

Turkey

| | 2015 | 2016 | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--|---------------------|
| Internet Freedom Status | Partly Free | Not Free | Population: | 78.7 million |
| Obstacles to Access (0-25) | 13 | 13 | Internet Penetration 2015 (ITU): | 54 percent |
| Limits on Content (0-35) | 20 | 21 | Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked: | Yes |
| Violations of User Rights (0-40) | 25 | 27 | Political/Social Content Blocked: | Yes |
| TOTAL* (0-100) | 58 | 61 | Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested: | Yes |
| | | | Press Freedom 2016 Status: | Not Free |

* 0=most free, 100=least free

Key Developments: June 2015 – May 2016

- Mobile and internet connections were repeatedly suspended in Yuksekova, Cizre, Sur, Silopi, and other cities in the southeast of the country during raids by security agencies against militants (See **Restrictions on Connectivity**).
- Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were temporarily blocked on numerous occasions—typically in the aftermath of terrorist attacks—until they restricted access to specific posts or accounts (see **Blocking and Filtering**).
- Turkey accounted for almost 90 percent of all content that was locally restricted by Twitter in the second half of 2015. Turkey’s regulator fined the company TRY 150,000 (US\$ 51,000) for refusing to remove what it termed “terrorist propaganda” from the site (see **Content Removal**).
- Progovernment trolls have escalated their campaigns to harass opposition voices and organizations on social media through smear campaigns and fake accounts (see **Media, Diversity, and Content Manipulation**).
- Journalists such as Hayri Tunç, Aytekin Gezici, and Bülent Keneş received lengthy prison sentences for “insulting” public officials or spreading “terrorism propaganda” (see **Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities**).
- A 14-day cyberattack brought almost 400,000 Turkish websites offline and temporarily suspended retail banking services in the country (see **Technical Attacks**).

Editor's Note:

This report covers events between June 1, 2015 and May 31, 2016. On July 15, 2016, a rogue faction of the Turkish military attempted to overthrow the government. Internet connections were throttled and major social media platforms were blocked. In a bid to reassert control over the country, President Erdoğan ordered the telecommunications regulator to restore internet access and subsequently made a FaceTime video call to a news anchor, who held up her cell phone in front of the camera to allow the president to address the nation.¹ President Erdoğan rallied citizens to take to the streets in a show of support for the government. Government order was eventually restored, but not before some 300 people reportedly died in clashes between pro- and anti-coup forces.² Government officials publicly blamed exiled Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen for instigating the coup. Since then a state of emergency has been in place, thousands have been arrested, and hundreds of thousands have faced some form of retribution for alleged connections to Gülen, such as job loss, travel bans, or harassment. In August 2016, one of Turkey's government agencies, the Telecommunication and Communication Presidency (TİB), was closed by decree and all responsibilities were transferred to the ICT Authority. The TİB—described by President Erdoğan as “among the places that has all the dirt”—was closed over suspicions it was used by Gülenists as a “headquarters for illegal wiretapping.”³ These dynamics will be further explored in the 2016-17 edition of Freedom on the Net.

Introduction

Internet freedom declined in Turkey in 2015-16 amid network shutdowns, social media blocking, lengthy prison sentences, and nationwide cyberattacks.

General elections in June and November of 2015 heightened tensions in the country, which were further exacerbated by a series of deadly terrorist attacks. Authorities hastily introduced gag orders on the dissemination of images and videos of the bombings, resulting in the blocking of hundreds of URLs. Access to Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube was repeatedly throttled until the companies removed controversial content. Specific hashtags related to the bomb sites, like #Istanbul, #Ankara, and #Diyarbakir, were temporarily filtered from Instagram. Counterterrorism operations in the southeastern region of the country repeatedly resulted in the suspension of 3G networks, affecting millions of residents for days at a time.

Over 100,000 websites were reportedly blocked in the country as of 2016, including a wide variety of political, social, and religious content. Dozens of news agencies and social media accounts covering Kurdish issues have been either blocked or shut down for allegedly promoting terrorist propaganda over the past year. Journalists and even university students have been convicted on spurious terrorism-related charges and sentenced to multiyear prison terms. But the most common charge over the coverage period remained “insulting” public officials, particularly President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has reportedly filed criminal defamation complaints against more than 2,000 people since

1 Reuters, “Erdoğan addresses Turkey via FaceTime amid attempted coup – video,” *The Guardian*, July 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/jul/15/erdogan-facetime-turkey-coup-attempt>.

2 Patrick Kingsley, “Turkey coup: Erdoğan mourns casualties – and vows retribution,” *The Guardian*, July 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/17/recep-tayyip-erdogan-mourns-coup-casualties-and-vows-retribution>.

3 “Turkey shuts down telecommunication body amid post-coup attempt measures,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 15, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkey-shuts-down-telecommunication-body-amid-post-coup-attempt-measures.aspx?pageID=238&nID=102936&NewsCatID=338>.

elected to his current office in August 2014.⁴ While most users typically receive suspended sentences,⁵ several users have been given lengthy prison terms. The government frequently targets political opponents by applying the country's draconian defamation laws to nonviolent, often satirical Twitter posts.

Turkey continued to grapple with significant threats to cybersecurity. While opposition news sites are frequently targeted by progovernment hackers, a nationwide DDoS attack brought thousands of Turkish websites offline and made it difficult for locals to use retail banking services in December 2015. Furthermore, the addresses, dates of birth, and national identity numbers belonging to around 50 million citizens were leaked in early April 2016 in one of the country's biggest ever data breaches. At the same time, Turkish users must contend with intrusive government surveillance and the proven use of sophisticated malware tools by law enforcement. In a country that reportedly listed social media as one of the main threats to national security,⁶ internet freedom is on a very negative trajectory in Turkey.

Obstacles to Access

The most significant obstacle to internet access in Turkey remains the shutting down of telecommunications networks during security operations, mainly in the southeastern part of the country. Internet penetration continues to grow, particularly through mobile broadband, as three companies have begun to offer "4.5G" services.

Availability and Ease of Access

Internet penetration has continued to increase over the last few years. According to the International Telecommunication Union, internet penetration stood at 54 percent at the end of 2015, up from 40 percent in 2010.⁷ Mobile broadband subscriptions outpaced those of fixed broadband by 37.3 million to 9.2 million, according to Turkey's Information and Communications Authority (BTK), the regulator responsible for ICTs.⁸

According to the results of the Turkish Statistical Institute's Household Usage of Information Technologies Survey, the number of households with internet access has risen to 76 percent.⁹ For individuals aged 16–74, computer usage stood at 95.9 percent, with internet usage at 93.7 percent.

Mobile phone penetration in Turkey reached 93.7 percent with 73.8 million mobile subscribers in the

4 Christopher de Bellaigue, "Welcome to demokrasi: how Erdogan got more popular than ever," *The Guardian*, August 30, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/30/welcome-to-demokrasi-how-erdogan-got-more-popular-than-ever>.

5 Generally speaking, an individual avoids prison in a suspended sentence, unless he or she reoffends during a probationary period outlined by the court.

6 The National Security Council allegedly listed social media as one of the main threats to Turkey's national security along with protests and civil disobedience; parallel state structures; communication security; cyber security; organizations exploiting religion, such as the Islamic State militant group; and ethnic-based terrorist groups, such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). "National Security Council under Erdogan updates top secret national security 'book,'" *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 30, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1UVBcCM>.

7 International Telecommunication Union, "Statistics," 2015, <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>.

8 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2015 Q3)," accessed February 20, 2015, slide 7, <http://www.btk.gov.tr/File/?path=ROOT%2f1%2fDocuments%2fPages%2fMarketData%2f2015-Q3-En.pdf>

9 Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu, "Household Usage of Information Technologies Survey of Turkish Statistical Institute, 2015," [in Turkish] August 18, 2015, accessed October 13, 2016, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1028.

first quarter of 2016. Although all operators offer third-generation (3G) data connections, only 65.9 million subscribers have access to 3G.¹⁰ Prices remain high in comparison with the minimum wage. Turkey ranked 69th on the global ICT Development Index (IDI) for 2015, or 38th out of 40 European countries.¹¹

Restrictions on Connectivity

Poor telecommunications infrastructure, a lack of electricity, and raids by the military or police continue to restrict connectivity in certain areas, especially in the eastern and southeastern regions of the country. For example, counterterrorism or law enforcement activities in the southeastern cities of Yuksekova, Cizre, Silopi, and Sur led to shutdowns of 3G mobile networks and electricity outages.¹² In one case, the outage lasted 60 hours.¹³

Turkey's internet backbone is run by TTNET, a subsidiary of Türk Telekom that is also the largest internet service provider (ISP) in the country. Türk Telekom, which is partly state owned, has 214,395 km of fiber-optic infrastructure, while other operators have a combined total of just 58,155 km. Nearly 124,374 km of this infrastructure is used as backbone, with the remainder dedicated to access distribution.¹⁴

There are three IXPs owned by private companies, both of which are in Istanbul: IST-IX, established by Terramark in 2009, and TNAP, established by seven leading ISPs in 2013. DEC-IX, a German internet exchange company, has started its operation in Istanbul as "a neutral interconnection and peering point for internet service providers from Turkey, Iran, the Caucasus region and the Middle East."¹⁵

ICT Market

There are 582 operators providing ICT services in the Turkish market, and a total of 930 were authorized as of late May 27, 2016 according to the BTK.¹⁶ There are around 359 ISPs, though the majority act as resellers for Türk Telekom. TTNET, founded in 2006 by Türk Telekom, dominates the ISP market with 71.2 percent of market share.¹⁷

Turkcell is the leading mobile phone provider, with 44.2 percent of market share, followed by Voda-

10 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2016 Q1)," accessed October 10, 2016, slide 3, http://www.btk.gov.tr/File/?path=ROOT%2f1%2fDocuments%2fPages%2fMarket_Data%2f2016-Q1-En.pdf.

