



**Input to the  
Global Study on the Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Civil Society  
and Civic Space**

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<b>HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN TURKEY: WANTED LISTS AND TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION</b>  <b>Background Information</b>  This report examines the human rights implications of the Turkish Interior Ministry’s “wanted for terrorism” lists which entails rewards for informing on listed individuals, with a certain focus on political opponents living abroad.  Turkey’s Ministry of Interior maintains a website, wanted for terrorism <sup>1</sup> , which publishes lists of individuals suspected of ties to organizations and groups that the Turkish government considers as terror networks <sup>2</sup> . The database is divided into five categories identified with different colors, with rewards offered for information leading to the capture of individuals on the lists <sup>3</sup> . The categories and corresponding rewards are as follows:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Red list: up to TL 10,000,000 (approximately USD 530,000 as of writing)</li><li>▪ Blue list: up to TL 3,000,000 (approximately USD 160,000 as of writing)</li><li>▪ Green list: up to TL 2,000,000 (approximately USD 106,000 as of writing)</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> “Terör arananlar” in Turkish, accessible via the following link: <https://www.terorarananlar.pol.tr/>

<sup>2</sup> Turkey’s national police (General Directorate of Security or EGM) announced the launch of the website on October 30, 2015 with a press release accessible via the following link: <https://www.egm.gov.tr/terorarananlar>

<sup>3</sup> When the website was first launched, it was published in 4 languages, namely Turkish, English, German and Arabic. As of writing, it is only available in Turkish and English.

- Orange list: up to TL 1,000,000 (approximately USD 53,000 as of writing)
- Gray list: up to TL 500,000 (approximately USD 27,000 as of writing)

As of the last update introduced in December 2022, the lists contain information on a total of 2,209 individuals from 18 networks deemed by Turkey to be terror groups<sup>4</sup>, with 308 on the red list, 163 on the blue list, 298 on the green list, 382 on the orange list and 1,058 on the gray list.

It should be noted here that the lists include a number of dissidents living abroad whose places of residence are known to Turkish authorities. Moreover, the lists include a broad range of individuals from all walks of life, including journalists, civil society leaders, human rights defenders, educators, and former public sector workers who are sought by Turkish authorities due to their alleged links to the Gülen movement.

The Turkish government accuses the Gülen movement of orchestrating a failed military coup in July 2016 although the movement denies any involvement in it. The government has coined the derogatory term “FETÖ” (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization) to refer to the group. A significant majority of countries and international organizations have refused to adopt Turkey’s views on the Gülen group.

In Turkey, the trials of people with alleged links to the Gülen movement typically consist of defendants being charged with and convicted of terrorism on the sole basis of their affiliation to the group and the indictments lack any evidential basis that goes beyond this and points to individual wrongdoing. The defendants’ ties to the Gülen group are demonstrated on the basis of non-violent acts that by no means constituted criminal offences at the time they were committed, such as having an account at the Gülen-affiliated Bank Asya, sending their children to private schools operated by the movement, or downloading and using a certain mobile messaging app that was available to everyone on major app stores. Therefore, the trials are often in clear violation of such basic legal principles as individual criminal responsibility and non-retroactivity, as evidenced by a number of UN working group opinions and European Court of Human Rights judgments that faulted Turkey over the imprisonment of alleged Gülen followers.

In a press release dated October 25, 2016, the Ministry of Interior stated that a total of 37 people sought for links to the Gülen movement were added to the list of those wanted for terrorism, eight of whom were included in the red color category<sup>5</sup>. As of February 2019, the lists contained the names of 345 people affiliated with the movement, 41 of whom were on the red list, 23 on the blue list, 17 on the green list, 48 on the orange list and 216 on the gray list. With the update introduced in December 2022, a total of 971 people were listed due to their links to the movement, 57 of whom were on the red list, 48 on the blue list, 135 on the green list, 165 on the orange list and 566 on the grey list.

### **Development of the Reward System for Targeting Dissidents**

<sup>4</sup> According to the Turkish government's nomenclature, the listed organizations are as follows: PKK/KCK, DEASH, DHKP/C, MLKP, FETÖ/PDY, MKP, THKP/C, TKP/ML, al-Qaeda, HEZBOLLAH/ILIM, REVOLUTIONARY HEADQUARTERS, ISLAMIC MOVEMENT ORGANIZATION, TAWHEED-SALAM JERUSALEM ARMY, HEZBOLLAH, DKP/BÖG, TKP/MLK, TİKB, TKEP.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Interior press release dated 25.10.2016 and numbered 2016/82.

