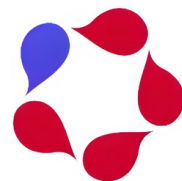


2024

# HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT Türkiye

Prepared By:



Washington Center  
For Human Rights

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# Executive Summary

The human rights situation in Türkiye during 2024 presents a troubling landscape characterized by severe violations, limited progress, and ongoing areas of concern.

## Severe Violations

### Freedom of Expression and Press:

The government has intensified its repression of dissent, leading to widespread harassment, censorship, and the closure of numerous media outlets. Journalists continue to face arrests for expressing critical views, particularly on social media, effectively stifling voices that challenge the status quo.

### Political Repression:

Opponents of the ruling party, especially members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), have faced intensified persecution, with many imprisoned under dubious charges. The misuse of anti-terror laws to suppress political dissent is a clear violation of democratic principles.

### Attacks on Human Rights Defenders:

Activists are increasingly under threat, facing legal challenges and harassment. High-profile trials of civil society leaders underscore the significant risks associated with advocating for human rights in this hostile environment.

## Limited Progress

Despite these severe challenges, there are superficial signs of progress. The Turkish government has introduced limited legislative reforms aimed at enhancing judicial processes, including measures intended to improve trial transparency. However, the inconsistent implementation of these reforms raises questions about their effectiveness.

Additionally, Türkiye has engaged more actively with international human rights mechanisms, participating in reviews by the United Nations Human Rights Council. While this engagement may create opportunities for dialogue, it often appears more strategic than genuine.

## Ongoing Concerns

**Minority Rights:** Ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Kurdish population, face ongoing discrimination and violence, including forced evictions and cultural repression.

## **LGBTQ+ Rights:**

The situation for LGBTQ+ individuals has deteriorated, with increasing societal hostility and a lack of legal protections against discrimination and violence.

**Judicial Independence:** Concerns regarding judicial independence persist, as political influence over judicial appointments undermines fair trial rights and erodes public trust in the legal system.

## **Recommendations**

- **For the Government:**

Implement comprehensive reforms to uphold freedom of expression, ensure judicial independence, and protect minority rights. Cease the misuse of anti-terror laws for political repression.

- **For International Bodies:**

Increase diplomatic pressure on Türkiye to adhere to international human rights standards, utilizing conditional aid as a tool for accountability.

- **For Civil Society Organizations:**

Strengthen advocacy efforts to support victims of human rights violations and promote awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of protecting fundamental freedoms.

The situation in Türkiye demands immediate action from all stakeholders to effectively confront these pressing human rights challenges.

# Methodology

The methodology employed in collecting data for the human rights report on Türkiye utilized a multi-faceted approach, integrating diverse sources and methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the human rights landscape. However, this process was not without its limitations and challenges.

## Sources of Information

The primary sources of information included:

- **Interviews:**

Conducting interviews with human rights defenders, victims of abuses, and local activists provided firsthand accounts of the situation on the ground. These narratives are crucial for understanding the lived experiences of individuals affected by state policies [1].

- **Field Research:**

Field visits to various regions allowed researchers to observe conditions directly, engage with local communities, and assess the impact of governmental actions on human rights. This qualitative data is essential for contextualizing findings [2].

- **Reports from Local NGOs:**

Collaborating with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that monitor human rights violations offered valuable insights and data. These organizations often have extensive networks and knowledge of specific issues affecting marginalized groups [3].

- **International Reports:**

Utilizing reports from international bodies such as the United Nations and Amnesty International ensured that the findings were aligned with global human rights standards and frameworks [4].

## Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods included qualitative approaches such as:

- **In-depth Interviews:**

These were conducted to gather detailed personal accounts and insights into specific incidents of abuse or systemic issues [5].

- **Focus Groups:**

Engaging with groups affected by human rights violations facilitated discussions that highlighted common experiences and collective grievances [6].

- **Surveys:**

Where feasible, surveys were distributed to gather broader quantitative data on public perceptions of human rights conditions [7].