11 International Telecommunication Union, *Measuring the Information Society Report*, 2015, <http://www.itu.int/net4/ITU-D/idi/2015/>.

12 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Social media throttling in Turkey points to wartime censorship efforts," *The Daily Dot*, August 27, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/turkey-wartime-censorship-syria/>.

13 "60 hour internet in the Eastern Province," [translated] *Haberler.com*, July 26, 2015, <http://web.archive.org/web/20150728014051/http://www.haberler.com/dogu-illerinde-60-saattir-internet-sikintisi-7542461-haberi/>.

14 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2016 Q1)," accessed October 10, 2016, slide 13, http://www.btk.gov.tr/File/?path=ROOT%2f1%2fDocuments%2fPages%2fMarket_Data%2f2016-Q1-En.pdf.

15 "DEC-IX Istanbul," accessed February 20, 2015, <https://www.de-cix.net/products-services/de-cix-istanbul/>.

16 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2016 Q1)," accessed October 10, 2016, slide 4, Market Data (2016 Q1)," accessed October 10, 2016, slide 3, http://www.btk.gov.tr/File/?path=ROOT%2f1%2fDocuments%2fPages%2fMarket_Data%2f2016-Q1-En.pdf.

17 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2016 Q1)," accessed October 10, 2016, slide 34, http://www.btk.gov.tr/File/?path=ROOT%2f1%2fDocuments%2fPages%2fMarket_Data%2f2016-Q1-En.pdf.

fone and Avea (which currently operates under the brand Türk Telekom).¹⁸ Although the BTK originally set a deadline of May 26 for the auction of a 4G spectrum, in April 2015 it was announced that the tender could be canceled due to President Erdoğan's insistence that Turkey jump directly from 3G to 5G.¹⁹ An auction of 4G frequency bands was held that August, but the BTK dubbed it "4.5G" in what some said was an effort to placate President Erdoğan.²⁰ All three companies started offering "4.5G" technology for mobile subscribers on April 1, 2016.

Though all legal entities are allowed to operate an ISP, there are some requirements to apply for authorization, pertaining to issues like the company's legal status, its scope of activity, and its shareholders' qualifications. Furthermore, implicit obstacles may prevent newly founded companies without political ties or economic clout from entering the market. ISPs are required by law to submit an application for an "activity certificate" to the BTK before they can offer services. Internet cafes are also subject to regulation. Those operating without an activity certificate from a local municipality may face fines of TRY 3,000 to 15,000 (US\$1,335 to US\$6,680). Mobile phone service providers are subject to licensing through the BTK.

Regulatory Bodies

Policymaking, regulation, and operation functions are separated by the basic laws of the telecommunications sector. The Ministry of Transportation, Maritime Affairs, and Communications is responsible for policymaking, while the BTK is in charge of regulation.²¹

The BTK and the Telecommunication and Communication Presidency (TİB), which it oversees, are well staffed and have a dedicated budget. However, the fact that board members are government appointees is a potential threat to the BTK's independence, and its decision-making process is not transparent. Nonetheless, there have been no reported instances of certificates or licenses being denied. The TİB also oversees the application of the country's website blocking law and is often criticized by advocacy groups for a lack of transparency and its apparent lack of independence from the executive.

The Computer Center of Middle East Technical University has been responsible for managing domain names since 1991. The BTK oversees and establishes the domain-name operation policy and its bylaws. Unlike in many other countries, individuals in Turkey are not permitted to register and own domain names ending with the country extension .tr, such as .com.tr and .org.tr, unless they own a trademark, company, or civil society organization with the same name as the requested domain.

Limits on Content

Limits on content continued to increase in Turkey over the past year. Prompted by a series of deadly terrorist attacks, the government repeatedly blocked or throttled social media platforms in a bid to halt the dissemination of images and videos surrounding the events. In addition, scores of news sites

18 "Electronic Communications Market in Turkey – Market Data (2016 Q2)," page xiii.

19 Ece Toksabay, "Turkey minister says might cancel 4G tender, switch to 5G: newspaper," Reuters, April 28, 2015, <http://reuters/1GBtwvO>.

20 Tulay Karadeniz, "Turkey's 4G tender outstrips predictions with bids for 4.5 billion," Reuters, August 26, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/26/us-turkey-telecoms-idUSKCN0QV1XI20150826>.

21 Information and Communication Technologies Authority, "Establishment," accessed October 11, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1QsTRoE>.

and Twitter accounts were blocked or removed, particularly those covering the conflict with Kurdish militants. Journalists, scholars, and public figures that are critical of the government faced coordinated harassment by progovernment trolls on Twitter.

Blocking and Filtering

Blocking continues to increase steadily in Turkey. According to the reports of the independent organization Engelli Web, as of May 2016 over 111,000 websites were banned based on civil code–related complaints and intellectual-property rights violations. The number of blocked websites has risen from 43,785 to 111,011 in three years.²² This figure includes numerous sites that were blocked for political or social reasons, such as news outlets or online communities that report on LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) issues, ethnic minorities, specifically pro-Kurdish content, anti-Muslim content, or social unrest.

Authorities specifically targeted the online accounts of journalists and activists this year. A number of platforms were blocked during the coverage period, frequently for refusing to restrict Turkish users' access to specific pages or posts. The TİB and Turkish courts blocked access to thousands of URLs including but not limited to pro-Kurdish websites such as Rudaw, BasNews, DİHA, ANHA, Özgür Gündem newspaper, Yüksekova Haber, Sendika.org, RojNews, ANF, BestaNuçe, as well as data journalism website Dag Medya,²³ alternative news source Jiyan, Marxist website marksist.org, and most of the outlets' Twitter accounts.²⁴ The Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (YSK) blocked access to more than 90 URLs for sharing polls before the elections. After a request by Yaman Akdeniz and Kerem Altıparmak, two law professors, the YSK lifted the ban.²⁵ The TİB blocked access to five of the most commonly used LGBTI websites, namely GayLeY, Travestice, Tracesti Sitesi, Turk Gay Bar, and Istanbul Gay.²⁶

Furthermore, Turkey has censored atheist and anti-Muslim websites deemed defamatory, according to a court order dated February 27, 2015.²⁷ The Ankara Golbasi Criminal Court of Peace issued an order to ban 49 URLs, including atheist and anti-Muslim websites; the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and its corresponding Wikipedia entry; and Turkish and foreign news articles about a controversial *Charlie Hebdo* cover that caricatured the Muslim prophet Muhammad.²⁸ Akdeniz and Altıparmak also filed an objection against that decision, but the websites remain blocked.

In most of cases, owners of the banned websites were not informed of the order or were not given sufficient time to comply. For example, on August 9, 2015, TİB banned access to Dag Medya, a data journalism website which also operates as a hub organizing events for journalists. Dag Medya re-

22 Engelli Web, "Kurum Bazında İstatistikler."

23 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Government bans data journalism website without court order," *Jiyan*, August 15, 2015, <http://jiyan.org/2015/08/09/governmetn-bans-data-journalism-website-without-court-order/>.

24 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Turkey declares war on ISIS, censors Kurdish news instead," 2 August, 2015, <https://medium.com/@efekerem/turkey-declares-war-on-isis-censors-kurdish-news-instead-3f30a9e5264f#.b5hmjmor2>.

25 "Seçim geçti, YSK yasağı kalkmadı: 90 internet sayfası hala engelli," *Sendika.org*, July 15, 2016, <http://sendika10.org/2015/07/secim-gecti-ysk-yasagi-kalkmadi-90-internet-sayfasi-hala-engelli/>.

