



Turkey

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In early December, SPoD NGO announced the opening of the Suna Sözer Community Centre to create a new inclusive space for LGBTI people in Turkey. The launch was attended by consuls general from Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada, and Brazil, as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In March, psychiatrist Mustafa Merter made several media appearances in which he disparaged queer identities, describing the process of transitioning as "madness," and denying the existence of LGBTI people.

In March, President Erdoğan accused opposition-led municipalities of sponsoring LGBTI people and movements and declared that "protecting the family and keeping family values alive is a national duty."

In May, Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, during the opening of the 3rd International Family Symposium, argued that "degenderisation, individualisation, weakened social ties under the impact of digitalisation, and the transforming family structure are no longer just individual issues but a problem that concerns the future of our country."

In November, President Erdoğan delivered a speech at the "Family and Culture-Art Symposium" held at the Beştepe National Library, in which he targeted LGBTI people while framing the protection of the family as a core state priority. In his remarks, he portrayed LGBTI identities as a threat to social and moral values and stated that the government was taking measures against what he described as attempts to undermine the family structure. He also emphasised the need to combat digital and social media content that he claimed endangered the family, society, and "sacred values".

In November, President Erdoğan, answering journalists' questions while returning from Azerbaijan, targeted LGBTI people by stating that Turkey would "never allow perversions like LGBTI."

Erdoğan emphasised that the family institution was under pressure, citing efforts to weaken it through LGBTI activities, and highlighted government initiatives to encourage marriage and childbirth.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, Mustafa Fidan was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of trans woman and sex worker Ecem Seçkin in Alsancak, Izmir. Seçkin was brutally killed in January 2023. While Seçkin's lawyers demanded an aggravated life sentence, the court rejected the request and handed down a standard life term instead. The decision has been appealed, and the case file is now before the Court of Cassation for review.

In March, during the Newroz celebrations in Yenikapı Square in Istanbul, a group assaulted participants carrying LGBTI flags.

In August, a trans woman was murdered in her home in Antalya's Muratpaşa district. Following an investigation, one of the suspects confessed to committing the murder and was formally arrested on charges of intentional homicide.

In December, Pink Life reported the death of a trans man in a ward at Sincan Prison. The circumstances raised concerns as the public prosecutor reportedly only came to the prison two days later, and no witness statements were taken in the aftermath.

EDUCATION

The İzmir Provincial Directorate of National Education has imposed disciplinary sanctions in the form of reprimands on three teachers for giving lessons on gender equality in schools on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8, following a decision by the Education and Science Workers' Union.

In April, Minister of National Education Yusuf Tekin declared his opposition to LGBTI inclusion in education and added that the government is firmly "against LGBT imposition."

In July, Hacettepe University shut down the Hacettepe Queer Studies Club, citing vague

allegations of misconduct and claiming that the club was employing public funds to promote LGBTI propaganda. The decision was issued by the Student Clubs Establishment and Functioning Commission, which claimed it had received complaints about the club and, after evaluation, opted for closure. In its reasoning, the Commission accused the club's activities and members of "opposing religious, national, and social values" and "acting against social harmony." The club had first been shut down in 2023 but reopened in early 2025.

In August, a group of trans women living in Beyoğlu were attacked by an intoxicated man in the middle of the night. After footage showing the women chasing the attacker circulated on social media, trans people became targets of further online hostility. Trans Blok reported that the man had persistently harassed the women, assaulted one of them, and attacked nearby shopkeepers. They stated that police collected camera footage the following morning, and that the recordings clearly showed the man's aggression. Despite this, the women were taken to the police station and were arbitrarily kept waiting for a prolonged period of time.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In January, President Erdoğan declared 2025 the "Year of the Family", portraying LGBTI people and gender equality initiatives as threats to traditional values. Following a cabinet meeting, he announced a nationwide campaign focused on "protecting and strengthening the family." Shortly thereafter, the government held a Year of the Family Promotion Meeting, during which the Minister of Family and Social Services, Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, warned against what she described as "harmful movements" undermining family values. In October, President Erdoğan submitted the 2026 Central Government Budget Law Proposal to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. The proposal allocated approximately 22 billion Turkish lira (around €600 million) to programmes aimed at the "protection and strengthening of the family."