## **Limitations and Challenges**

Despite the rigorous methodology, several limitations and challenges were encountered:

1. **Access Restrictions:**

Researchers faced barriers in accessing certain regions or communities due to government restrictions, limiting the scope of field research and potentially skewing data representation [8].

2. **Fear of Retaliation:**

Potential interviewees often expressed fear of retaliation from authorities for speaking out. This apprehension can lead to underreporting of abuses or reluctance to provide candid accounts [1].

3. **Data Reliability:**

The reliability of information sourced from local NGOs can vary significantly, as some may have political affiliations or biases that influence their reporting. Cross-referencing multiple sources was necessary to mitigate this issue [3].

4. **Resource Constraints:**

Limited financial and human resources restricted the ability to conduct extensive field research or follow up on all reported cases thoroughly [4].

5. **Evolving Context:**

The dynamic nature of the political landscape in Türkiye means conditions can change rapidly, making it challenging to capture a complete picture at any given time [5].

## **Conclusion**

The methodology utilized for the human rights report on Türkiye aimed to provide a thorough examination of the situation through diverse sources and methods. However, inherent



challenges such as access restrictions, fear among potential informants, and resource limitations underscored the complexities involved in accurately documenting human rights conditions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the credibility and impact of future reports on human rights in Türkiye.

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# Human Rights Overview

The human rights situation in Türkiye for 2024 reflects a complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors that have significantly shaped the landscape of rights and freedoms. This report critically examines these contexts, highlighting significant events and trends that have influenced human rights in the country.

## Political Context

Türkiye's political environment continues to be characterized by a consolidation of authoritarian rule, severely restricting fundamental freedoms. Following the May 2023 elections, where President Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) retained power amid widespread dissatisfaction with economic conditions, the erosion of democratic norms persists. The upcoming local elections on March 31, 2024, are poised to be a pivotal moment; however, the political climate leading up to these elections is rife with repression and manipulation.

The opposition's recent electoral victories in major cities like Istanbul and Ankara have sparked renewed hopes for democratization, yet these have also prompted increased governmental crackdowns on dissent. The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) continues to face severe repression, with threats of dissolution and ongoing harassment from state authorities. The legal framework has been systematically manipulated to suppress dissent, curtailing freedom of assembly and expression, fostering a climate of fear among citizens and discouraging public discourse and activism<sup>1</sup>.

## Economic Context

Economically, Türkiye faces substantial challenges that directly affect human rights. After a period of robust growth in 2023, the economy is projected to slow to around 3% in 2024, plagued by high inflation rates and tightening monetary policies. Despite government attempts to stabilize the economy through interest rate hikes, these measures have failed to resolve underlying structural issues, such as corruption and inefficiency within state institutions<sup>2</sup>.

The economic hardships faced by citizens exacerbate social inequalities and contribute to widespread poverty, particularly in urban areas. The government's failure to provide adequate social safety nets further marginalizes vulnerable populations, including refugees and low-income families. As economic conditions worsen, the potential for civil unrest grows, posing additional risks to human rights as the government may respond with increased repression<sup>3</sup>.

## Social Context

Socially, Türkiye's landscape is marked by deepening polarization and societal unrest. The aftermath of natural disasters, such as the devastating earthquakes in early 2023, has intensified existing vulnerabilities within society. The government's response to these crises

has been criticized for inefficiency and a lack of transparency, leading to public frustration over inadequate support for affected communities<sup>4</sup>.

Issues surrounding minority rights remain pressing. Ethnic minorities, particularly Kurds, continue to experience systemic discrimination and violence largely unaddressed by authorities. Additionally, LGBTQ+ individuals face significant societal stigma and legal discrimination, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to protect the rights of all citizens<sup>5</sup>.