26 Yıldız Tar, "Access to LGBTI related websites was blocked one by one?," *KaosGL*, June 4, 2015, <http://kaosgl.org/page.php?id=19562>

27 Golbasi Criminal Court of Peace Decision No 2015/191 D.İs, dated February 27 2015.

28 Efe Kerem Sözeri, "Turkey quietly escalating online censorship of atheism," *The Daily Dot*, March 4, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1M9kZpa>.

ported that TİB did not send a notice about illegal content in the website, nor did it provide justification or a court order.²⁹

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were briefly blocked or throttled until they complied with court orders to remove “criminal” content, including images and videos related to deadly bombings in Suruç, Ankara, and Istanbul. In all of the following cases, restrictions on social media platforms occurred within 1-2 hours of each incident, indicating authorities may have sent more informal orders to ISPs prior to the official orders cited below:³⁰

- On July 20, 2015, a suicide bombing killed 32 people, mainly student activists, in the south-eastern border town of Suruc.³¹ Two days after the bombing, a court banned access to a total of 173 URLs, including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and 38 news websites as part of a ban on images and footage of the incident.³² A backlash started immediately using the hashtag #TwitterBlockedInTurkey and Twitter was once again accessible two hours later, following the removal of most of the pictures and videos of the bombing.³³ Later on, the Sanliurfa Judgeship reversed the gag order and lifted the ban on 173 URLs, citing “press freedom.”³⁴
- A terrorist attack on October 10, 2015 killed more than 100 people at a peace rally in Ankara.³⁵ Users reported difficulties accessing Twitter and Facebook, as well as Instagram posts marked with the hashtags #Istanbul, #Ankara, and #Diyarbakir.³⁶ The Turkish Supreme Board on Radio and Television (RTÜK) imposed a ban on broadcasting pictures and videos of the massacre and, October 14, Ankara’s 6th Judgeship issued a gag order, which lasted five days,³⁷ banning “all kinds of news, interviews, criticism and similar publications in print, visual, social media and all kinds of media on the internet” related to the ensuing investigation.³⁸
- On January 12, 2016, a suicide bomber in Istanbul’s popular Sultanahmet area killed 10 individuals, mostly German tourists.³⁹ The prime minister’s office quickly banned all media

29 Dag Medya, “TİB, “İdari Tedbir” ile “dagmedya.net” Sitesini Kapattı,” August 9, 2015, <http://dagmedya.net/2015/08/09/internet-sansuru-tib-idari-tedbir-ile-dagmedya-net-sitesini-kapatti/>.

30 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “Social media throttling in Turkey points to wartime censorship efforts,” *The Daily Dot*, August 27, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/turkey-wartime-censorship-syria/>.

31 “Suruç massacre: Mass funeral for Turkey bombing victims,” BBC News, July 21, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33615239>.

32 Efe Kerem Sözeri, “Turkey responds to deadly bombing by censoring social media, news sites,” *The Daily Dot*, July 22, 2015 <http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/suruc-turkey-censorship-facebook-twitter-youtube/>.

33 Victoria Richards, “Twitter temporarily blocked by Erdogan government as Turkey bans images of deadly suicide bombing in Suruc,” *Independent*, July 22, 2015 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/twitter-blocked-by-erdogan-government-as-turkey-bans-images-of-deadly-suicide-bombing-in-suruc-10407387.html>

34 “Mahkeme ‘basın özgürlüğü’nü hatırladı: Suruç katliamıyla ilgili yayın yasağı kalktı,” *Diken*, July 22, 2015, <http://www.diken.com.tr/mahkeme-basin-ozgurlugunu-hatirladi-suruc-katliamiyla-ilgili-yayin-yasagi-kalkti/>.

35 “Nearly 100 dead as Ankara peace rally rocked by blasts,” Al Jazeera, October 10, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/explosions-hit-turkey-ankara-peace-march-151010073827607.html>.

36 Esra Dogramaci and Damian Radcliffe, “How Turkey Uses Social Media,” Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/essays/2015/how-turkey-uses-social-media/>.

37 Benjamin Harvey, “How a Bomb Blast in Ankara Became Politicized Before Election Day,” Bloomberg, October 23, 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-10-22/confusion-reigns-over-ankara-blast-as-turkish-election-day-nears>.

38 “Court issues total media ban over Ankara suicide bombings,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 14, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/court-issues-total-media-ban-over-ankara-suicide-bombings.aspx?PageID=238&NID=89884&NewsCatID=341>.

39 Ceylan Yeginsu and Tim Arango, “Istanbul Explosion Kills 10 Tourists, and ISIS Is Blamed,” *The New York Times*, January 12, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/europe/explosion-in-istanbul-tourist-district-kills-at-least-10.html>.

coverage of the blast, citing national security concerns. A few hours later, an Istanbul court issued a gag order affecting social media platforms.⁴⁰

- On March 13, 2016 another suicide bombing occurred in Ankara's Guven Park near a bus stop, killing at least 37 people.⁴¹ Within one hour, Turkish authorities censored news coverage and the RTÜK imposed a ban on broadcasting pictures and videos of the massacre. Turkish ISPs throttled traffic to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, following an order by an Ankara court.⁴² Five days later, Ankara's 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace issued an order banning 214 URLs that included news and footage of the bombing.
- An attack on March 19, 2016 on Istanbul's Istiklal Street killed five people and wounded 36, mainly foreign tourists.⁴³ Once again, a media ban was immediately issued by the office of the prime minister. The TİB issued a ban order on all content and news on the bombing, and shortly after, access to Facebook and Twitter⁴⁴ was restricted for over 24 hours.⁴⁵

The blog-hosting service WordPress was temporarily blocked in July 2015 over five WordPress-hosted sites on Kurdish politics. In a blog post on its transparency page, WordPress's parent company, Automattic, explained that one of the sites targeted by the TİB for allegedly supporting terrorism actually featured content that was critical of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish militant group that is classified as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States, and a number of other governments.⁴⁶ As the site employs HTTPS, a connection method that makes blocking a single page technically very difficult, a second order called for the blocking of the entire WordPress.com domain.⁴⁷ Access was later reinstated.

Currently, access to a number of well-known sites and services is blocked, including Metacafe and Imgur.

- URL-shortening services Bit.ly and Dld.bz were both temporarily blocked over the coverage period, although they do not host content. The TİB later restored access to Bit.ly and explained that the site had been banned due to a technical error.⁴⁸ Access to Dld.bz was also restored, although without a statement.⁴⁹

40 Charlotte Alfred, "Why Turkey Bans News About Terror Bombings", *Huffington Post*, January 13, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/turkey-media-blackout-istanbul-bombing_us_56957080e4b086bc1cd5a364.

41 Raziye Akkoc, "Ankara explosion: Turkish president vows war on terror as officials say one bomber was 'female Kurdish militant'", *The Telegraph*, March 14, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/12192759/Ankara-explosion-Several-wounded-in-centre-of-Turkish-capital-Kizilay.html>.

42 "Turkey explosion: Ankara car bomb kills at least 32," *BBC News*, March 13, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35798517>.

43 "Istanbul bombing: At least five killed in Turkish city," *Al Jazeera*, March 19, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/istanbul-taksim-square-area-hit-explosion-160319091702737.html>.

44 "Turkey denies right to seek information following Taksim bombing," *D8 News*, March 20, 2016, <https://d8news.com/after-taksim-terror-attack-turkey-denied-citizens-right-seek-information-970>

45 "Turkey: central Istanbul hit by suicide bomb", March 19, 2016, <http://www.euronews.com/2016/03/19/explosion-hits-central-istanbul-some-people-wounded-turkey-s-dogan-news-agency/>.

46 Kevin Koehler, "Trouble in Turkey," *WordPress Transparency Report*, Automattic (blog), July 31, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1joCg7a>.

47 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Ban against a single blog post leads Turkish ISPs to censor all of WordPress," *The Daily Dot*, April 1, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1LkEJWM>.

48 "Turkey Bans Bitly, Turns Out to be By Accident," *BIA.net*, April 19, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Mcikxb>.

49 Ulvi Yaman, "Turkiye Sansurunun Son Altı Yılı," July 8, 2015, <http://www.ulviyaman.com/blog/2015/07/turkiyede-internet-sansurunun-son-6-yili/>.

