



EngelliWeb 2019: An Iceberg of Unseen Internet Censorship in Turkey

Press Release

14 August, 2020

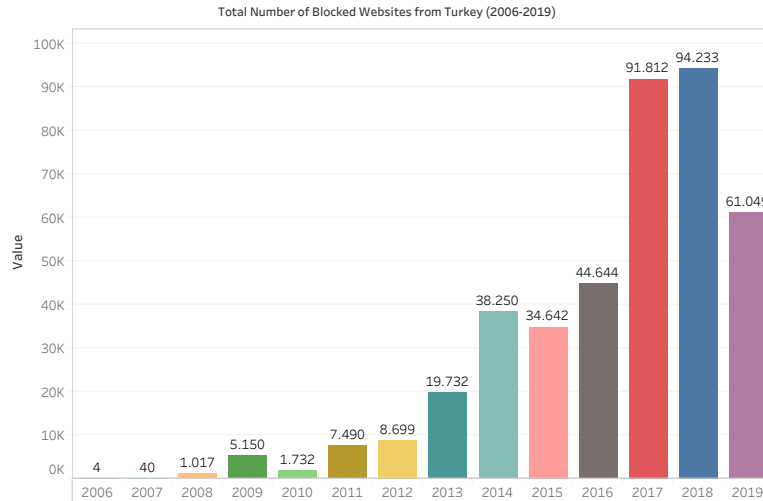
İfade Özgürlüğü Derneği (İFÖD – Freedom of Expression Association) has been set up formally in August 2017 protect and foster the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Association envisions a society in which everyone enjoys freedom of opinion and expression and the right to access and disseminate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

The **2019 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 2019 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 13 years ago and other subsequent regulations in Turkey.

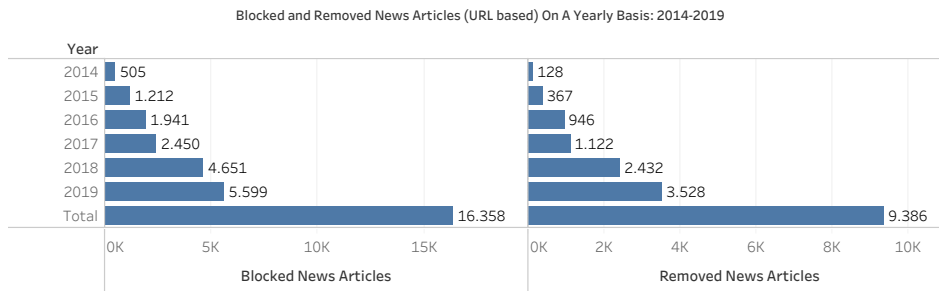
As a matter of fact, no statistical data on websites blocked from Turkey was published either by the former Telecommunications Communication Presidency (“TIB”) or its successor Information Technologies and Communication Board (“BTK”). Moreover, no statistical data on blocked websites, news articles (URL-based) 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 2019 and also provides an overview for the 2007-2019 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 October 2020 with regards to the first half of 2020 and a subsequent report in June 2021 as a year-end report for 2020.

According to the EngelliWeb 2019 report **access to 408.494 websites was blocked from Turkey by the end of 2019**. Access to a total of **61.049 websites and domain names** was blocked only in 2019. Furthermore, the report highlights that **130.000 URLs, 7.000 Twitter accounts, 40.000 tweets, 10.000 YouTube videos, and 6.200 Facebook content** were blocked subject to Law No. 5651 and other legal provisions by the end of 2019. In addition to these, nearly 50.000 content (URLs) were removed by content providers subject to access-blocking orders by the end of 2019.