In May, during the International Family Forum in Istanbul, President Erdoğan announced the designation of 2026-2035 as the "Decade of Family

and Population." In his remarks, Erdoğan framed opposition to LGBTI rights as part of a broader struggle to protect society and freedom. The Minister of Family and Social Services stated that what she described as "gender-neutral ideologies" posed a threat to the institution of the family.

In June, during a Family Workshop organised under the Union of Religious Officials' Family Year Action Plan, the organisation's president, Ali Yıldız, made statements targeting LGBTI identities and gender equality frameworks. In his remarks, he characterised LGBTI identities as a threat to moral and social values, criticised what he described as "genderisation", and denounced the Istanbul Convention, portraying Turkey's withdrawal as a positive development. He further called for restrictive approaches towards media, daytime television programmes, and online platforms, which he claimed promote immorality.

In late October, protests took place across Turkey in response to the proposed 11th Judicial Package, which initially included provisions aiming to expand criminal liability for expressions and conduct deemed contrary to "biological sex" and public morality, introduce prison sentences related to same-sex engagements or marriages, and increase penalties for certain public order offences. In late November, the government removed the proposed anti-LGBTI provisions from the package prior to its submission. Other elements of the reform package, including provisions affecting the prosecution and sentencing of children, remained under consideration.

In late November, the Republican People's Party (CHP) adopted its renewed program, which covers a wide range of areas including Democracy, Governance and Justice, Development, Social State, Foreign Policy, Security, and Resistance. While LGBTI issues were not explicitly listed as a separate section, the program emphasised ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

FAMILY

In May, the General Directorate of Family and Community Services issued a nationwide directive

to all units of the Ministry of Family and Social Services and to provincial directorates in all 81 cities, instructing staff to avoid using terms such as "gender," "gender identity," and "sexual orientation".

In July, Turkey's Presidential Communication Centre (CİMER) introduced a new [survey](#) that frames LGBTI people as a threat to the family. One question asks respondents which public policy should be prioritised to protect the family, listing "combating LGBT" alongside options such as promoting marriage, expanding family counseling services, and increasing birth-related subsidies.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In January, Turkey [submitted](#) its defence before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the case brought by Kaos GL concerning bans on LGBTI marches and events in Ankara. The case combines two applications: the prohibition of the 2016 Anti-Homophobia March and the indefinite ban on all LGBTI activities imposed during the 2017 State of Emergency. The government denied discrimination, arguing that restrictions were based solely on security concerns. It also requested the Court to dismiss third-party interventions as "political." The ECtHR asked Turkey to clarify the legal grounds for imposing an indefinite city-wide ban and whether this violated freedom of assembly and the prohibition of discrimination under the European Convention on Human Rights. The case remained pending at the end of 2025. In July, the 30-day ban [imposed](#) by the Eskişehir Governor's Office in 2023 to block Pride Week events was [brought](#) before the Constitutional Court after lower courts had upheld the prohibition.

In January, Pink Life Queerfest [took place](#) despite authorities formalising a ban on both the festival and the scheduled screening of the documentary BELLEKVARİ: An Oral History of QueerFest. University Pride events also faced obstruction. In May, the 13th METU Pride March was [met](#) with heavy police and riot control presence, while private security attempted to block participants. Similarly, Hacettepe University Pride was [confronted](#) by university security and prevented by police from proceeding. In June, Ankara Pride [went ahead](#) despite

repeated police attempts to block the procession. Marchers delivered their press statement and dispersed peacefully. The İzmir Governor's Office [imposed](#) a three-day ban on the 13th İzmir Pride Week in late June, prohibiting marches, press statements, sit-ins and cultural activities across the province. Activists briefly marched despite the ban but dispersed under threat of detention. In November, the İzmir 5th Administrative Court [annulled](#) the ban, finding that the governorship had failed to demonstrate a concrete and imminent danger justifying the restriction. In late October, the Çanakkale Governorship [banned](#) the Kuir-Feminist Forum organised by Çanakkale Pride and imposed a two-day prohibition on public activities, explicitly referencing LGBTI events.