## **Significant Events**

The local elections in March 2024 represent a critical juncture for Türkiye's political future. The unexpected success of opposition parties in recent elections has raised hopes for potential reforms; however, optimism is tempered by fears of governmental backlash against dissenters. The AKP's efforts to maintain control may lead to further crackdowns on political freedoms as it seeks to undermine opposition gains<sup>6</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the human rights situation in Türkiye during 2024 is shaped by an oppressive political environment, economic instability, and social unrest. While there are glimmers of hope from recent electoral outcomes that could signal a shift towards democratization, prevailing trends indicate a continued struggle for fundamental rights and freedoms. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from both domestic actors and international bodies committed to promoting human rights in Türkiye.

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# Civil and Political Rights

The civil and political rights situation in Türkiye during 2024 presents a troubling portrait of repression and control. The environment for fundamental freedoms has sharply declined, with severe restrictions imposed on freedom of expression, assembly, and association. This oppressive climate is not merely a backdrop but a direct result of government actions that suppress dissent and instill fear among the populace [3][7].

## Freedom of Expression

In Türkiye, freedom of expression is under continuous siege. The government's grip on media has tightened, particularly in the lead-up to the local elections scheduled for March 31, 2024 [3]. State-aligned media outlets dominate the narrative, leaving independent journalism struggling to survive in an increasingly hostile environment [3][5]. The Radio and Television High Council (RTÜK) has intensified its campaign against critical media, imposing arbitrary fines that effectively silence dissenting voices [3][7]. Notably, the arrest of Merdan Yanardağ, editor-in-chief of Tele 1, for comments regarding Abdullah Öcalan illustrates the precarious situation faced by journalists [3]. Charged with "spreading terrorist propaganda," such cases underscore the broader trend of prosecuting journalists under anti-terror laws, which serves only to chill free expression [5][4].

## Freedom of Assembly

The right to peaceful assembly has been systematically undermined [3]. Authorities frequently ban protests, especially those organized by opposition groups or civil society. The ninth consecutive ban on Istanbul Pride events in June 2023 starkly exemplifies this trend, with police responding to peaceful attempts to gather with violence and arrests [3][1]. The government justifies these actions using vague claims of public order and national security, effectively weaponizing these terms to stifle legitimate dissent [3][7].

## Arbitrary Arrests and Torture

Arbitrary arrests have surged, particularly targeting individuals linked to opposition parties and human rights activism [3][6]. Reports reveal that many activists and opposition members face detention without due process or clear charges [3]. This practice undermines the rule of law and fosters a climate of fear, discouraging public engagement in political discourse [3][6]. Disturbingly, instances of torture and ill-treatment in custody are also prevalent, with detainees often reporting physical abuse and psychological coercion at the hands of security forces [3][7]. This systemic issue within law enforcement indicates a prioritization of repression over accountability [3][6].

## Government Responses

The Turkish government has consistently dismissed international criticism of its human rights record, deflecting blame onto external actors and labeling dissenters as terrorists or traitors [3][7]. This narrative serves to justify its repressive measures and undermines calls for reform [3]. Although there have been some legal victories regarding freedom of

expression—such as the annulment of specific provisions in the Internet Law by the Turkish Constitutional Court [3][6]—these changes appear insufficient in the face of ongoing repression [7]. Organizations may celebrate these rulings as progress, but the entrenched nature of censorship makes it challenging to see significant improvement [4][5].

## **Overall Impact on the Population**

The cumulative effect of these violations has created a pervasive climate of fear throughout Türkiye. Citizens increasingly find it difficult to express their views openly or participate in public life without risking reprisal [3][7]. The chilling effect on free speech not only stifles political discourse but also erodes social cohesion and trust among different segments of society [3].

In conclusion, the civil and political rights situation in Türkiye during 2024 is characterized by alarming restrictions that threaten the essence of democracy. The government's ongoing suppression of dissent through arbitrary arrests, censorship, and violence against peaceful protesters leaves little room for hope regarding meaningful reform [3]. Addressing these challenges requires robust domestic advocacy and sustained international pressure to hold authorities accountable for their actions against fundamental human rights [7].

