



2022 IN REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT

SOLIDARITY WITH OTHERS

MAY 2023
BELGIUM

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The year 2022 saw no substantial improvement in Turkey's human rights situation, continuing the concerning trends observed in 2021.

The authorities persisted in their mass detention and incarceration campaign, specifically targeting government critics associated with the Gülen movement and individuals who are involved in Kurdish political networks. This relentless crackdown disregarded Turkey's own laws and international legal standards.

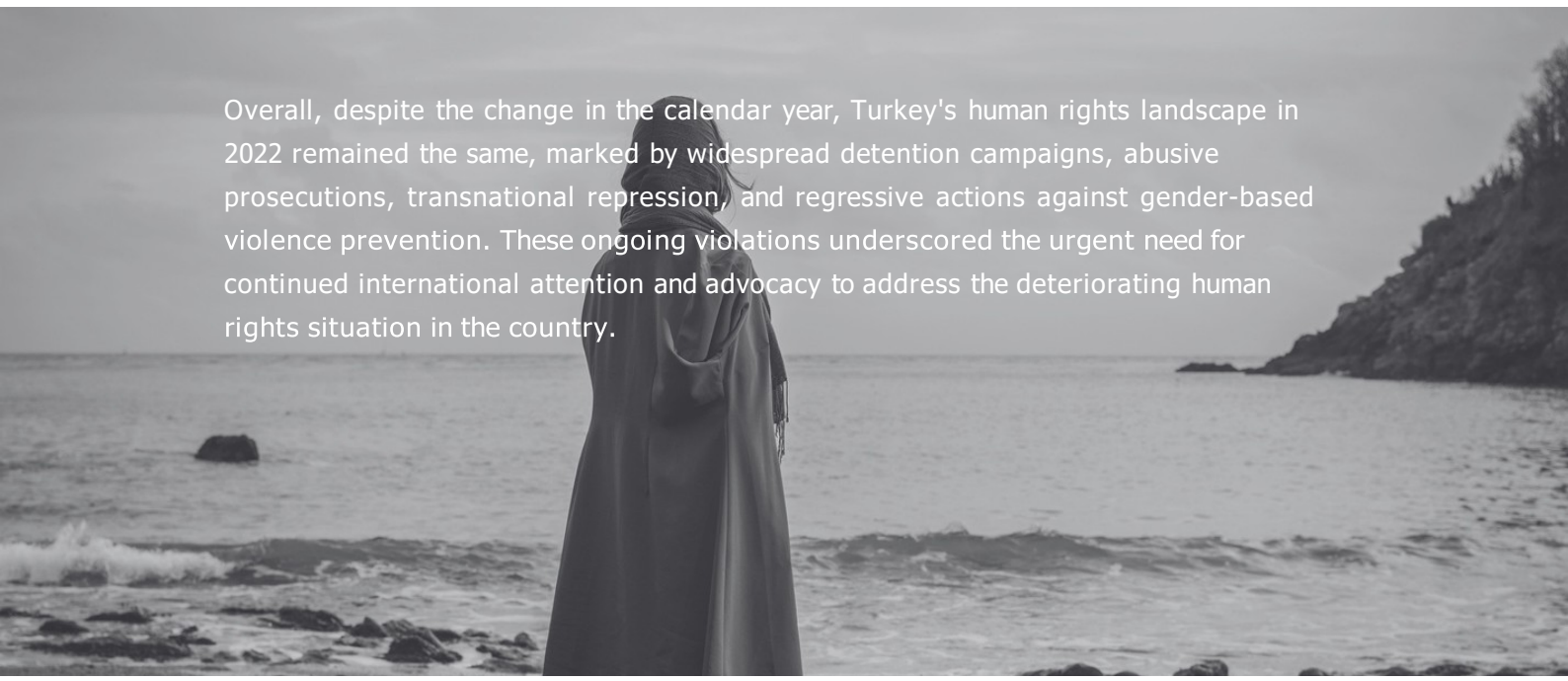
Disturbingly, pregnant and post-partum women, as well as critically ill inmates, remained incarcerated in violation of their rights and were deprived of necessary medical care.

Tragically, some of these individuals lost their lives either behind bars or shortly after their belated release.

Turkish courts continued to abuse their power by prosecuting individuals for expressing their views on social media and participating in peaceful demonstrations. This ongoing suppression of dissent stifled freedom of expression and violated individuals' rights to voice their opinions without fear of reprisal.

Another significant setback occurred in women's rights, dealing a tremendous blow to efforts to address domestic violence and other gender-based forms of violence, undermining the progress made in ensuring women's safety and well-being.

Overall, despite the change in the calendar year, Turkey's human rights landscape in 2022 remained the same, marked by widespread detention campaigns, abusive prosecutions, transnational repression, and regressive actions against gender-based violence prevention. These ongoing violations underscored the urgent need for continued international attention and advocacy to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the country.

