

Joint Letter to NATO: Accreditation Process Excludes Independent Turkish Journalists from Summit

IPI, together with press freedom, freedom of expression, and human rights organisations, has written to NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte to raise urgent concerns about the denial of accreditation to independent media in Türkiye seeking to cover the 2026 Ankara Summit.

Dear Secretary General Rutte,

The undersigned press freedom, freedom of expression, journalists' and human rights organisations are writing to express our serious concern regarding the [denial](#) of media accreditation to independent news outlets and journalists in Türkiye seeking to cover the 2026 NATO Summit in Ankara on 7–8 July.

Over the past few days, NATO's Office of Strategic Communications has rejected by e-mail accreditation requests from a number of media organisations and journalists, [including](#) Halk TV, Sözcü TV, Nefes, BirGün, Cumhuriyet, ANKA News Agency, Medyascope, and T24 — independent media operating in an already severely restricted press environment. Among the affected applicants are journalists with extensive records of covering NATO summits, now turned away without explanation. The rejection notices stated that the reasons for this decision could not be discussed and were final.

Of particular concern to us is the recent [announcement](#) by the NATO Spokesperson, who acknowledged that NATO “relies on the host nation to provide assessments on journalists from their country to ensure access to the meeting site.” The NATO spokesperson at the same time states that “[I]t is very important for NATO that media can attend major events in person.”

Türkiye's Directorate of Communications, operating under control of the Presidency, has repeatedly been [criticised](#) by international press freedom organisations for systematically using press accreditation to pressure critical journalists. NATO's reliance on an institution with the Directorate's track record gives rise to serious concerns: that the accreditation decisions for the upcoming summit were influenced by the editorial or political orientation of the rejected media organisations.

Given NATO's own accreditation criteria, which lists editorial independence as a core eligibility requirement, rejection of outlets defined by that very quality is difficult to reconcile. Should a governmental institution with a documented track record of restricting press access have played any role in this process, NATO risks allowing domestic media pressures to influence what should be an independent credentialing framework.

Under [international standards](#), the following minimum requirements are necessary for an accreditation scheme to be compliant with freedom of expression principles:

- be administered by a body which is independent from the government and follow a transparent procedure;
- be based on specific, non-discriminatory, and reasonable criteria published in advance;
- only be applied to the extent justifiable by genuine space or safety constraints; and
- not permit accreditation to be withdrawn based on the work of the journalist or media outlet concerned.

Independent journalists in Türkiye are already under [intense pressure](#). NATO, an alliance explicitly built upon the shared values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law, has an institutional responsibility to ensure that its public-facing events do not mirror or legitimise repressive domestic media environments.

Against this backdrop, the denial of accreditation raises urgent concerns that NATO has an obligation to address. Therefore, the undersigned organisations respectfully request:

- NATO explain in full the criteria applied in assessing media accreditation requests for the 2026 Ankara Summit, and what role Turkish governmental authorities played in that process.
- Provide specific, written reasons for the rejection of accreditation requests, particularly given that outlets known to have been affected are independent media organisations.

- Reconsider the rejected applications and restore accreditation to outlets that meet NATO's own eligibility criteria, including the requirement for editorial independence.
- Establish an immediate appeals mechanism that allows rejected media organisations and journalists to challenge decisions before the summit opens.

The undersigned organisations consider these accreditation rejections a direct limitation on publicly available information and a deprivation of independent perspectives from Türkiye — for both the Turkish public and the international community.

In view of the NATO Spokesperson's announcement that NATO is in contact with the Turkish authorities on accreditation for the Summit, we urge you to ensure the ability of independent media to cover the summit by reconsidering the rejected accreditation requests and restoring meaningful press access before the gathering opens.

We look forward to your prompt response regarding this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Signatories:

International Press Institute (IPI)

ARTICLE 19 Europe

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Foreign Media Association (FMA Turkey)

Human Rights Watch

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)

Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC)

Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT)

PEN Norway

Progressive Journalists Association (ÇGD)

P24 Platform for Independent Journalism

South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

The Journalists' Union Of Turkey (TGS)

This statement was produced by IPI as part of the [Media Freedom Rapid Response \(MFRR\)](#), a Europe-wide mechanism which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and candidate countries, funded by the European Commission.