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Statement on the Shutdown of Turkish Digital Website T24

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan joins the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS), the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA), the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the International Press Institute (IPI) in condemning the Turkish government's shutdown of independent digital website T24, due to its reporting on LGBT issues.

Source: <<https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2026/10/01/turkey-istanbul-court-shuts-down-independent-news-site-t24/>>

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20260930-turkey-says-news-site-closed-for-lgbtq-propaganda>

The Turkish government claims that T24 was engaged in "LGBT Propaganda". The shutdown of T24's website and social media accounts on Sept. 30th comes on the heels of a crackdown on Turkey's LGBTQ community that includes raids on bars, nightclubs, and private homes, that has resulted in arrest warrants for 162 people as of the beginning of October.

The Turkish Justice Ministry says T24 produced 118 pieces of content over the past year that it labeled "LGBT propaganda." The justice ministry accused T24 of receiving outside funding using its LGBTQ-coverage to attack traditional families. T24 says multiple government tax audits have failed to prove those claims.

T24 has challenged the access ban, insisting it violates the Turkish Constitution, along with rulings by the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. The objection petition prepared by T24's lawyers stated that the judicial decision violates freedom of opinion and expression, both of which are constitutionally guaranteed. T24 says that the disproportionate nature of the access ban constitutes a clear system of digital domination and social censorship.

Headquartered in Istanbul with a staff of 40 and a branch office in Ankara, T24 had also faced a social media harassment campaign prior to the ministry's decision to shut it down, T24's foreign news desk editor Buse Sogutlu told AFP.

Founded 17 years ago as an independent news site, T24 has become a widely consulted and trusted media organization in Turkey. In July, it ranked first among the "sources consulted by artificial intelligence platforms for Turkish fact-checking" in a Stanford University study.

<https://hai.stanford.edu/news/reading-todays-headlines-through-ai-a-real-time-audit-of-six-commercial-chatbots>

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