- The TİB blocked Reddit for three days in November 2015 due to obscenity.⁵⁰ Tumblr was blocked by a court order in April 2016, while Metacafe and Imgur remain blocked from previous coverage periods.⁵¹
- Russian social networking site VKontakte and Deviantart were blocked in early 2016, according to reports from Turkish censorship forums.⁵²
- Sanliurfa Criminal Judgeship of Peace issued a blocking order to international sports site Goal.com by reason of illegally betting. The decision was reversed and the site is now accessible.⁵³
- EngelliWeb reported that encrypted messaging service Wire and VoIP service Viber were blocked in April 2016 for a few hours. The event was later confirmed by Viber.⁵⁴
- On April 11, 2016, Slack, Amazon, and many sites using Amazon Web Services were inaccessible on the TTNNet ISP, potentially due to a technical error.⁵⁵ TTNNet blocked Amazon Web Services without any reason, thus application and websites that are using AWS, including but not limited to Slack, a popular cloud based team collaboration tool, were temporarily down.
- The TİB blocked Russian news agency Sputnik in April 2016.⁵⁶ Six days later, Sputnik's Turkish bureau chief Tural Kerimov was refused entry into the country and his residence permit and press credentials were seized.⁵⁷ The ban was lifted on August 8, 2016, one day before a meeting between President Erdoğan and his Russian counterpart.⁵⁸

The blocking and removal of online content (see "Content Removal" below) is regulated under Law No. 5651, whose full name is "Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by Means of Such Publication."⁵⁹ It was initially established in 2007 to protect children and prevent access to illegal and harmful internet content. This includes material related to child sexual abuse, drug use, the provision of dangerous substances, prostitution, obscenity, gambling, suicide promotion, and crimes against Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of modern Turkey.⁶⁰ The responsibilities of content providers, hosting companies, public access providers, and ISPs are delineated in Law No. 5651. Domestically hosted websites with proscribed content can be taken

50 See https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/3soxpk/reddit_just_got_blocked_in_turkey/.

51 "Tumblr da Erisime Engellendi," Zete, April 6, 2016, <https://zete.com/tumblr-da-erisime-engellendi/>.

52 See, for example, <http://www.r10.net/teknoloji-haberleri/1565111-deviantart-erisime-engellendi.html>, <https://eksisozluk.com/entry/58542905>, and <http://www.kizlarsoruyor.com/ara?q=vkontakte&st=0>.

53 Engelliweb data on subject: <https://engelliweb.com/url/goal-com>.

54 Engelli Web statement on subject: <https://twitter.com/engelliweb/status/718597048250011648>.

55 See <https://twitter.com/turkeyblocks/status/719448397942497280>.

56 "Russia's Sputnik news website abruptly blocked in Turkey after 'legal consideration'" April 14, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/339661-sputnik-site-blocked-turkey/>.

57 "Erdogan's war on media: Sputnik Turkey chief banned from entering Istanbul, told to fly to Russia," Russia Today, April 20, 2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/340320-sputnik-turkey-chief-prohibited/>.

58 "Ankara lifts ban on Sputnik Turkey," Sputnik News, August 8, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/world/201608081044044208-turkey-lifts-ban-sputnik/>.

59 Law No. 5651 was published in the *Official Gazette* on May 23, 2007, in issue No. 26030. A copy of the law can be found (in Turkish) at World Intellectual Property Organization, "Law No. 5651 on Regulating Broadcasting in the Internet and Fighting Against Crimes Committed through Internet Broadcasting," <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/details.jsp?id=11035>; Telekomunikasyon İletişim Baskanlığı (TİB), "Information about the regulations of the content of the Internet," in "Frequently Asked Questions," <http://bit.ly/1PtuhBN>.

60 Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Internet Freedom, Rights in Sharp Decline," September 2, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1r1kJOE>.

down, while websites based abroad can be blocked and filtered through ISPs. The law has already been found to be in contravention of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In December 2015, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the blocking of YouTube in 2008 violated Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, specifically the right to freedom of expression. The lawsuit was brought to the court by law professors Serkan Cengiz, Yaman Akdeniz, and Kerem Altıparmak.⁶¹

Law No. 5651 has repeatedly been amended over the past few years to broaden the scope for censorship.⁶² A set of amendments enacted in March 2015 authorized cabinet ministers to order the TİB to block content when necessary to “defend the right to life, secure property, ensure national security and public order, prevent crime, or protect public health.” The orders are then taken up within four hours by the TİB, which must also submit the decision to a criminal court within 24 hours. If a judge does not validate the decision within 48 hours, the blocking order must be rescinded.⁶³ A similar bill passed in September 2014 had been overturned by the Constitutional Court in October of that year. While the original version of Law No. 5651 included only notice-based liability and takedown provisions for content that violates individual rights, changes passed in February 2014 extended this provision to include URL-based blocking orders to be issued by a criminal court judge. The February 2014 amendments also entrusted the TİB with broad discretion to block content that an individual or other legal claimant perceives as a violation of privacy, while failing to establish strong checks and balances. These changes came after leaks of the alleged phone conversations of top government officials on December 17, 2013, and they laid the groundwork for the eventual blocking of social media platforms.

The February 2014 amendments to Law No. 5651 also shield TİB staff if they commit crimes during the exercise of their duties. Criminal investigations into TİB staff can only be initiated through an authorization from the TİB director, and investigations into the director can only be initiated by the relevant minister. This process casts serious doubt on the functioning and accountability of the TİB. ISPs are required to set up a new Association for Access Providers, membership in which is compulsory in order to obtain an “activity certificate” to legally operate in the country. ISPs must also comply with blocking orders from the TİB within four hours or face a penalty of up to TRY 300,000 (US\$103,000). Failure to take measures to block all alternative means of accessing the targeted site, such as proxy sites, may result in a fine of up to TRY 50,000 (US\$22,000).⁶⁴

The vast majority (94 percent) of blocking orders are issued by the TİB,⁶⁵ rather than court orders.⁶⁶ The procedures surrounding decisions are nontransparent in both cases, creating significant challenges for those seeking to appeal. Judges can issue blocking orders during preliminary investiga-

61 “Human rights court rules block on YouTube violated freedom of expression,” *Today’s Zaman*, December 1, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_human-rights-court-rules-block-on-youtube-violated-freedom-of-expression_405790.html.

62 World Intellectual Property Organization, “Law No.5651 on Regulating Broadcasting in the Internet and Fighting Against Crimes Committed through Internet Broadcasting,” May 4, 2007, <http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/details.jsp?id=11035>.

63 “Approved article gives Turkish gov’t power to shut down websites in four hours,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 20, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1C3iuA8>.

64 For further information on this section, see Representative on Freedom of the Media, “Briefing on Proposed Amendments to Law No. 5651,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, January 2014, <http://bit.ly/1X3Z4az>; Center for Internet and Society, Stanford Law School, “WILMAP: Turkey,” accessed November 6, 2014, <http://stanford.io/1YcN8EX>.

65 Engelli Web, “Kurum Bazında İstatistikler,” accessed February 28, 2016, <http://engelliweb.com/istatistikler/>.

66 According to TİB statistics from May 2009, the last date these were available, the courts are responsible for 21 percent of blocked websites, while 79 percent are blocked administratively by the TİB. Reporters Without Borders, “Telecom Authority Accused of Concealing Blocked Website Figures,” May 19, 2010, <http://en.rsf.org/turkey-telecom-authority-accused-of-19-05-2010,37511.html>.

tions as well as during trials. The reasoning behind court decisions is not provided in blocking notices, and the relevant rulings are not easily accessible. As a result, it is often difficult for site owners to determine why their site has been blocked and which court has issued the order. The TİB's mandate includes executing judicial blocking orders, but it can also issue administrative orders for foreign websites, content involving sexual harassment of children, and obscenity. Moreover, in some cases it successfully asks content and hosting providers to remove offending items from their servers, in order to avoid issuing a blocking order that would affect an entire website. This occurs despite the fact that intermediaries are not responsible for third-party content on their sites. The filtering database is maintained by the government without clear criteria. A "Child and Family Profiles Criteria Working Committee" was introduced to address this problem in 2012, but it was largely made up of BTK members or appointees and does not appear to be active.

In addition to these blocks, ISPs offer "child" and "family" filtering options under rules established by the BTK in 2011, though the filtering criteria have been criticized as arbitrary and discriminatory.⁶⁷ The BTK tried to mandate filtering for all users in 2011,⁶⁸ but withdrew the proposal following a legal challenge.⁶⁹ The child filter obstructs access to Facebook, YouTube, Yasam Radyo (Life Radio), the Armenian minority newspaper *Agos*, and several websites advocating the theory of evolution,⁷⁰ even as some anti-evolution websites remain accessible.⁷¹ Internet access is filtered at primary education institutions and public bodies, resulting in the blocking of a number of minority news sites.⁷²

Content Removal

In addition to widespread filtering, state authorities are proactive in requesting the deletion or removal of content. Social media platforms comply with administrative decisions and court orders as promptly as possible in order to avoid blocking and, more recently, throttling. Like international social media platforms, popular Turkish websites are also subject to content removal orders. Courts issued several orders pertaining to user-generated content websites such as Eksi Sozluk (Sour Dictionary), Inci Sozluk (Pearl Dictionary), and ITU Sozluk (Istanbul Technical University Dictionary).

