



EngelliWeb 2018: An Assessment Report on Blocked Websites, News Articles and Social Media Content from Turkey

Press Release

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İfade Özgürlüğü Derneği (İFÖD – Freedom of Expression Association) has been set up formally in August 2017 protect and foster the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Association envisions a society in which everyone enjoys freedom of opinion and expression and the right to access and disseminate information and knowledge.

The **2018 EngelliWeb Report** of the Freedom of Expression Association (“İFÖD”) written by **Yaman Akdeniz and Ozan Güven** includes overview of and considerations on increasing Internet censorship and access blocking practices by the end of 2018 in Turkey. This assessment is predominantly conducted by reference to the application of Law No. 5651 on Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by Means of Such Publications, which was enacted about 12 years ago and other subsequent regulations in Turkey.

As a matter of fact, no statistical data on websites blocked from Turkey was published either by the former Telecommunications Communication Presidency (“TIB”) or its successor Information Technologies and Communication Board (“BTK”). Moreover, no statistical data on blocked websites, news articles (URL-based) and/or social media content has ever been published by the Association of Access Providers (“ESB”).

İFÖD report includes detailed statistical information for the year of 2018 and also provides an overview for the 2007-2018 period on blocked websites, news articles (URL-based) and social media content. It is the intention of İFÖD to share such data and analysis with the general public on a regular basis. Therefore, further reports will be prepared and published; the first in September 2019 with regards to the first half of 2019 and a subsequent report in February 2020 as a year-end report for 2019.

According to the İFÖD report **access to 245.825 websites was blocked from Turkey by the end of 2018**. Access to a total of **54.903 websites and domain names** was blocked only in 2018. Furthermore, the report highlights that over 45.000 URL based blocking orders were issued since 2014 resulting with over 100.000 URLs blocked from Turkey to protect individual rights such as reputation.

Since the personal rights violations related URL-based access blocking measure came into force in February 2014 with the amendment of Article 9 of Law No. 5651, as of 31 December 2018, it was determined that a total of **7334 news articles** (URL-based) were blocked. These URLs were blocked by **2129 separate orders** issued by **287**

separate criminal judgements of peace. **Table 2** shows statistical information from 2014 to end of 2018 in relation to top twenty news sites from Turkey in terms of blocked news articles and how many URLs on these sites were blocked, how many of those blocked URLs have been deleted or removed from the website, and the figures of blocked URLs against deleted/removed URLs are also shown in figures 8 and 9.

The EngelliWeb report also includes a section on most blocked and most removed news articles by newspapers and online news providers. For this purpose, **7334 blocked news articles** (URL-based) were identified. These URLs were blocked by **2129 separate orders** issued by **287 separate** criminal judgements of peace in Turkey.

The **EngelliWeb 2018: An Assessment Report on Blocked Websites, News Articles and Social Media Content from Turkey** was prepared by Professor **Yaman Akdeniz** (Professor, Faculty of Law, İstanbul Bilgi University) and Expert Researcher **Ozan Güven**.

EngelliWeb 2018 report was prepared within the scope of a project funded by the Human Rights Programme of the Government of the Netherlands and can be accessed in full as a PDF formatted book at: https://ifade.org.tr/reports/EngelliWeb_2018_Eng.pdf

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İFÖD Twitter Address: @ifadeorgtr