In March, nearly 200 people were [detained](#) during International Women's Day mobilisations across several cities. In December, the first [hearing](#) took place in the case against trans activist Iris Mozalar, one of 112 people detained during the Feminist Night March in Istanbul. She was charged under Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. The court postponed the case to June 2026. Organisers reported that Mozalar had been singled out and released under judicial control with a travel ban. In May, 23 people were [indicted](#) for participating in a gathering at Istanbul University commemorating the Gezi Resistance. The indictment explicitly referred to the display of LGBTI flags as evidence and sought custodial penalties. In June, prosecutors filed [charges](#) against 36 individuals for participating in the 11th Trans Pride March in Istanbul. The indictment relied on alleged violations of the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations and cited prior participation in LGBTI events and personal phone messages seized during detentions. In July, the first [hearing](#) was held in the trial concerning the 2022 METU Pride March, during which defendants described the use of rubber bullets, physical violence and threats during detention. The case was adjourned to September.

In July, 11 activists charged in connection with the 2022 Istanbul Pride were [acquitted](#). The court declined, however, to pursue complaints regarding alleged excessive police force. Similarly, eight activists [detained](#) during the 2024 Istanbul Pride

were acquitted in a separate proceeding. In October, 2 activists charged after the 2024 Trans Pride March were also acquitted by an Istanbul court.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In June, Boysan's House – a communal and cultural space for LGBTI people in Beyoğlu and Şişli – announced its closure. Founded in 2016, the space had served as a hub for socialisation, organising, and collective memory, but volunteers explained that changing living conditions, mounting pressures, and the fragility of financial sustainability had made it impossible to continue.

In December, the Izmir 3rd Civil Court of First Instance ruled to shut down the social media account of the Young LGBTI+ Association on the grounds of "obscenity," "encouraging LGBTI+ identity," and "violating the Turkish family structure," following a lawsuit filed by the Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. At the same time, criminal proceedings were initiated against 11 activists who were former members of the association's executive and supervisory boards for violating the Associations Law.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, journalist Yıldız Tar, Editor-in-Chief of the LGBTI news portal KaosGL.org, was arrested and charged with "membership in a terrorist organisation" as part of a wider crackdown in which 52 people, including journalists, opposition MPs, artists, and activists, were taken into custody. After being held in pre-trial detention, Tar was released in May under judicial control, including an international travel ban. The case was transferred from Istanbul to Ankara following a ruling of lack of jurisdiction. At the first hearing, held on 13 October before the Ankara High Criminal Court, the court decided to maintain the judicial control measures and adjourned the proceedings. The trial is ongoing, with the next hearing scheduled for February 2026.

In February, LGBTI activist İris Mozalar was acquitted of charges of "publicly inciting hatred and hostility" over social media posts condemning racist attacks against Syrians in Kayseri. Mozalar had been detained in July 2024 for four posts and

briefly arrested, before being released two days later. During the third hearing at the 61st Criminal Court of First Instance in Istanbul, the judge ruled that the posts were protected under freedom of expression.

In March, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the Istanbul Family Foundation signed a "Cooperation Protocol on the Protection and Strengthening of the Family." According to RTÜK, the agreement aims to align digital and television content with so-called family values, protect children from "harmful" material, and promote national and spiritual values through the media. Under the protocol, initiatives include the creation of a "Family Broadcasting Hour," as well as short film, animation, and documentary competitions designed to promote family unity and encourage the production of content that reinforces "positive family values." In light of the protocol, RTÜK Vice Chair Feyzullah Tecirli declared 2025 the "Year of the Fight Against LGBT," while Vice Chair Abdülkerim Gün stated, "We will never allow LGBT content."

In April, Turkey's government coalition partner HÜDAPAR introduced the "Bill on Amendments to the Turkish Penal Code and Certain Other Laws" containing an explicit ban on LGBT propaganda. The proposal would impose severe prison sentences, while banning any form of LGBTI-related content across virtually all media, communications channels and the work of civil society organisations, regardless of their field of activity. The bill would also criminalise trans people who fail to disclose their sex assigned at birth before marriage, classifying such unions as "fraudulent marriages" punishable with imprisonment. In June, the Free Cause Party's (HÜDA-PAR) Chairman met with the leader of the New Welfare Party (Yeniden Refah) to express joint support for the bill.