Turkey has consistently featured among the countries with the highest number of removal requests sent to Twitter. Of all of the tweets "withheld" by Twitter around the world in the second half of 2015, Turkey accounted for almost 90 percent. Requests from courts and government agencies reached 2,211, and rose to 2,493 in the first half of 2016. In each reporting period, Twitter indicated it complied in 23 percent of cases.⁷³

Some believe Twitter has under-reported its own censorship in Turkey.⁷⁴ The company was fined TRY

67 Reporters Without Borders, "New Internet Filtering System Condemned as Backdoor Censorship," December 2, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1W3FNp7>.

68 Decision No. 2011/DK-10/91 of Bilgi Teknolojileri ve İletişim Kurumu, dated February 22, 2011.

69 On September 27, 2011, the Council of State rejected the "stay of execution" request by BİAnet referring to the annulment of the February 22, 2011.

70 Dorian Jones, "Turkey Blocks Web Pages Touting Darwin's Evolution Theory," Voice of America, December 23, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1Lh9DmR>.

71 Sara Reardon, "Controversial Turkish Internet Censorship Program Targets Evolution Sites," *Science Magazine*, December 9, 2011, <http://bit.ly/1OfyitU>; Haber Merkezi, "Agos'u Biz Değil Sistem Engelledi," [Agos was filtered through the Ministry of Education filter], *BİAnet*, January 23, 2012, <http://bit.ly/1jzOWr4>.

72 "Meclis'te Alevi Sitesine Yanlışlıkla Sansür," *BİAnet*, December 8, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1FNfbzb>.

73 Twitter, "Turkey," *Transparency Report* <https://transparency.twitter.com/en/countries/tr.html>.

74 "Known Unknowns: An Analysis of Twitter Censorship in Turkey" <http://www.cs.rice.edu/~rst5/twitterTurkey/paper.pdf>.

150,000 (US\$51,000) by the BTK for failure to remove “terrorist propaganda” from the site in December 2015,⁷⁵ although Twitter appealed the fine in a Turkish court one month later.⁷⁶

According to Facebook’s Government Requests Report for the period of July to December 2015, the company restricted 2,078 pieces of content on orders from both the BTK and Turkish law enforcement, particularly in compliance with Law No. 5651 on the internet.⁷⁷ In March 2016, *Yeni Şafak*, a progovernment daily newspaper, claimed that their official Facebook page with 10 million “Likes” was removed without notice. The newspaper stated the move was meant to “silence Turkish media” and, along with the TİB, condemned Facebook. In a statement, the company confirmed they had noticed “irregularities” in the number of the page’s followers, which according to one journalist, had increased by five million in only eight months. Facebook reopened the page 10 days later after removing 2.5 million “spurious likes.”⁷⁸

Media, Diversity, and Content Manipulation

The climate of fear created by widespread government prosecution of online activities has led to an increase in self-censorship, particularly when it comes to criticism of the government or public officials. Speech on Islam or the prophet Muhammad, as well as posts about the “Kurdish problem” or even calls for peace can result in death threats and legal battles. Turkish-Armenian relations have become less controversial in recent years, but they remain sensitive, particularly during periods of ethnic tension and violence in the southeast.

Turkish users increasingly rely on internet-based publications as a primary source of news, and despite the country’s restrictive legal environment and growing self-censorship, the Turkish blogosphere is still surprisingly vibrant and diverse. There are a wide range of blogs and websites through which citizens question and criticize Turkish politics and leaders, including on issues that are generally viewed as politically sensitive. The majority of civil society groups maintain an online presence.

Numerous⁷⁹ reports⁸⁰ have revealed that an “army of trolls,” numbering around 6,000 individuals, has been enlisted by the ruling AKP to manipulate discussions, drive particular agendas, and counter government critics on social media.⁸¹ Journalists and scholars who are critical of the government have faced orchestrated harassment on Twitter, often by dozens or even hundreds of users.⁸² Shortly before the November 2015 elections, progovernment trolls circulated allegations that Oy ve Otesi (Vote and Beyond), the first civic election-monitoring initiative in Turkey, was committing fraud and aiding terrorist organizations. A Twitter account named “Vote and Fraud” with 42,000 followers warned supporters not to get involved with the group. Only a week before the smear campaign, it was found that the account had purported to be a young girl sharing romantic quotes, adding to

75 “Turkey fines Twitter for failure to remove ‘terrorist propaganda,’” *Hurriyet Daily News*, December 11, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetcailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=238&nID=92387&NewsCatID=339>.

76 “Twitter sues Turkey over ‘terror propaganda’ fine,” *Al Jazeera*, January 7, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/twitter-sues-turkey-terror-propaganda-fine-160107173150687.html>.

77 Facebook, “Turkey,” *Government Requests Report*, July to December 2015, accessed October 15, 2016, <https://govtrequests.facebook.com/country/Turkey/2015-H2/#>.

78 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “The rotten politics infecting Turkey’s social media,” *The Daily Dot*, March 30, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/turkey-social-media-yeni-safak-facebook-twitter-manipulation/>.

79 Dion Nissebaum, “Before Turkish Coup, President’s Drive to Stifle Dissent Sowed Unrest,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/before-turkish-coup-presidents-drive-to-stifle-dissent-sowed-unrest-1468632017>.

80 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “RedHack leaks reveal the rise of Turkey’s pro-government Twitter trolls,” *The Daily Dot*, September 30, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/redhack-turkey-albayrak-censorship/>.

81 “CHP asks if pro-gov’t trolls put on AK Party payroll,” *Cihan*, September 4, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1UWSepJ>.

82 Emre Kizilkaya, “AKP’s social media wars,” *Al Monitor*, November 15, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1LhdTCG>.

speculation that “Vote and Fraud” was a fake account created solely for the purposes of trolling.⁸³ Progovernment trolls have also been active amid rising tensions with foreign governments, such as Russia, which recently commenced a propaganda campaign against Turkey after the shooting down of a Russian jet in December 2015. In response, “TrollState Russia” became a trending topic on Twitter in a campaign allegedly orchestrated by Erdoğan’s public communication officer.⁸⁴

Although a large number of websites are blocked, circumvention tools are widely available, enabling users to avoid filters and blocking mechanisms. Each time a new order is issued and a popular website is blocked, articles are published to instruct users on how to access it. As proof of users’ tech savviness, YouTube was the eighth-most-accessed site in Turkey in 2010, at a time when it was officially blocked.⁸⁵ However, when internet users employed Google’s Domain Name System (DNS) service and OpenDNS to evade blocks on both Twitter and YouTube in 2014,⁸⁶ Google announced that it had received several credible reports and later confirmed that Turkish ISPs had intercepted and hijacked the settings.⁸⁷

Turkish users often turn to the internet to find news on domestic issues not covered by mainstream broadcast media. According to IAB Turkey Internet Audience Measurement, the most visited online news source is milliyet.com.tr, the online edition of the newspaper *Milliyet*. *Hurriyet*, an influential newspaper is the second-most visited online news source.⁸⁸ New models for citizen journalism and volunteer reporting are also gaining traction, such as 140journos, dokuz8haber (literally, “nine-8news”), and Otekilerin Postasi (“The Others’ Post”) whose editor was arrested in November 2015. News about the southeastern region of the country, heavily populated by Kurds, is heavily influenced by the government. Frequent power outages, mobile internet shutdowns, and censorship of prominent local news sites make information gathering even more difficult in that area.

On March 4, 2016, Gülen-linked newspapers *Zaman* and *Today’s Zaman*, as well as Cihan News Agency, were seized and new progovernment⁸⁹ editorial boards were established by a court order.⁹⁰ The online archives of each paper were deleted, as well as *Zaman*’s previous Twitter activity.⁹¹

Digital Activism

Digital activism has played a significant role in the country, particularly after the Occupy Gezi protests of 2013. In March 2016, mobile operator Turkcell came under fire on social media for its sponsorship of the Ensar Foundation, which was allegedly involved in a child sex abuse scandal. After the

83 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “How pro-government trolls are using a sexy Twitter bot to sway Turkey’s election,” *Daily Dot*, October 31, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/turkey-election-twitter-troll-vote-and-beyond-vote-and-fraud/>.

84 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “Inside the great troll war between Russia and Turkey,” *Daily Dot*, December 14, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/russia-turkey-missile-turkey-troll-war-twitter/>.

85 Alexa, “Turkey,” in “Top Sites,” accessed August 26, 2010, <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/TR>.

86 Emre Peker, Joe Parkinson, and Sam Schechner, “Google, Others Blast Turkey,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 31, 2014, <http://on.wsj.com/1KgtnVD>.

87 “Google says Turkey intercepting its Web domain,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 31, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1iPtvIX>.

88 IAB Turkey Internet Audience Measurement, February 2016, http://www.iabturkiye.org/sites/default/files/internet_audience_toplist_02_2016_son.pdf.

89 “Zaman newspaper: Seized Turkish daily ‘now pro-government,’” *BBC News*, March 6, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35739547>.

90 “Istanbul court to appoint trustees for Zaman, Today’s Zaman editorial board,” Committee to Protect Journalists, March 4, 2016, <https://cpj.org/2016/03/istanbul-court-to-appoint-trustees-for-zaman-today.php>.