In recent years, Turkey has amended its anti-terrorism legislation and developed a system that allows the targeting of political opponents. On August 31, 2015, a “Reward Commission” was established within the Ministry of Interior, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Interior, with members from the General Directorate of Security (EGM), Gendarmerie General Command and Coast Guard Command. This commission was established with the purpose of offering rewards for information leading to the capture of individuals suspected of involvement in terrorism<sup>6</sup>.

On October 18, 2018, Article 19 of the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 3713 was amended to allow for the offering of monetary rewards for information leading to the discovery of crimes covered by the law, or in the seizure of evidence, or in the apprehension of the perpetrators of the crime, or to those who report their whereabouts or identities, provided that they have not participated in the commission of the crime.

On November 5, 2019, a new regulation on rewards to be offered to those who help uncover terrorism offenders or seize evidence or apprehend perpetrators of crimes, was published and the 2015 regulation was repealed<sup>7</sup>. This new regulation further expands the scope of the reward system by allowing for rewards to be offered to individuals who are not Turkish citizens, and by requiring that the identity of the persons to be awarded cannot be disclosed in any way.

These changes in legislation and the establishment of the Reward Commission demonstrate the government’s intention to target dissidents and harass them through monetary rewards for information leading to their capture. These measures are detrimental to the rule of law, human rights and the safety of individuals living abroad.

### **Human Rights Violations Committed Through the Website**

The “wanted for terrorism” lists amount to a violation of several international human rights standards:

- ***Right to liberty and security of person:*** The listing of individuals without sufficient evidence of criminal wrongdoing and the offering of rewards for information leading to their capture may result in the arbitrary deprivation of their liberty, in violation of the right to liberty and security of person as protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).
- ***Right to fair trial:*** The rewards that are offered may create an incentive for individuals to provide false testimony or information, undermining the right to a fair trial as protected under the ICCPR.
- ***Right to privacy:*** The revealing of personal information of individuals through these lists without their consent constitutes a violation of the right to privacy as protected under the ICCPR and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

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<sup>6</sup> “Terörle mücadele kanunu kapsamına giren suçların faillerinin yakalanmasına yardımcı olanlara verilecek ödül hakkında yönetmelik,” Resmî Gazete, August 31, 2015, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/08/20150831-1.htm>

<sup>7</sup> “Terör suçlarının ortaya çıkarılmasına veya delillerin ele geçirilmesine ya da suç faillerinin yakalanmasına yardımcı olanlara verilecek ödül hakkında yönetmelik,” Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Turkey, November 5, 2019, <https://www.teroraranlar.pol.tr/mevzuat>

- **Right to freedom of expression:** The targeting of individuals such as exiled journalists who are listed on the basis of their work constitutes a violation of the right to freedom of expression and media as protected under the ICCPR and the ECHR.
- **Right to non-refoulement:** The listing of individuals living abroad may put them at risk of forced rendition to Turkey, where they may face persecution, torture, and other ill-treatment, in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, which is enshrined in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW).
- **Violation of the right to life and the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life, as well as the right to fair trial:** According to news reports, the Turkish government has paid rewards to individuals for reporting on and assisting in the capture or killing of individuals on the lists. As of January 2016, three individuals were reportedly paid a total of TL 525,000 for their role in capturing or killing 11 alleged terrorists in the predominantly Kurdish provinces<sup>8</sup>. Another report published in March 2019 said that 249 individuals were awarded a total of TL 19,547,000 for their role in capturing or killing individuals on the lists<sup>9</sup>. These reports lead to significant concerns of extrajudicial killings.

