

World's Press welcomes release of Turkish journalists

PARIS, FRANCE / DARMSTADT, GERMANY / ANKARA, TURKEY: The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum have welcomed the release of four Turkish journalists held for over a year on spurious charges of aiding a terrorist group, and called on Turkish authorities to do more to respect freedom of the press.



Nedim Sener, Ahmet Sik, Coskun Musluk and Sait Çakir had been arrested and accused of involvement with Oda TV, a news website that authorities allege acted as the media wing for the so-called "Ergenekon" conspiracy.

While commending the decision of an Istanbul court to release the four on Monday, WAN-IFRA and WEF called on the Turkish authorities to do more to respect freedom of the press and urged the government to end its harassment of critical journalists.

Turkish government needs to reverse trend

"Attacks against the press risk creating a climate in which journalists practice self-censorship, eroding democratic principles and stifling public debate," said a WAN-IFRA statement, echoing a press freedom [resolution](#) issued on 1 March by the Board of the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers.

"The influence that Turkey has in the Middle East and North Africa region following the Arab revolutions, coupled with its desire to strengthen ties with European neighbours, makes it all the more critical that the government reverses its alarming trend of targeting critical media and arresting journalists," the statement said.

Authorities have arrested hundreds of people from across Turkish society in the "Ergenekon" conspiracy, in which ultra-nationalists and elements of the Turkish security services are said to have plotted to use terrorism to bring down the government. Such charges are routinely used to imprison journalists, with international observers identifying many journalists arrested in direct connection to their professional work. There are currently more journalists in jail in Turkey than in any other country in the world.

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