91 Zaman’s Twitter account has been renamed “@AnalizMerkez.” See to Efe Kerem Sozeri’s statement: <https://twitter.com/efekerem/status/706282702861942784?lang=en> and <https://web.archive.org/web/20160306005700/https://twitter.com/analizmerkez>.

company refused to cut ties with the foundation, it also sought help from the courts to censor 862 tweets from 743 accounts in order to curb critical coverage.⁹² As a result, hashtags such as #Tecavüz-Cell (RapeCell), #EnsürCell, and #SansürCell (CensorCell) started trending on Twitter. Twitter refused to comply with a court order to remove the tweets and emailed users stating that the company will appeal the decision in a higher court.⁹³ Digital rights lawyers Yaman Akdeniz and Kerem Altıparmak also filed an appeal before the Constitutional Court.⁹⁴ Turkcell continued to call for the removal of hundreds,⁹⁵ and later thousands⁹⁶ of additional tweets throughout the month of April and even filed a lawsuit for TRY 10,000 (approximately US\$3,000) of damages from 124 Twitter users.⁹⁷

Organizations such as Oy ve Ötesi (Vote and Beyond), the first civic election-monitoring initiative, used social media tools to enlist over 60,000 volunteers to monitor more than 130,000 ballot boxes during the general elections of November 2015,⁹⁸ despite unsuccessful attempts to ban the organization.⁹⁹ Dogruluk Payı ("Share of Truth"), Turkey's first and only political fact-checking website, was also a popular source for information during the elections.¹⁰⁰

Violations of User Rights

While prison sentences for online speech have been rare, several individuals were sentenced to lengthy terms over the past year for allegedly insulting public officials or spreading terrorist propaganda. Journalists, public figures, and young students have been targeted for nonviolent speech that is critical of the government or touches on controversial issues of Kurdish identity. Surveillance remains a key issue, but cybersecurity made headlines over the past year amid a massive leak of Turkish citizens' personal data and a nationwide cyberattack that brought down thousands of websites, including retail banking infrastructure.

Legal Environment

The Turkish constitution includes broad protections for freedom of expression. Article 26 states that "everyone has the right to express and disseminate his thought and opinion by speech, in writing or in pictures or through other media, individually or collectively."¹⁰¹ Turkish legislation and court judgments are subject to the European Convention on Human Rights and bound by the decisions of

92 Daghan Irak, "Sparks Fly with Turkcell under the 'Spotlight,'" Research Turkey April 13, 2016, <http://researchturkey.org/sparks-fly-with-turkcell-under-the-spotlight/>.

93 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Turkish court orders 860 tweets censored after ISP boycott sparked by child-rape scandal," *The Daily Dot*, April 12, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/turkcell-twitter-censorship-protest-ensar-foundation/>.

94 Press Release, "Turkcell'in Ensar Vakfı Eleştirileri ile ilgili Aldığı Sansür Kararını Anayasa Mahkemesi'ne taşıdı," May 31, 2016, <http://privacy.cyber-rights.org.tr/?p=1611>.

95 "#SansürCell seriyeye bağlandı: Turkcell 423 tweete daha erişim engeli getirtti," *Diken*, April 28, 2016, <http://www.diken.com.tr/mahkeme-turkcelle-tepkinin-onunu-yine-kesti-423-tweete-erisim-engeli/>.

96 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "A Turkish mobile provider got 13 court orders to erase this hashtag from the Internet," *The Daily Dot*, May 20, 2016, <http://www.dailydot.com/layer8/turkcell-tecavucell-twitter-censorship/>.

97 "Turkcell'den yeni hamle: 124 kişiye 10 bin lira manevi tazminat davası," *Diken*, June 4, 2016, <http://www.diken.com.tr/turkcellden-tepkilere-karsi-yeni-hamle-124-kisiye-10-bin-lira-manevi-tazminat-davasi/>.

98 Oy ve Ötesi Derneği, "Seçim Sonuç Değerlendirmeleri" [in Turkish], news release, June 10, 2015, <http://oyveotesi.org/1-kasim-2015-genel-secimleri/1-kasim-2015-secim-sonuc-degerlendirmeleri/>.

99 "Top election body rejects banning civilian group from monitoring elections," October 31, 2015, *Today's Zaman*, http://www.todayszaman.com/national_top-election-body-rejects-banning-civilian-group-from-monitoring-elections_403027.html.

100 Riada Ašimović Akyol, "Will new Turkish fact-checking site be able to hold politicians accountable?," *Al Monitor*, February 3, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/02/turkey-politics-meet-fact-checking.html#>.

101 The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, accessed April 22, 2013, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf.

the European Court of Human Rights. The constitution also seeks to guarantee the right to privacy, though there are limitations on the use of encryption devices, and surveillance by security agencies is highly prevalent. There are no laws that specifically criminalize online activities like posting one's opinions, downloading information, sending email, or transmitting text messages. Instead, many provisions of the criminal code and other laws, such as the Anti-Terrorism Law, are applied to both online and offline activity.

Defamation charges have been frequently used to prosecute government critics. According to Article 125 of the Turkish criminal code, "anyone who undermines the honor, dignity or respectability of another person or who attacks a person's honor by attributing to them a concrete act or a fact, or by means of an insult shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three months to two years, or punished with a judicial fine." Defaming a public official carries a minimum one year sentence, while insults to the president entails a sentence of one to four years according to Article 299. Several courts deemed Article 299 unconstitutional in the first half of 2016 and requested the matter be taken up by the Constitutional Court.¹⁰² Cases related to insulting the president have seldom resulted in jail sentences, although some defendants have been jailed while awaiting trial.

According to Article 7 of the Anti-Terror Law, "those who make propaganda of a terrorist organization by legitimizing, glorifying or inciting violent methods or threats" are liable to prison terms of one to five years. The law has been widely criticized for its broad definition of terrorism, which has been exploited by courts to prosecute journalists and academics with no affiliation to terrorism for the simple act of criticizing the government.¹⁰³

Prosecutions and Detentions for Online Activities

Arrests and prosecutions for social media posts have increased in recent years, and in some cases, individuals have been imprisoned. Over the past year, hundreds of Twitter users faced charges of insulting government officials, defaming President Erdoğan, or sharing propaganda in support of terrorist organizations.

Several journalists were charged for their social media activities, including:

- Journalist Hayri Tunç, who works for the news site *Jiyan*, was arrested on February 2, 2016 and later sentenced to two years in prison for "terrorism propaganda," "abetting criminal acts," and "glorifying criminal acts." He was targeted for posting tweets, Facebook posts, and YouTube videos that mainly covered fighting between the security services and Kurdish militants.¹⁰⁴ He appealed the decision shortly after his June 2016 sentencing.¹⁰⁵
- In September 2015, journalist and writer Aytekin Gezici received a combined prison sentence of five years and nine months, in addition to a judicial fine equivalent to 21 months

102 "Local court applies to Turkey's top court to annul article on 'insulting president'," *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 30, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/local-court-applies-to-turkeys-top-court-to-annul-insulting-president-law.aspx?pageID=238&nID=97103&NewsCatID=509>.

103 "Why Turkey's terror law is the 'Achilles heel' of the EU-Turkey visa deal," *France 24*, May 13, 2016, <http://www.france24.com/en/20160513-why-turkeys-terror-law-achilles-heel-eu-turkey-migrant-deal>.

104 Efe Kerem Sozeri, "Kurdish Reporter Faces Jail Time in Turkey for Twitter and Facebook Posts," *Global Voices*, March 9, 2016, <https://globalvoices.org/2016/03/09/kurdish-reporter-faces-jail-time-in-turkey-for-twitter-and-facebook-posts/>.