### Targeting of Members of the Gülen Movement

The Turkish government has been on a campaign of transnational repression to harass, intimidate and, in some cases capture, members of the Gülen movement living abroad. Former Minister of Justice Abdülhamit Gül announced in March 2019 that a total of 107 members of the group were brought back to Turkey<sup>10</sup>. Many of the renditions were carried out through intelligence-led operations that bypassed legal extradition procedures. The whistleblower-reward system may well have been used in locating and abducting/returning these individuals as Turkish government officials have on the record acknowledged and threatened members of the Gülen movement abroad<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, individuals close to the government have publicly named and incited violence against specific members of the Gülen movement living abroad<sup>12,13,14</sup>. These statements by the government and individuals close to the government constitute a serious threat to the physical safety and security of members of the Gülen movement living

<sup>8</sup>“Teröristleri ihbar eden 3 kişiye 525 bin lira verildi,” Karar, January 9, 2016, <https://www.karar.com/teroristleri-ihbar-eden-3-kisiye-525-bin-lira-verildi-65610>

<sup>9</sup> “Vatan ödülü,” Yeni Şafak, March 5, 2019, <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/vatan-odulu-3449724>

<sup>10</sup> “Adalet Bakanı Gül: Firari 107 FETÖ’cünün Türkiye’ye getirilmesi sağlandı,” Anadolu Agency, March 27, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/adalet-bakani-gul-firari-107-fetocunun-turkiyeye-getirilmesi-saglandi/1431100>

<sup>11</sup> “Başkan Erdoğan’dan NATO Zirvesi öncesi önemli açıklamalar,” Sabah, December 3, 2019, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2019/12/03/baskan-erdogan-londraya-gidiyor-canli>

<sup>12</sup> “Albayrak set çıktı: Gördüğüm yerde boğazlarım!” Vatan, August 18, 2017, <https://www.gazetevatan.com/ekonomi/albayrak-sert-cikti-gordugum-erde-bogazlarim-1094537>

<sup>13</sup> “İbrahim Kalın: Her an her şey olabilir!” Haber7, September 21, 2018, <https://www.haber7.com/siyaset/haber/2717161-ibrahim-kalin-her-an-her-sey-olabilir>

<sup>14</sup> “İsmail Hakkı Pekin: FETÖ de ASALA gibi yok edilmeli, hatta MOSSAD’ın Nazi’lere yaptığı gibi,” Yurt newspaper, January 17, 2018, <https://www.yurtgazetesi.com.tr/guncel/ismail-hakki-pekini-feto-de-asala-gibi-yok-edilmeli-hatta-mossadin-h71260.html>

abroad and a violation of the right to liberty and security of the person as well as the prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

**Conclusion:**

The Turkish government's wanted lists offering rewards for informing on individuals and the targeting of members of the Gülen movement living abroad are serious human rights violations that must be addressed immediately. The lists violate the right to privacy, the right to a fair trial, and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention. The targeting of individuals based on their political or ideological beliefs is a violation of the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. The principle of non-refoulement is also violated by the government's attempts at the extrajudicial and forcible rendition of alleged members of the group. UN and other international mechanisms must monitor the situation closely and call on the Turkish government to take steps to ensure that individuals are protected from human rights violations, and that those responsible for such violations are held accountable. The UN and other international organizations should provide support and assistance to individuals who have been affected by the human rights violations. The Turkish government should cooperate with the international community and take steps to ensure compliance with international human rights standards.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Turkish government should immediately discontinue the practice of publishing "Wanted for Terrorism" lists with rewards for informing on individuals as it violates the right to privacy, the right to a fair trial, and the prohibition of arbitrary arrest and detention.
2. The Turkish government should respect the rights of individuals, including members of the Gülen movement, to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of movement. The targeting of individuals based on their political or ideological beliefs is a violation of these rights and should be ceased immediately.
3. The Turkish government should respect the principle of non-refoulement and refrain from forcibly returning individuals to Turkey where they may face persecution, torture or other ill-treatment.
4. The Turkish judiciary should conduct investigations into the statements and actions of officials and individuals close to the government that incite violence against members of the Gülen movement living abroad and hold those responsible accountable for their actions.
5. The Turkish government should cooperate with the international community, including the UN, to address these human rights violations and ensure compliance with international human rights standards.
6. UN and other international human rights mechanisms should monitor the situation closely, and call on the Turkish government to take steps to ensure that individuals are protected from human rights violations, and that those responsible for such violations are held accountable.
7. The UN and other international organizations should provide support and assistance to individuals who have been affected by the human rights violations, including providing access to legal representation, medical and psychological support, and other forms of assistance.

