

## Turkey: IPI and partner organisations call for the release of journalist İsmail Arı ahead of June 5 court hearing

The undersigned press freedom, freedom of expression, journalists' and human rights organisations call for the immediate release of BirGün journalist İsmail Arı, who has been behind bars for 75 days. Arı is due to appear before an Ankara court on June 5, after being jailed under Turkey's so-called "disinformation law" in connection with his investigative journalism. Media Freedom Rapid Response's (MFRR) monitoring database Mapping Media Freedom reports [55 cases](#) related to disinformation, including that of İsmail Arı, since the introduction of Disinformation Law in 2022.

Arı was [detained](#) in the Turhal district of Tokat province on March 21, where he had travelled to visit family during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, and was subsequently transferred to Ankara. The investigation, conducted by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, includes charges of "publicly disseminating misleading information" under Article 217/A of the Turkish Penal Code and "insulting a public official," under Article 125. Following the investigation, Arı was formally [arrested](#).

The investigation file is built primarily around Arı's journalistic work, including his published reports, social media posts, and attendance at public events, making clear that Turkish authorities are treating routine journalistic activity as criminal evidence. Covering stories, speaking with sources, and investigating matters of public interest are not criminal acts.

Turkey's [disinformation law](#) is structurally incompatible with international press freedom standards. Its vague wording fails to clearly define what constitutes "untrue information" or to specify what type of content poses a threat to national security or public order, handing authorities broad discretion to weaponise the law against independent journalism and intimidate reporters.

Arı's arrest earlier this year is not the first time the journalist has been targeted for his work. Last year, Arı [received](#) direct threats following his reporting on the "Şahinler" organised crime network and an article he wrote about alleged judicial bribery. These threats, sent from an unknown foreign number, included not only direct messages targeting him personally, but also a list of information about his relatives. At least one family member also received direct threats.

Following the threats, Arı filed complaints with the police and the Ministry of Interior. Despite the seriousness of the incident, the police only provided him with a 90-day "caution protection" number to report further incidents.

We call on Turkish authorities to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release İsmail Arı at the hearing in Ankara on June 5,
- Repeal Article 217/A of the Turkish Penal Code in its entirety,
- Bring all legislation regulating freedom of expression into line with Turkey's international obligations.

**Signatories:**

International Press Institute (IPI)  
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)  
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)  
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)  
International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)  
Foreign Media Association Turkey (FMA)  
Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)  
Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT)  
PEN International  
PEN Norway  
PEN Sweden  
Progressive Journalists Association (ÇGD)  
P24 Platform for Independent Journalism  
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)  
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)  
Wales PEN Cymru

*Disclaimer:*

*This statement was coordinated by 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.*