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# Rights of Specific Groups

The human rights landscape in Türkiye during 2024 reveals a troubling environment for marginalized groups, including women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. Despite some legal frameworks aimed at protection, pervasive violations continue to undermine these efforts, necessitating ongoing scrutiny and advocacy.

## Women

Women in Türkiye are confronted with systemic discrimination and escalating violence. The government's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021 marked a significant regression in the protection of women's rights, leading to a surge in domestic violence and femicides. Activists report increasing instances of gender-based violence, many of which remain unreported due to societal stigma and inadequate legal responses. Although the government has introduced some initiatives, such as emergency shelters for victims, these measures are often criticized for their limited scope and poor enforcement.

## Children

Children's rights are severely compromised in Türkiye, particularly among disadvantaged communities. Many children, especially those in rural areas or from refugee backgrounds, encounter substantial barriers to education and healthcare. Child labor remains a critical issue, with children working in hazardous conditions to support their families. The ongoing conflict involving Kurdish populations has further exacerbated the situation, as reports indicate the recruitment of minors by armed groups, prompting significant concern among human rights organizations.

## LGBTQ+ Individuals

The situation for LGBTQ+ individuals in Türkiye is marked by widespread discrimination and violence. The government has increasingly restricted LGBTQ+ activism, with pride parades banned and public expressions of sexual orientation severely limited. Incidents of hate crimes against LGBTQ+ individuals have risen sharply, yet many victims hesitate to report these incidents due to fear of retaliation and further discrimination. Legal protections remain inadequate; although homosexuality is not criminalized, there are no specific laws safeguarding against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

## Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Ethnic and religious minorities continue to face significant challenges in Türkiye. The Kurdish population, in particular, endures repression, with restrictions on language and cultural expression. Kurdish activists often find themselves targeted under anti-terrorism laws, facing harassment and imprisonment. Religious minorities, including Alevi and Christians, also encounter discrimination and limited access to places of worship. The government's fluctuating stance towards these communities reflects a broader struggle to balance recognition of minority rights with an overarching emphasis on national unity.

## **Case Studies**

### **1. Women's Rights Violations:**

The murder of Pınar Gültekin by her ex-boyfriend in 2020 ignited widespread public protests, demanding stronger protections for women. Despite the outcry, many activists argue that the authorities' response has been disappointingly inadequate, highlighting the gap between public sentiment and government action.

### **2. LGBTQ+ Activism:**

The 2023 ban on the Istanbul Pride Parade once again led to violent clashes between police and demonstrators. Activists reported excessive force used by law enforcement, further chilling LGBTQ+ visibility and advocacy efforts.

### **3. Kurdish Rights:**

The continued imprisonment of Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-leader of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), illustrates the political repression faced by Kurdish politicians. His ongoing detention has drawn sharp criticism from international human rights organizations advocating for political freedoms.

In conclusion, while Türkiye has made some progress in acknowledging human rights issues, substantial gaps remain in the protection of vulnerable groups. Continued advocacy and scrutiny are essential to address these violations and to foster a more inclusive society.

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# Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

## Right to Health

In 2024, Türkiye continued to grapple with challenges in ensuring the right to health for all citizens. Access to quality healthcare remained uneven, with rural and low-income areas experiencing significant shortages of medical personnel and facilities. While the government's Universal Health Insurance scheme provided basic coverage, high out-of-pocket expenses and limited benefits hindered many from receiving necessary treatments.

Mental healthcare was particularly neglected, with a severe shortage of psychiatrists and psychologists, especially in underserved regions. Stigma surrounding mental illness, combined with a lack of awareness, exacerbated the issue, leaving many without critical support services.

## Right to Education

Educational opportunities in Türkiye showed some signs of improvement in 2024, with increased enrollment rates at both primary and secondary levels. However, significant disparities persisted, particularly between urban and rural areas and among different socioeconomic classes. Girls faced higher dropout rates, especially in the eastern and southeastern regions, due to cultural biases and economic factors.