105 "Gazeteci Hayri Tunç'a 2 yıl hapis cezası!," *Birgun*, June 7, 2016, <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/gazeteci-hayri-tunc-a-2-yil-hapis-cezasi-115140.html>.

in prison, for “insulting” President Erdoğan, former deputy prime minister Bulent Arinç, and former justice minister Bekir Bozdağ on Twitter.¹⁰⁶ He was acquitted of similar charges against two other public officials. Gezici had been detained in October 2014 in Adana after a police raid on his home.¹⁰⁷ Although he was not immediately imprisoned (likely due to an appeal), he was detained in July 2016 for alleged links to the failed coup.¹⁰⁸

- Bülent Keneş, editor-in-chief of *Today's Zaman*, was arrested in October 2015 for allegedly insulting President Erdoğan on Twitter.¹⁰⁹ In March, he was sentenced to over 2.5 years in prison, although he was not yet imprisoned, likely due to an ongoing appeal.¹¹⁰
- Journalist and anchorwoman Sedef Kabaş was acquitted in October 2015 of “menace” and “targeting public officials involved in counter-terrorism.”¹¹¹ Earlier, she had her home raided and was detained for a tweet that alluded to a cover up of a government corruption scandal.¹¹²
- In April 2016, journalist Hamza Aktan was arrested after retweeting a request from the BBC for people in Cizre to send pictures to the BBC. He faced a one- to five-year prison sentence.¹¹³

Journalists were not the only ones targeted for the social media activity. Prominent figures and even lesser known citizens were charged over the past year, including:

- Merve Büyüksaraç, a former “Miss Turkey,” was given a 14-month suspended prison sentence in May 2016.¹¹⁴ She had been on trial since 2015 for sharing a satirical poem on Instagram related to President Erdoğan’s corruption scandal that had originally appeared in the Turkish comic *Uykusuz*.¹¹⁵
- Bercan Aktas, a 22-year-old media student and member of the opposition People’s Democratic Party (HDP), was arrested in August 2015 for a tweet stating “A special forces police officer was neutralized” rather than using the term “martyred.” “Neutralized” is the term employed by the mainstream media to describe the death of alleged Kurdish militants. He was detained for over one month and later received a suspended prison sentence of one year and three months.¹¹⁶

106 “Gazeteci Aytakin Gezici’ye Erdogan’a hakareten 6 yıl hapis,” *Birgün*, September 17, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Lb26UR>.

107 “Turkey’s journalists challenged by growing judicial, political pressure,” *Today's Zaman*, May 28, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1iPzx61>.

108 Gündem Haber, “Aytakin Gezici tutuklandı, Yüksel Evsen Adli Kontrolle serbest...,” Ajans Adana, July 25, 2016, <http://ajansadana.com/haber-8406-aytekin-gezici-tutuklandi...-yuksel-evsen-adli-kontrolle-serbest...html>.

109 “Editor-in-chief arrested over tweet,” *Today's Zaman*, October 9, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/national_editor-in-chief-arrested-over-tweet_401136.html.

110 “Bülent Keneş’e ‘Cumhurbaşkanına hakaret’ten hapis cezası,” Anadolu Ajansı, March 24, 2016, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/bulent-kenese-cumhurbaskanina-hakaretten-hapis-cezasi/543362>.

111 “Journalist Sedef Kabaş acquitted in trial over critical tweet by İstanbul court,” *Today's Zaman*, October 6, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1joEtPW>.

112 “Twitter Transparency Report: Turkey Tops Censorship List by Margin,” *Today's Zaman*, February 6, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Qi8Sta>.

113 “Journalist detained in Turkey over tweets,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 30, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/journalist-detained-in-turkey-over-tweets.aspx?pageID=238&nID=98552&NewsCatID=341>.

114 “Ex-Miss Turkey sentenced for insulting Erdogan,” BBC, May 31, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36419723>.

115 Adam Taylor, “How a single Instagram post could end up sending a former Miss Turkey to jail,” *Washington Post*, February 25, 2015, <http://wapo.st/1LyEfMm>.

116 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “Turkish student detained for terrorism after tweeting about a dead soldier,” *Daily Dot*, August 19, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/can-you-go-to-jail-for-tweeting/>.

- A 14-year-old schoolboy was held overnight at a police station in October 2015 for “insulting” President Erdoğan on Facebook.¹¹⁷
- Bilgin Çiftçi, a family doctor in the province of Aydın, shared a popular meme comparing President Erdoğan’s facial expressions to a character in the Lord of the Rings movies. He was charged with insulting the president in December 2015 and faces up to two years in prison. In defense of Çiftçi, the films’ director Peter Jackson claimed that the picture did not portray Gollum, but rather his alternate ego “sweet Smeagol,” and therefore should not be considered insulting.¹¹⁸ Another person, Rifat Çetin, shared a similar content in 2014 and was handed a suspended prison sentence of one year. The judge had assembled a panel of film experts to determine whether or not the image was insulting.¹¹⁹
- In February 2016, 23-year-old university student Gizem Yerik was pulled from a lecture and taken into custody on charges of defaming the president and spreading PKK propaganda through her social media posts. Alleging that there was no ward for women in the jail, she was reportedly kept in solitary confinement for six days until she was sent to Gebze prison. She was released on probation on May 11, 2016 and later sentenced to 11 months and 20 days for insulting the president, in addition to a prison term of 3 years and 9 months for spreading propaganda in support of terrorist organizations.¹²⁰

President Erdoğan has reportedly filed criminal complaints against more than 250 people for “insulting” him online and more than 2,000 people for “insulting” him by any means since he was elected president in August 2014.¹²¹ Speaking on July 30, 2016, after the failed coup, President Erdoğan announced he would withdraw all such lawsuits.¹²² Nevertheless, Article 125(3) and Article 299 of the penal code remained in place as of writing.

Surveillance, Privacy, and Anonymity

Government surveillance, the bulk retention of user data, and limitations on encryption and anonymity are all concerns in Turkey. Leaked emails revealed a contract between the Italian surveillance software company Hacking Team and the General Directorate of Security (GDS), a civilian police force, for the use of Hacking Team’s “Remote Control System” from June 2011 to November 2014.¹²³ Under Turkish law, the interception of electronic communications falls under the purview of the TİB, and questions remain over the legality of the GDS using software that can infiltrate targets’ computers. The prominence of so-called Gülenists in the police and judiciary has been a major point of

117 Avi Asher-Schapiro, “Teen Arrested for ‘Insulting’ Erdogan on Facebook as Crackdown in Turkey Continues,” *Vice News*, October 23, 2015, <https://news.vice.com/article/teen-arrested-for-insulting-erdogan-on-facebook-as-crackdown-in-turkey-continues>.

118 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “Turkish court hires Gollum witnesses after doctor compares LOTR character to president,” *Daily Dot*, December 2, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/turkey-gollum-meme/>.

119 “Turkey guilty verdict for depicting Erdogan as Gollum,” *BBC*, June 23, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36610000>.

120 “Üniversite öğrencisi Gizem Yerik’e hapis cezası,” *HaberTurk*, May 13, 2016, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1238957-universite-ogrencisi-gizem-yerike-hapis-cezasi>.

121 Finkel, “Miss Turkey on Trial for Allegedly Insulting President Erdogan.” and “Cumhurbaşkanına Hakaret Davalarında Patlama” in Turkish, *Aktif Haber*, November 22, 2015, <http://www.aktifhaber.com/cumhurbaskanina-hakaret-davalarinda-patlama-1263244h.htm>.

122 “President Erdoğan withdrawing lawsuits filed for insult,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, July 30, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/president-erdogan-withdrawing-lawsuits-filed-for-insult.aspx?pageID=238&nID=102278&NewsCatID=338>.

123 Efe Kerem Sozeri, “Turkey paid Hacking Team \$600k to spy on civilians,” *The Daily Dot*, July 7, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/hacking-team-turkey/>.

discussion in the country in recent years, particularly after Gülenists were widely blamed for leaked wiretaps that led to various government corruption scandals in 2013 and 2014. Further scandals prompted high-level sackings and reshuffling within the police and judiciary, apparently aimed at removing suspected Gülenist officials.¹²⁴

According to Article 22 of the constitution, “everyone has the right to freedom of communication, and secrecy of communication is fundamental.” This right can only be violated under a court order in cases of “national security, public order, prevention of the commission of crimes, protection of public health and public morals, or protection of the rights and freedoms of others, or unless there exists a written order of an agency authorized by law in cases where delay is prejudicial.”¹²⁵ For the most part, any action that could interfere with freedom of communication or the right to privacy must be authorized by the judiciary. For example, judicial permission is required for technical surveillance under the Penal Procedural Law. Before the passage of the Homeland Security Act in March 2015, the law allowed Turkish security forces to conduct intelligence wiretapping for 24 hours without a judge’s permission in urgent situations. However, with the new law the time limit was increased to 48 hours, with a new requirement that wiretapping officials notify their superiors. In addition, only the Ankara High Criminal Court is authorized to decide whether the wiretapping is legitimate. Despite constitutional guarantees, most forms of telecommunication continue to be tapped and intercepted.¹²⁶

Furthermore, Turkey’s National Intelligence Organization (MİT) received expanded powers to conduct surveillance in April 2014. Law 6532 on Amending the Law on State Intelligence Services and the National Intelligence Organization grants intelligence agents unfettered access to communications data without a court order. The law forces public and private bodies—including but not limited to banks, archives, private companies, and professional organizations such as bar associations—to provide the MİT any requested data, documents, or information regarding certain crimes, such as crimes against the security of the state, national security, state secrets, and espionage. Failure to comply is punishable by prison. In a clause related to the MİT’s ability to intercept and store private data on “external intelligence, national defense, terrorism, international crimes, and cyber-security passing through telecommunication channels,” no requirement to procure a court order is mentioned.¹²⁷ The law also limits MİT agents’ accountability for wrongdoing. Courts must obtain the permission of the head of the agency in order to investigate agents, and journalists or editors who publish leaks on MİT activities via media channels may be imprisoned for three to nine years. Some observers have argued that the bid to shield the MİT from judicial investigations was intended to provide legal cover for the agency’s negotiations with the PKK, which is officially recognized as a terrorist organization; it also facilitated the crackdown on government opponents such as the Gülenists.¹²⁸ The opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) objected to the MİT law and filed an appeal with the Constitutional Court.

