MapMF [documenting](#) five separate incidents since the beginning of 2024. In April 2025, Karabay [received](#) a prison sentence of more than two years in a separate case after President Erdoğan and members of his family filed complaints accusing him of “insulting the president” and “defamation” over remarks he made during a YouTube program. The court suspended this sentence. This followed two previous jailings on similar allegations. In December 2023, he was [arrested](#) after publishing a report on judicial corruption and bribery allegations. He remained in jail until his release in January 2024. In November 2024, he was [detained](#) again over his coverage and social media posts about the investigation into a local opposition mayor who was arrested and replaced by a trustee. He was released later that month.

Karabay’s case underscores a broader, alarming clampdown on press freedom in Turkey and mirrors the persecution of other journalists who have faced similar extended pretrial detention periods without indictment. In June 2025, prominent journalist and YouTuber Fatih Altaylı was similarly [arrested](#), due to his comments during an online broadcast that were allegedly “threatening the president,” and was held in pretrial detention for more than a month before his indictment was issued. In February 2025, reporters Yıldız Tar, Ercüment Akdeniz, and Elif Akgül

were [detained](#) and spent several months in prison before their indictments were prepared. Although the charges were not directly related to their journalism, such cases still illustrate how pretrial imprisonment is being misused to punish and silence critical voices, including in the media.

We consider Karabay's imprisonment and the denial of due process for more than three months as a disproportionate and punitive response to his journalism. Reporting and critical public commentary on government officials must never be criminalised. Equating news coverage and commentary with serious offenses like "targeting officials" is a dangerous distortion.

IPI and 17 undersigned organizations, call for the immediate release of journalist Furkan Karabay and for all charges against him to be dropped. We further urge Turkish authorities to cease exploiting vague legal provisions to persecute journalists and release the other [16 journalists](#) in jail.

Signed by:

International Press Institute (IPI)

ARTICOLO 21

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

Danish PEN

Dicle Fırat Journalists Association

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

IFEX

International Fédération of Journalists (IFJ)

Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)

Norwegian Helsinki Committee

PEN America

PEN International

PEN Norway

PEN Sweden

P24 Platform for Independent Journalism

Reporters sans frontières (RSF)

South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)