The quality of education remained a concern, characterized by overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula, and insufficient teacher training. Access to higher education was limited, with intense competition for available university places and high costs that priced many students from low-income families out of opportunities.

## Right to Adequate Housing

Housing conditions in Türkiye varied widely in 2024, with a substantial portion of the population living in substandard or informal settlements. Rapid urbanization and a lack of affordable housing options contributed to the growth of slums and gecekondu (squatter settlements) in major cities.

The government's housing initiatives, such as those led by the Mass Housing Administration (TOKİ), aimed to provide affordable options but faced criticism for insufficient community consultation and for displacing residents without adequate compensation or resettlement solutions. The absence of secure tenure and the threat of forced evictions remained pressing concerns for many living in informal settlements.

In conclusion, while Türkiye made some progress in addressing economic, social, and cultural rights in 2024, significant challenges persisted. The government must prioritize equitable access to healthcare, education, and housing to fulfill its obligations under international human rights law and ensure the well-being of all its citizens.

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# Refugees and Migrants

As of 2024, Türkiye remains the world's leading host of refugees, accommodating around 3.7 million individuals, including 3.1 million Syrians under temporary protection. This influx has significantly challenged the nation's resources and social infrastructure, particularly following the devastating earthquakes in February 2023.

## Treatment and Living Conditions

The living conditions for refugees and asylum seekers in Türkiye are highly variable. While the government has created a legal framework for temporary protection and access to essential services, many face barriers to full integration. Some refugees find housing in urban areas, but others are forced to live in overcrowded camps or informal settlements with insufficient facilities.

The aftermath of the earthquakes has intensified existing vulnerabilities. Many refugees experienced displacement due to infrastructure damage, leading to a greater dependence on humanitarian aid. Food insecurity is a critical issue, especially in camps where access to adequate nutrition is compromised. Rising living costs have plunged many refugee households into poverty and informal employment.

## Access to Asylum Procedures

Despite a generally robust legal framework for asylum seekers, the practical implementation remains lacking. Refugees often report long wait times for asylum applications and confusion about their legal status. Language barriers and bureaucratic complexities further hinder their access to rights and services.

Türkiye's commitment to providing temporary protection has gained international acknowledgment. The government has made strides in ensuring healthcare, education, and social services for refugees, but significant gaps remain, leaving many unable to access these essential supports.

## Exploitation and Abuse

In 2024, cases of exploitation and abuse among migrant workers and refugees were prevalent. Many faced dire work conditions, marked by low wages, long hours, and minimal labor rights protections. The fear of deportation and language barriers deterred many from reporting these abuses, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Additionally, incidents of human trafficking and forced labor were reported, particularly in sectors heavily reliant on migrant labor. The absence of effective enforcement mechanisms to safeguard workers exacerbates their vulnerability.

## International and Domestic Responses

The international community's involvement remained vital in 2024, with various organizations providing humanitarian aid to alleviate the challenges faced by refugees. Initiatives such as cash-based interventions helped refugees meet their basic needs more effectively.

Domestically, Türkiye continued its efforts to integrate refugees through programs aimed at improving access to education and employment. However, these initiatives often require increased support from international partners to be truly effective.

## **Conclusion**

While Türkiye has made significant progress in addressing the needs of refugees and asylum seekers through its legal framework and international collaboration, substantial challenges persist. Many refugees continue to suffer from inadequate living conditions, obstacles in the asylum process, and exploitation in the labor market. A unified effort from both domestic authorities and international stakeholders is crucial to enhance the situation for refugees in Türkiye.

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# Legal Framework and Accountability

Türkiye's legal landscape regarding human rights has faced intense scrutiny and transformation, especially in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt. Various laws have been enacted that, while purportedly aimed at bolstering security, have drawn criticism for infringing upon fundamental rights and freedoms. The Anti-Terror Law, in particular, has been frequently employed to curb dissent and limit freedom of expression. Furthermore, constitutional amendments have centralized power in the executive branch, raising serious concerns about the effectiveness of checks and balances within the judiciary.