In 2013, the daily newspaper *Taraf* filed a complaint at the Constitutional Court against the MİT for illegally tapping journalists’ phones. Lawyers had initially filed a complaint with the Istanbul Public

124 “Turkish court accepts indictment of TIB over illegal spying,” *TRT World*, June 2, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1FgTTyZ>.

125 The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey.

126 For a history of interception of communications, see Faruk Bildirici, *Gizli Kulaklar Ulkesi* [The Country of Hidden Ears] (Istanbul: İletişim, 1999); Enis Coskun, *Kuresel Gozalti: Elektronik Gizli Dinleme ve Goruntuleme* [Global Custody: Electronic Interception of Communications and Surveillance] (Ankara: Umit Yayıncılık, 2000).

127 Human Rights Watch, “Turkey: Internet Freedom, Rights in Sharp Decline,” September 2, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1r1kJ0F>.

128 See Sebnem Arsu, “Turkish Leader Signs Bill Expanding Spy Agency’s Power,” *New York Times*, dated April 25, 2014, <http://nyti.ms/1McuXsn>; and Fehim Taştekin, “Is Turkey reverting to a ‘muhaberat’ state?” *Al-Monitor*, April 17, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1NDF1h7>.

Prosecutor's Office in 2012, but since MİT agents can only be prosecuted with the permission of the prime minister, the prosecutor's office decided not to pursue the case.¹²⁹ In May 2015 the Constitutional Court ruled that issuing such wiretapping orders was a violation of constitutional rights, particularly the right to privacy.¹³⁰

The constitution states that "secrecy of communication is fundamental," and users are allowed to post anonymously online. However, the anonymous purchase of mobile phones is not allowed; buyers must provide official identification. According to a Council of Ministers decision dated 2000, Turkish citizens may only import one mobile phone per two years. Imported devices can be registered at mobile phone operators' subscription centers and an e-government website, for a fee of TRY 131.50 (US\$45). Devices that are not registered within 60 days are shut off from telecommunications networks. In 2011, the BTK imposed regulations on the use of encryption hardware and software. Suppliers are required to provide encryption keys to state authorities before they can offer their products or services to individuals or companies within Turkey. Failure to comply can result in administrative fines and, in cases related to national security, prison sentences.

Under Law No. 5651, hosting and access providers must retain all traffic information for one year and maintain the accuracy, integrity, and confidentiality of such data. In addition, access providers must file the data together with a time stamp and provide assistance and support to the TİB in monitoring internet traffic. On December 8, 2015, the Constitutional Court nullified a set of amendments passed in February 2014, including a requirement that hosting providers must store data for up to two years.¹³¹ However, the decision will not enter into force until December 2016.

Public-use internet providers hold different responsibilities depending on their status as either commercial or noncommercial. Commercial providers are defined as entities that provide internet service upon a certain payment, such as internet cafes. Noncommercial public-use internet providers are defined as entities that provide internet service at a certain venue for a certain period of time, such as in hotels and restaurants. While all public-use internet providers are expected to take measures to prevent access to criminal content and store internal IP distribution logs, commercial providers must also receive permission from the local administration, use a content-filtering service approved by the TİB, and keep accurate daily records of internal IP distribution logs using software supplied by the TİB, which must be stored for a period of one year. In addition, these commercial providers are required to install a video surveillance system so as to identify users, and retain such records for seven days. All data must be made available to the TİB upon request—and without the need for a court order—under penalty of TRY 10,000 to 100,000 (US\$4,400 to 44,000) in fines.¹³²

In a largely positive note, a new Data Protection Law was passed and entered into force on April 7, 2016, aligning the country's legislation with EU standards.¹³³

129 "Taraf daily to take MİT's wiretapping to Constitutional Court," *Today's Zaman*, August 25, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1KwFDj>.

130 "Top court rules against Turkish intelligence over wiretapping journalists," *BGN News*, May 10, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1OfTWhm>.

131 Burçak Unsal, "The Constitutional Court's decision on internet law," *Hurriyet Daily News*, December 14, 2015 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-constitutional-courts-decision-on-internet-law.aspx?pageID=238&nID=92470&NewsCatID=>. 396

132 For further information on this section, see Representative on Freedom of the Media, "Briefing on Proposed Amendments to Law No. 5651," Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, January 2014, <http://www.osce.org/fom/110823?download=true>; Center for Internet and Society, Stanford Law School, "WILMAP: Turkey," accessed November 6, 2014, <http://stanford.io/1YcN8EX>.

133 Naz Degirmenci, "Turkey's First Comprehensive Data Protection Law Comes Into Force," *Inside Privacy*, April 8, 2016, <https://www.insideprivacy.com/data-security/turkeys-first-comprehensive-data-protection-law-comes-into-force/>.

Intimidation and Violence

Citizen journalists and reporters for online news outlets operate in an environment in which media workers have often been physically assaulted for their reporting.¹³⁴ Online journalists have been targeted while at protests; for example, police attempted to detain Bianet reporter Beyza Kural during a demonstration in November 2015.¹³⁵ Social media users—particularly public figures, journalists, and intellectuals—face online harassment for their posts.

Technical Attacks

Popular news organizations such as *Zaman*, *Today's Zaman*, *Cihan*, *Rotahaber*, *Radikal*, *Sözcü*, and *Taraf* reported cyberattacks against their websites during the November 2015 elections. The arts-and-culture news website Sanatacak.com experienced technical attacks after publishing a letter supporting Turkish actress Füsün Demirel, who declared that she “wanted to be to be a [Kurdish] guerrilla” in her youth. The website was inaccessible for around 48 hours on March 21, 2016 due to distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks.¹³⁶ The HDP’s website was attacked two days before the June 2015 elections and could not be accessed for over 24 hours.

Starting on December 14, 2015, Turkey suffered a 14-day long cyberattack to its official domain name servers, disconnecting almost 400,000 Turkish domains belonging to companies, government institutions, schools, e-mail services, and many other online services. On the first day of the attack, Turkey’s National Response Center for Cyber Events (USOM) cut all incoming foreign traffic to nic.tr, an administrative nongovernmental authority run by the Computer Center of Middle East Technical University, making Turkish websites with .tr domain names unreachable from the rest of the world.¹³⁷ On December 24, three of Turkey’s largest banks were targeted, disrupting online banking, ATM, and POS services. Although some suspected the attack to have originated in Russia, Anonymous claimed responsibility for the DDoS attack, accusing Turkey of supporting the so-called Islamic State.¹³⁸

Furthermore, in March 2016, the addresses, identity numbers, and other personal information of almost 50 million Turkish citizens were uploaded onto a website titled the “Turkish Citizenship Database” in a massive data leak. The website stated that the personal information of prominent public figures such as the president and prime minister could be found in the 1.5 gigabyte file and taunted President Erdoğan. According to Transport and Communication Minister Binali Yıldırım, the breach appeared to date back to at least 2010. An expert stated that the data was taken from the government’s official Population Governance Central Database (MERNIS) around 2009 and later illegally sold to foreclosure firms.¹³⁹

134 “Hurriyet columnist Ahmet Hakan injured in ‘organized assault,’” *Hurriyet Daily News*, October 1, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hurriyet-columnist-ahmet-hakan-injured-in-organized-assault.aspx?pageID=238&nID=89212&NewsCatID=509>.

135 “Detainment Effort by Handcuffing Behind bianet Reporter Beyza Kural,” *Bianet*, November 6, 2015, <http://bianet.org/english/media/169024-detainment-effort-by-handcuffing-behind-bianet-reporter-beyza-kuralturkcel>.

136 “In Turkey, technical attacks imperil digital media survival,” *International Press Institute*, April 12, 2016, <http://www.freemedia.at/in-turkey-technical-attacks-compromise-digital-media-sustainability/>.

137 Efe Kerem Sözeri, “Turkish Internet hit with massive DDoS attack,” *Today's Zaman*, December 17, 2015, <http://www.dailydot.com/politics/turkey-ddos-attack-tk-universities/>.

138 “Suspected cyber-attack hits Turkish banks, transactions,” *Today's Zaman*, December 24, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/national_suspected-cyber-attack-hits-turkish-banks-transactions_407865.html.

139 Can Sezer “Turkey launches inquiry into leak of 50 million citizens’ data,” *Reuters*, April 6, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-cyber-idUSKCN0X31ZK>.