

公益社団法人 日本外国特派員協会

## The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan

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### FCCJ STATEMENT ON THE DETENTION OF JOURNALISTS IN TURKEY

The FCCJ joins the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) (CPJ) and other press freedom organizations around the world to urge Turkish authorities to end the detention of journalists and ensure the safety of foreign and Turkish media members covering the [protests](#) in cities across Turkey.

“Neither the police violence targeting journalists who are covering the street protests, nor the raiding of their homes, is acceptable under any conditions,” said Özgür Öğret, CPJ’s Turkey representative. “Turkish authorities should immediately release the journalists in custody and allow the press to operate freely and safely.”

Local press freedom organization [Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası](#) (Journalists’ Union of Turkey) also reports hostile behavior, such as beatings and shootings with rubber bullets, as well as damaging the equipment of journalists reporting on the ground.

As of March 26, at least 1,100 people have been [arrested](#) in the protests, among whom [more than half a dozen](#) or so are journalists.

[Seven photojournalists and reporters](#) working for foreign and Turkish press were first taken into police custody in Istanbul on March 24: [Yasin Akgül](#), Agence France-Presse (AFP); freelancers [Hayri Tunç](#), [Bülent Kılıç](#) (formerly of AFP), and [Zeynep Kuray](#); [Ali Onur Tosun](#) (NOW Haber); Istanbul City Hall photojournalist Kurtuluş Arı; Bakırköy Municipality photojournalist Gökhan Kam. Freelancer Murat Kocabaş was also added to the list from protests in Izmir.

They were later notified via their lawyers that they would be released conditionally but were instead [arrested](#) the next day on the charges of "breaking the law against gatherings and demonstrations." Freelancer Yağız Barut; Barış İnce (BirGün), and Zişan Gür, a reporter for the leftist news website Sendika, were also among those detained by the police at protest sites or through home raids at dawn. Since then, they were released conditionally pending the processing of their cases.

A statement published by Journalists' Union of Turkey condemned the arrests based on photographs taken during the protests: "You can neither take a photo nor break news from a desk. A journalist cannot be expected to record an unfolding event by withdrawing to the background. A journalist must be present where the news is breaking," read the organization's statement.

Erol Önderoğlu, a spokesperson for Reporters Without Borders Turkey, responded "with surprise and anger" at the news that "detained journalists in Istanbul were denied conditional release at the last minute and sent for arrest, instead. "No one has the right to damage one's faith in justice that much... This is the first time that a clearly identified journalist has, in the exercise of his duties, been formally arrested on the basis of this law against gatherings and demonstrations," he added.

In a separate statement, the Turkish Photojournalists' Association said, "Photojournalists are witnesses of an event -- not its subjects or its supporters. They are journalists who document truth with their cameras, convey to the society's memory unfolding events, and do their job on behalf of the public... we will never accept dismissal of the reason for these journalists to be [at the protests] simply to do their job and their eventual arrest."

Last week, one of Turkey's most respected and well-known investigative journalists, İsmail Saymaz, was taken into police custody on charges of "assisting an attempt to overthrow the government" for his coverage 13 years ago of national protests. Saymaz has since been released but [put under house arrest](#).

Separately, the FCCJ would like to remind authorities such as Turkey's RTÜK (Radio Television Supreme Board) and the Turkish Information and Communication Technologies Authority of their [obligation](#) to allow media organizations to inform the public, and of the public's right to get information about national events and rallies in Turkey without being [threatened](#). We also urge the authorities to not block the accounts of news organizations and journalists on [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter).

The Freedom of the Press Committee