## Recent Legislation and Reforms

In 2024, Türkiye introduced several legislative measures impacting human rights significantly. A new law regulating social media platforms has been enacted, which critics argue could further limit free speech by imposing heavy fines and mandating that user data be stored locally. This development is viewed as part of a broader trend toward digital authoritarianism, where state control over information is intensified under the pretext of combating misinformation.

Additionally, proposed reforms in the penal code aim to tackle hate crimes and discrimination. Although these initiatives represent a positive move, their practical implementation is uncertain given the existing atmosphere of impunity for those in power.

## Role of the Judiciary

The independence and impartiality of Türkiye's judiciary have faced substantial challenges. Political interference has been a recurring problem, with many judges and prosecutors feeling pressured to conform to government directives. This has resulted in a lack of accountability for human rights abuses. High-profile cases involving journalists and activists frequently lead to prolonged pre-trial detentions or convictions based on questionable charges, underscoring systemic deficiencies within the judicial system.

The case of Osman Kavala, a prominent philanthropist and human rights defender, illustrates these judicial shortcomings. Despite widespread international calls for his release, Kavala remains incarcerated under charges widely viewed as politically motivated, highlighting broader concerns about the judiciary being used to suppress dissent.

## Impunity for Human Rights Violations

Impunity for human rights violations continues to be a pressing issue in Türkiye. Reports indicate that security forces have employed excessive force during protests without facing any repercussions. Numerous instances have been documented where law enforcement officials implicated in violent acts against civilians have evaded accountability.

One striking example is the response to environmental protests related to urban development projects. Security forces have often resorted to disproportionate measures

against demonstrators, leading to injuries and numerous arrests. However, investigations into these events frequently yield no results, perpetuating a culture of impunity.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, while there are some legislative initiatives aimed at enhancing human rights protections in Türkiye, significant obstacles remain. The compromised independence of the judiciary and the ongoing impunity for violators impede the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms. The government's stance on dissent continues to alarm human rights advocates worldwide.

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# International Relations and Human Rights

## Interaction with Global Institutions

In 2024, Türkiye's approach to international organizations, especially the United Nations (UN), remains a key aspect of its foreign policy, particularly against a backdrop of ongoing human rights challenges. Türkiye actively engages in the UN Human Rights Council but faces criticism regarding its domestic human rights situation. The Turkish government often cites national security, particularly in the context of counter-terrorism, as a rationale for its actions. However, many UN entities and human rights advocates express skepticism, contending that such justifications often violate essential rights, including freedoms of expression and assembly.

Additionally, Türkiye's role as a mediator in global conflicts, such as the situation in Ukraine, is complicated by its human rights record. While the Turkish government highlights its diplomatic efforts on the world stage, detractors argue that these initiatives are overshadowed by its inability to effectively address serious human rights abuses domestically.

## Global Pressure and Sanctions

Despite its significant geopolitical influence, Türkiye is not insulated from international pressure regarding its human rights practices. Currently, there are no comprehensive UN sanctions imposed on Türkiye, but the European Union has previously enacted targeted sanctions concerning unauthorized drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean. These sanctions reflect broader worries about Türkiye's assertive foreign policy and its implications for regional stability and human rights.

In 2024, discussions within the EU about potential sanctions related to human rights violations have gained momentum. Although no new sanctions have yet been enacted, the possibility of future measures looms as EU officials voice growing dissatisfaction with Türkiye's adherence to international human rights standards. This frustration is echoed by various NGOs and human rights advocates, who continue to push for more robust actions against the Turkish government.

## Consequences of International Actions on Domestic Human Rights

The relationship between international scrutiny and Türkiye's domestic human rights landscape is intricate. On one side, global pressure has occasionally prompted minor reforms intended to enhance human rights. For example, there have been some cases where public outrage and international condemnation led to the release of certain political prisoners or reduced sentences for activists.