In June, the Istanbul 12th Criminal Judgeship of Peace ordered an access ban on the online newspaper KaosGL.org, along with its newly created X account and its Facebook and Instagram pages. This came shortly after the platform's original X account had already been blocked by a separate court order.

In June, pro-government media reported that the

Ministry of Culture canceled concerts by several prominent artists because of their outspoken defense of LGBTI rights.

In September, the RTÜK issued [fines](#) against several LGBTI-themed films available on major digital platforms. RTÜK justified the penalties by claiming that the films violated Article 8 of Law No. 6112, specifically the clauses prohibiting content deemed "contrary to national and spiritual values, general morality, and the protection of the family," as well as provisions against "obscenity."

In late November, trans activist Janset Kalan was [sentenced](#) to five months in prison and fined 400 TL on charges of "obscenity" for a social media post depicting her legs and cleavage, shared on an account that did not belong to her. The Ankara 48th Criminal Court of First Instance ruled on the case, with the official announcement of the sentence postponed. The indictment specifically referenced the visibility of her legs and cleavage as the basis for the obscenity charge.

HEALTH

In January, Turkey's Ministry of Health [appointed](#) a series of Audit and Evaluation Scientific Commissions – among which the "Gender Change Audit and Evaluation Scientific Commission" – tasked with monitoring medical services for compliance with legislation and efficiency in the use of public resources, but also to launch investigations based on citizen complaints and to impose administrative or penal measures when deemed necessary. The move comes after pro-government media outlets had singled out hospitals providing trans-related healthcare and the Turkish Pharmacists' Association announced that hormone replacement therapies would face new supply restrictions under an order from the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency.

In February, leaked government draft [amendments](#) to Turkey's Criminal and Civil Codes revealed plans to severely restrict access to legal gender recognition and trans-specific healthcare. The proposals included criminal penalties not only for those seeking or providing such healthcare, but also

for "any person who publicly encourages, praises or promotes attitudes and behaviours contrary to innate biological sex and public morality."

In June, the Ministry of Health, through the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency, issued a [directive](#) to provincial health authorities introducing a minimum age of 21 for access to hormone treatment in the context of gender affirmation. The directive, titled "Abuse of Gender Hormone Medications," restricted the prescription of testosterone, GnRH analogues, and oestrogen-only medications for individuals under the age of 21. This measure goes beyond existing provisions of the Civil Code, which set the minimum age for eligibility for gender-affirming surgery at 18.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In March, psychiatrist Ahmet Akin publicly [acknowledged](#) having subjected minors he identified as LGBTI to practices commonly referred to as conversion practices. In September, the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued a [decision](#) of non-prosecution in a case brought against journalist Can Öztürk of T24, who had reported on these statements and related allegations. The investigation, initiated under Turkey's disinformation law following a complaint by Akin alleging the dissemination of misleading information and defamation, was closed after prosecutors concluded that the reporting was factually grounded, fell within the scope of press freedom and freedom of expression, and did not constitute a criminal offence.

DATA COLLECTION

In November, the Human Rights Association (İHD) [published its 2024 Human Rights Report](#). The report emphasises that rights violations against women and LGBTI people in Turkey accelerated during the year, linking these attacks to the government's family-centered discourse. It notes: Regarding homophobic and transphobic violence, the report records at least four deaths and seven injuries in 23 attacks targeting LGBTI people throughout 2024. The report also documents state repression of Pride Month events: at least 23 participants were detained during demonstrations – 10 in Eskişehir

and 13 in Istanbul. Of those brought to court, five were subjected to judicial control measures.

FOREIGN POLICY

In November, the Russian Embassy signaled support for Refah Party's anti-LGBTI stance by attending the party's 3rd Ordinary Grand Congress. In a statement on its social media accounts, the embassy highlighted the "similarity of our attitudes on issues such as the preservation of traditional values, especially family values, and the need to counter the practices of neocolonialism of our age." During the congress, Refah's Deputy Chairman Erbakan claimed that, if elected, his party would abolish the Istanbul Convention, alleging that the foundations of the family had been undermined. Erbakan also declared that LGBTI associations and activities represent "one of the most important indicators of social collapse and immorality," signaling his intention to end such associations and activities if his party came to power.