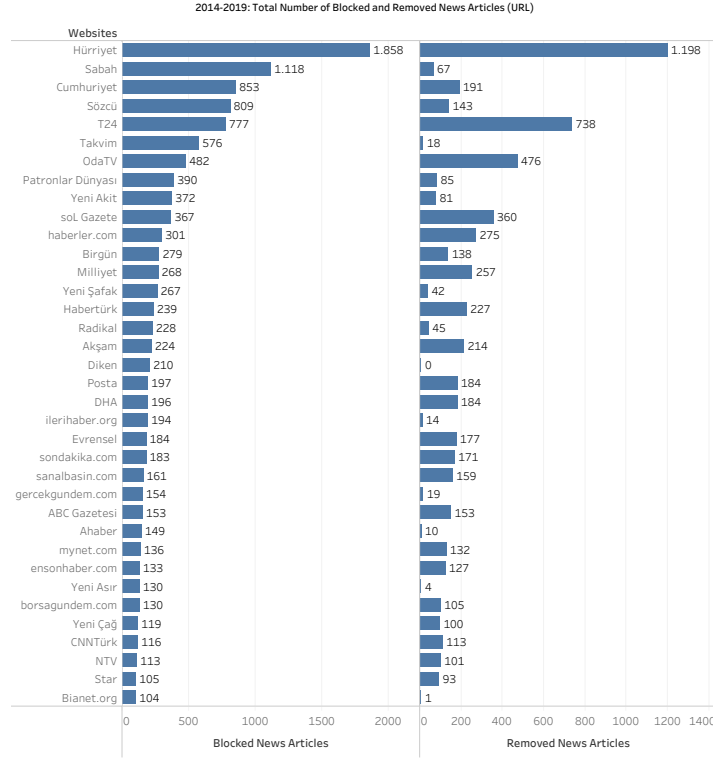


Since the personal rights violations related URL-based access blocking measure came into force in February 2014 with the amendment of Article 9 of Law No. 5651, as of 31 December 2019, it was determined as part of the EngelliWeb project that a total of **16.358 news articles** (URL-based) were blocked in accordance with Article 9 by **4.158 separate orders** issued by **408** separate criminal judgeships of peace. The number of URLs blocked was **505** in 2014, **1.212** in 2015, **1.941** in 2016, **2.450** in 2017, **4.651** in 2018, and **5.599** in 2019. It was also found that **9.386** of **16.358** blocked URLs were deleted or removed by content providers.



The EngelliWeb report also includes a section on most blocked and most removed news articles by newspapers and online news providers. By the end of 2019, in the category of “**most blocked news website in terms of news articles (URLs)**,” **Hürriyet** ranked first with **1.858 blocked news articles**, and it was followed by **Sabah** with **1.118 blocked news articles**. While **Cumhuriyet** ranked third with **853 blocked news articles**, **Sözcü** ranked fourth with **809 blocked news articles**, and **T24** ranked fifth with **777 blocked news articles**.

By the end of 2019, **Hürriyet** came out on top also in the category of “**removed and deleted news articles**” by removing or deleting **1.198 (64%)** of its **1.858** blocked news articles. It was followed by **T24**, which removed or deleted **738 (95%)** of its **777** blocked news articles and **OdaTV**, which removed or deleted **476 (99%)** of its **482** blocked news articles. **soL Gazetesi**, which removed or deleted **360 (98%)** of its **367** blocked news articles, ranked fourth, while **Haberler.com**, which removed or deleted **275 (91%)** of its **301** blocked news articles, ranked fifth.



The **EngelliWeb 2019: An Assessment Report on Blocked Websites, News Articles and Social Media Content from Turkey** was prepared by Professor **Yaman Akdeniz** (Faculty of Law, İstanbul Bilgi University) and Expert Researcher **Ozan Güven**.

EngelliWeb 2019 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_2019_Eng.pdf

İFÖD Web Address: <https://ifade.org.tr>

İFÖD Twitter Address: @ifadeorgtr

Reference: İFÖD, EngelliWeb 2019: An Iceberg of Unseen Internet Censorship in Turkey, August 2020, at https://ifade.org.tr/reports/EngelliWeb_2019_Eng.pdf

TR: https://ifade.org.tr/reports/EngelliWeb_2019.pdf