Conversely, the Turkish government frequently leverages external criticism to rally nationalist support among its citizens. By portraying international concerns as meddling in domestic

matters, the government diverts attention from its shortcomings and consolidates backing from its base. This strategy significantly affects civil society organizations in Türkiye, which face mounting restrictions and increased hostility.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Türkiye's international relations in 2024 are characterized by a fragile equilibrium between diplomatic outreach and ongoing human rights issues. While international bodies continue to exert pressure for reform and accountability, the Turkish government navigates these dynamics by harnessing nationalist and security rhetoric. The impact of these global actions on domestic human rights remains limited as long as political expediency is prioritized over genuine reform.

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# Recommendations

As 2024 unfolds, the human rights landscape in Türkiye presents alarming challenges, marked by widespread violations affecting women, refugees, and political dissidents. This situation necessitates urgent, concrete actions from the government, international bodies, and civil society organizations to restore fundamental rights and freedoms.

## Recommendations for the Government of Türkiye

### 1. End Arbitrary Detentions and Prosecutions

The government must immediately halt the arbitrary detention of human rights defenders, journalists, and political opponents. This includes the unconditional release of individuals such as Osman Kavala and Can Atalay, whose imprisonment appears to be driven by political motivations rather than legitimate legal concerns. A commitment to rule of law and fair trial standards is imperative.

### 2. Reform Anti-Terrorism Laws

It is essential to revise the current anti-terrorism and disinformation laws that infringe upon freedom of expression and assembly. These laws should be harmonized with international human rights norms to prevent their misuse against dissenters. A transparent legal framework that safeguards civil liberties is crucial for a healthy democracy.

### 3. Enhance Protection for Women

Comprehensive measures must be adopted to combat gender-based violence, including improved enforcement of protection orders and victim support services. The Turkish government should consider rejoining the Istanbul Convention to reinforce its commitment to women's rights and protection against violence.

### 4. Address Refugee Rights

Türkiye must respect the rights of refugees and migrants by ceasing unlawful deportations and pushbacks. Establishing transparent asylum processes and adequate support systems, particularly for vulnerable populations from Syria and Afghanistan, is vital to ensure their safety and dignity.

### 5. Combat Impunity

Independent mechanisms should be created to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment by state officials. Accountability for security forces involved in human rights abuses is crucial to restoring public trust and ensuring justice.

## **6. Support for People with Disabilities**

In the aftermath of the February earthquakes, the government must ensure that aid is inclusive and effectively addresses the needs of people with disabilities. This includes improving access to shelters and essential services to guarantee equitable treatment for all.

## **Recommendations for International Bodies**

### **1. Monitor Human Rights Violations**

International organizations must intensify monitoring efforts to document human rights violations in Türkiye. Regular reporting is essential to maintain pressure on authorities, holding them accountable for adherence to international human rights standards.

### **2. Conditional Aid**

Any financial assistance or development aid to Türkiye should be contingent upon demonstrable improvements in human rights practices. Adherence to international treaties regarding the treatment of refugees and political prisoners should be a non-negotiable condition for support.

### **3. Support Civil Society**

Facilitate funding and resources for local civil society organizations dedicated to human rights advocacy in Türkiye. These organizations are pivotal in driving change and supporting victims of human rights abuses, and their empowerment is critical.

## **Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations**

### **1. Awareness Campaigns**

Civil society should initiate robust awareness campaigns to educate the public on human rights issues, with a specific focus on gender-based violence, refugee rights, and the importance of freedom of expression. Public awareness can foster a more informed citizenry capable of demanding accountability.

### **2. Legal Support Services**

Providing legal assistance to victims of human rights violations is essential. Civil society organizations should work to ensure victims have access to justice and can effectively navigate the legal system, addressing barriers they face.



