

## **Turkey Tribunal Webinar: The State of Press Freedom in Turkey Today**

10 February 2021

- Turkey Tribunal in collaboration with International Observatory of Human Rights organize 4<sup>th</sup> of a series of webinars discussing the grave state of human rights in Turkey

On 21 January 2020, the Turkey Tribunal held a webinar in collaboration with the International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR) to consider the state of press freedom in Turkey.

The speakers included fellow journalist and author of the report "The State of Press freedom in Turkey Today" Philippe Leruth along with leading media figures Yavuz Baydar Editor in Chief of Ahval, Selçuk Gültaşlı, Brussels bureau chief of the Turkish newspaper Zaman and legal expert Prof. Dr. Baskın Oran.

Hosted by Johan Vande Lanotte, the webinar discussed Turkey's disturbing human rights record, specifically in the case of the clampdown on media and freedom of expression in Turkey.

The webinar discussed the findings of [the report commissioned by the Turkey Tribunal](#) on the State of Press Freedom in Turkey Today , journalist and report author Philippe Leruth revealed that **"the Turkish government has condemned more than 90% of press freedom related cases at the ECtHR."**

Leruth stated that the report mainly attempts to answer 2 fundamental questions:

1. Can Turkey currently be considered a country within which a sufficient degree of freedom of the press and freedom of expression is guaranteed, so it can follow the standards of a functioning democracy?
2. Can the decisions taken by the Turkish government still be considered a reaction linked to the "coup d'état" or do they need to be evaluated as a way to "destroy" the voices and/or organisations critical of the government?

The webinar captured testimonies from leading Turkish media figures representing approximately 200 other journalists currently living in exile. Yavuz Baydar Editor and Chief of Ahval commented on the situation in Turkey by saying **"Turkey has become a hell of fake news, lies as well as immense propaganda and blackouts."**

Selçuk Gültaşlı, Brussels bureau chief of the Turkish newspaper Zaman reflected on the role the Turkish government plays to suppress press freedom in Turkey by

stating: **“The message is clear: no judge can release a journalist without authorisation of the government.”**

Turkey Tribunal’s Johan Vande Lanotte concluded the webinar by thanking and speakers and attendees and re-emphasising the Turkey Tribunal’s commitment to bringing the dire situation of human rights in Turkey forward and the importance of presenting it to the court of public opinion.

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