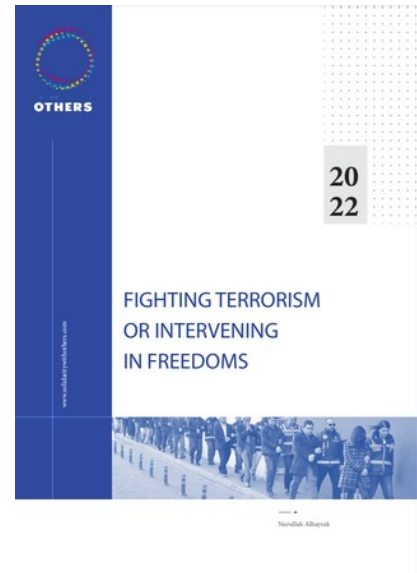


OUR REPORTS

Fighting Terrorism or Intervening in Freedoms

Nurullah Albayrak - February 2022

The report discusses how the fight against terrorism in Turkey has resulted in a suspension of human rights and freedoms, with vague laws and broad discretion given to the judiciary leading to numerous human rights violations and persecution of opposition groups showing that terrorism investigations are being used to interfere with freedoms rather than for security concerns, leading to serious problems in terms of the legality and foreseeability of terrorism laws in Turkey.



Open letter to European Commission officials *July 2022*

The letters, which were sent to Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, and Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, aimed to draw their attention to the continuing push-back incidents on the Greek-Turkey border and request their support in ending this most heinous practice which has so far claimed so many lives and ruined a lot more.

Letter to ICPA *December 2022*

The letter addressed an award given to the Turkish Directorate General of Prisons and Detention Houses by a Brussels-based international organization, highlighting the numerous human rights violations and gross mistreatment of prisoners in Turkish prisons, and criticized the organization for failing to acknowledge and consider the plight of Turkish prisoners before presenting the award.

EVENTS

Brussels Human Rights Workshop

In February and March 2022, we organized the first ever Brussels Human Rights Workshop, an awareness event we intend to organize annually. On the occasion of the workshop, we held a series of webinars and met new human rights activists from Europe and around the world, to exchange ideas on current and theoretical issues in the field of human rights, and to meet experts on technical issues and benefit from their knowledge.



The workshop aimed to strengthen the collective understanding of human rights and explore innovative approaches to address existing challenges. By creating a space for interaction and learning, the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to enhance their skills, broaden their perspectives, and forge valuable connections with individuals working in the field of human rights.

Art Exhibition on Pushbacks

In March 2022 we organized an art exhibition at Brussels Central Train Station with the aim of raising awareness about migrant pushbacks at Europe's borders.

To capture the essence of the event and its impact, a documentary was created. The documentary featured the preparations leading up to the art event, the artists' creative processes, the voices and stories of the victims of pushbacks, and the reactions and interactions of passers-by.

It also included interviews with key participants, organizers, and experts to provide further context and insight into the issue.

Overall, the art event and accompanying documentary served as powerful instruments to raise awareness, initiate conversations, and create a space for solidarity and empathy. By bringing together art, personal narratives, and the public, the initiative aimed to contribute to a more compassionate and informed understanding of migrant pushbacks at Europe's borders.

Panel discussion on Pushbacks

In November 2022, we had the honor of participating in a panel discussion at the Chapel for Europe in Brussels.

The discussion was focused on the ongoing issue of illegal pushbacks at Europe's borders and aimed to draw attention to the systematic pushbacks occurring at the Turkish-Greek border. The panelists emphasized the importance of respecting the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees, highlighting the right of every individual to apply for asylum and the need for due process. Additionally, the prevention of violence against refugees was emphasized, and the importance of holding those who violate these fundamental human rights accountable was underscored.

Prior to the panel, OTHERS member Ali Dincer gave an interview to Radio Chrétienne Francophone as part of the "Stop PushBack" project, providing information on pushbacks occurring during the asylum process. He also talked about the conditions and the persecution that led to becoming a political refugee in Belgium.

Demonstration in Strasbourg

In June 2022, we participated in a demonstration held in front of the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. We were also involved in the organization of the demonstration as part of the Peaceful Actions Platform.



INTERVIEWS

Street Talk Episode 2

In the second episode of Street Talk, we conducted street interviews with passers-by in Brussels to discuss the International Women's Day and the human rights situation in Turkey.



Participants expressed their concerns regarding the protection of human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the treatment of marginalized groups in Turkey. Particularly, they shared their views on the situation of women in Turkey, discussing issues such as gender-based violence, access to education and healthcare, and the importance of promoting women's rights within the country.



By capturing the perspectives of local inhabitants in Brussels, the interviews provided a platform for dialogue and understanding, highlighting the global significance of International Women's Day and shedding light on the human rights situation in Turkey. Through these street interviews, viewers gained valuable insights into the thoughts and experiences of people directly impacted by these issues.

Rights Talk - Manuel Soares

In June 2022, Rights Talk, our interview series on YouTube, hosted Manuel Soares, the President of the Association of Portuguese Judges.

Answering questions asked by lawyer Coşkun Yorulmaz, Soares shared his views on the dynamics between authoritarian leaderships and human rights, the effectiveness of UN



mechanisms and the European Court of Human Rights in countering human rights abuses and providing remedy to victims and the priority given to Turkey's human rights record by Western governments.



Rights Talk - Tineke Strik

Another guest who appeared on Rights Talk was Tineke Strik, professor of citizenship and migration at Radboud University in the Netherlands and a Dutch Member of the European Parliament.

Interviewed by OTHERS member Ali Dinger, MEP Strik informed our viewers on her observations at the Turkey-Greece border, her talks with Greek government officials on pushbacks and the responsibility of Frontex as an agency funded by EU taxpayers. She also encouraged our viewers to support a signature campaign launched by the Greens/EFA group at the European Parliament to put pressure on the European Commission to take action against pushbacks.



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