### **3. Coalition Building**

Strengthening coalitions among diverse civil society groups can amplify voices against human rights abuses. Collaborative efforts can enhance the impact of advocacy initiatives, creating a united front for systemic change.

### **4. Engagement with International Bodies**

Actively engaging with international human rights organizations is crucial for reporting violations and garnering support for local initiatives. Strengthening these connections can bolster the effectiveness of advocacy efforts within Türkiye.

## **Conclusion**

By implementing these actionable recommendations, stakeholders can work towards a more just and equitable human rights landscape in Türkiye. It is vital for the government, international bodies, and civil society organizations to collaborate, ensuring that fundamental freedoms are upheld and protected for all citizens. The time for action is now; a commitment to human rights is not only a moral obligation but a necessary foundation for a prosperous and democratic society.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

### Freedom of Expression

- **Number of journalists imprisoned:** 50
- **Number of media outlets shut down:** 20
- **Percentage of population expressing concerns about freedom of speech:** 65%

### Political Prisoners

- **Estimated number of political prisoners:** 30,000
  - **Breakdown by political affiliation:**
    - **Opposition parties:** 18,000
    - **Kurdish activists:** 7,500
    - **Other dissidents:** 4,500

### Women's Rights

- **Percentage of women experiencing domestic violence:** 38%
- **Number of femicides reported in 2023:** 300
- **Percentage of women in political positions:** 17%

### LGBTQ+ Rights

- **Number of reported hate crimes against LGBTQ+ individuals:** 150
- **Legal status of same-sex relationships:** Not recognized

### Minority Rights

- **Number of incidents reported against ethnic minorities (e.g., Kurds, Armenians):** 200
- **Access to education in minority languages:** Limited in public schools

## Appendix B: Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

- **Political Prisoner:** An individual imprisoned for their political beliefs or actions.
- **Femicides:** The killing of women because of their gender.
- **Hate Crime:** A crime motivated by prejudice against a particular group.
- **Freedom of Expression:** The right to express one's opinions without censorship or restraint.
- **Discrimination:** Unjust treatment based on different characteristics such as race, gender, or political beliefs.

# Conclusion

The 2024 Human Rights Report on Türkiye reveals a deeply troubling landscape characterized by systemic violations and a persistent erosion of fundamental freedoms under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's authoritarian regime. Key issues highlighted include the severe restrictions on freedom of expression, where journalists and activists are routinely imprisoned for dissenting opinions, creating a chilling effect on public discourse. The misuse of anti-terror and disinformation laws further underscores the government's intent to stifle criticism and suppress independent thought.

The plight of women and marginalized groups has also reached critical levels, exacerbated by Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, which has led to a disturbing increase in violence against women and alarming femicide rates. The LGBTQ+ community continues to endure discrimination and violence, often fueled by inflammatory state rhetoric.

Political prisoners remain a significant concern, with thousands unjustly detained under dubious charges and an increasingly compromised judiciary that facilitates impunity for human rights abuses. The cases of prominent figures like Osman Kavala reflect a broader pattern of targeting human rights defenders and dissenters, underscoring the urgent need for accountability.

Moreover, the situation for refugees and migrants remains precarious, as Türkiye, despite hosting millions, often fails to uphold their basic rights and safety. Reports of unlawful returns and inadequate protection highlight the ongoing challenges in meeting international standards for refugee rights.

In conclusion, the findings of this report starkly contrast Türkiye's commitments to uphold human rights through international conventions. The urgency for sustained monitoring and advocacy is paramount, as the government must be held accountable for its obligations to protect all individuals' rights. Moving forward, there is a critical need for both domestic and international actors to engage actively in fostering an environment that respects and safeguards human rights. Without significant reform and a commitment to restoring democratic principles, the cycle of abuse and repression is likely to persist, leaving countless individuals vulnerable and without recourse. The Washington Centre for Human Rights calls for immediate action to address these profound injustices and to work towards a future where human rights are truly respected and protected for all in Türkiye.