HOUSING

In July, authorities in Izmir issued an order to close 14 apartments where many trans women lived. Officially justified as part of a "fight against prostitution," the measure was preceded by police reportedly contacting local real estate agents to obtain tenants' lease contracts.

In August, trans women in Diyarbakır faced escalating evictions and forced displacement as a result of mounting police pressure and arbitrary sealings. Under the pretext of combating sex work, police imposed fines and sealed homes under the Misdemeanor Law and Article 104 of the 1930 Regulation.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In November, the European Commission released its enlargement report for Turkey, noting that previous recommendations had largely been ignored. The report stressed the need for Turkey to align its anti-terrorism laws with European standards and implement ECHR rulings.

The situation for LGBTI people was described as alarming. Civil society organisations advocating for

women's and LGBTI rights face heavy administrative and legal pressure, including audits and smear campaigns. The report also highlighted the lack of adequate anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation, leaving vulnerable groups without proper legal protection.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2025, participation in international political and human rights forums continued to expose LGBTI activists to criminal proceedings. This was illustrated by the prosecution of Enes Hocoğulları, a Council of Europe youth delegate for statements made during an official session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, addressing police violence, shrinking civic space, and the arrest of opposition mayors.

In September, the first hearing in the case was held before the Ankara 86th Criminal Court of First Instance. During the hearing, Hocoğulları stated that he was the only member of the Turkish delegation investigated in relation to the session, and argued that the indictment relied on significant translation inaccuracies that distorted the content and context of his remarks. The prosecutor recommended that he be tried without detention, and he was released on 8 September pending trial.

In December, a trans activist was detained during a home raid by the Counter-Terrorism Branch, citing an investigation initiated three years prior to the arrest. It was announced to the public in a press statement made at the Ankara Branch of the Human Rights Association that the victim was repeatedly questioned without a lawyer, subjected to ill-treatment, and that during the detention process, their views on LGBTI associations, solidarity networks, financial resources, and the concept of family were questioned.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In September, the Ministry of Family and Social Services requested that access to the song 'Perperişan' by Turkish singer Mabel Matiz be blocked, claiming that its content could "harm the family institution, negatively affect the mental

development of children and young people, disrupt public order, and cause outrage in society." Following this, the Ministry of Interior filed a criminal complaint against Matiz with the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor's Office under Article 226 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalises "obscenity" under the broader category of "crimes contrary to general morality." The song was blocked on September 18, and Matiz testified to the prosecutor on September 22. By October, the Ankara Criminal Court of Peace sentenced him to six months to three years in prison for "mediating the publication of obscene publications," rejecting the singer's defense.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, during the "Youth Standing Up" march in Ankara, police detained a trans woman using violence that bystanders reported could amount to torture. Footage of the assault quickly spread across social media but rather than condemning the brutality, the Ankara Governorship attempted to justify the police action by referring to the victim in a statement as a "so-called woman."

In April, during the protests sparked by the detention of the Mayor of Istanbul Ekrem İmamoğlu in March, reports emerged of women and LGBTI people being subjected to torture and sexual violence at the hands of police. A university student detained in Saraçhane recounted that while being transported to Vatan Police Headquarters, one of the officers attempted to grope their genitals over their clothing and mocked them with homophobic slurs.

In June, Trans Pride in Istanbul was violently dispersed, with 46 human rights defenders detained across the city, five of whom now face judicial controls and travel bans. According to news outlets, police confiscated banners and sealed off the area with patrol vehicles. Activists Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi, and Doğan Nur were among those arbitrarily detained during the March and held in pre-trial detention on charges linked to their participation in peaceful assembly. Their first hearing is scheduled for August at the Istanbul Criminal Court of First Instance No. 51. In late June, Nur was released following a court appeal while

Selen and Çelebi remained in detention (see also under Freedom of Assembly).

In August, police carried out a large-scale operation targeting trans women in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district. On the evening of July 31, watchmen surrounded several residences, preventing trans women from leaving their homes for nearly two hours. Around 30 women were detained from different parts of the district and taken to the police station, where they were held in the courtyard for about an hour. Despite repeatedly asking, they were given no explanation for their detention and were pressured to switch off their phones.