



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
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# Turkey

*Republic of Turkey*



## Key Facts



**World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall):** Ranked 157 (53.81)

**Head of State / Head of Government:** President Recep Tayyip ERDOGAN (since 10 August 2014)

**Capital city:** Ankara

**Population:** 81,257,239 (July 2018 est.)

**Official Language(s):** Turkish

**Ethnic Groups:** Turkish 70-75%, Kurdish 19%, other minorities 7-12% (2016 est.)

**Currency:** Turkish lira

**Gross domestic product (PPP):** 851.1 billion USD (2017)

**Internet penetration:** 51%

**Most trusted medium of information:** N/A

**Legal System:** civil law system based on various European legal systems, notably the Swiss civil code

**Political system:** presidential republic

**Journalists Jailed/Killed 2019:** 0

**Media Environment:** Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) operates multiple TV and radio networks and stations; multiple privately-owned national television stations and 567 private regional and local television stations; multi-channel cable TV subscriptions available; 1,007 private radio broadcast stations. media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few large private media groups which are typically part of wider conglomerates controlled by wealthy individuals, which limits the views that are presented. In addition, the companies are willing to use their influence to support their owners' wider business interests, including by trying to maintain friendly relations with the government. The media exert a strong influence on public opinion. Censorship in Turkey is also an issue, and in the 2000s Turkey has

seen many journalists arrested and writers prosecuted. On Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index it has fallen from being ranked around 100 in 2005 to around 150 in 2013.

**Media Issues:** The witch-hunt waged by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government against its media critics has come to a head since an abortive coup in July 2016. After the elimination of dozens of media outlets and the acquisition of Turkey's biggest media group by a pro-government conglomerate, the authorities are tightening the vice on what little is left of pluralism – a handful of media outlets that are being harassed and marginalized. Turkey is the world's biggest jailer of professional journalists. Spending more than a year in prison before trial is the new norm, and long jail sentences are common, in some cases as long as life imprisonment with no possibility of a pardon. Detained journalists and closed media outlets are denied any effective legal recourse. The rule of law is a fading memory in the "New Turkey" of paramount presidential authority. Censorship of websites and online social media has reached unprecedented levels and the authorities are now trying to bring online video services under control. Since 2011, the current government has increased restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of the press and internet use, and television content, as well as the right to free assembly. It has also developed links with media groups, and used administrative and legal measures (including, in one case, a billion tax fine) against critical media groups and critical journalists:

## Popular Forms of Media Consumption

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**Print:** Newspapers with oppositional editorial line against the government corresponds to 65% of daily newspapers in circulation while pro-government newspaper's share is 25%. The total number of readers of print media in Turkey is low, when compared to the big population of the country (95 newspapers per 1000 inhabitants). Circulating newspapers were estimated at around 2,450 in 2010, of which 5 national, 23 regional and other local ones. The media hubs of the country are Istanbul and Ankara. By circulation, the most popular daily newspapers are Hürriyet (330,000 daily sales in 2016), Sabah (300,000), Posta (290,000), Sözcü and Habertürk. Major Turkish daily newspapers are published every day of the year, including Sundays, religious and secular public holidays.

**Radio:** Radio enjoys a large number of listeners in the Turkey. There are more than 1000 radio stations in the country. In 2010 Turkey had around 1,100 private radio stations, of which 100 available on cable - 36 national ones, 102 regional ones, and 950 local ones. Several independent radio stations also broadcast in Turkey, including Istanbul's Açık Radyo (Open Radio), the first to be financially supported by listeners, and encouraging listeners to participate in public discussions on sensitive issues to promote open dialogue.

**Television:** Television is the main information and entertainment source in Turkey. Turks have an average daily TV viewing time of 3.5 hours per person (3.45 during weekends), Turkey's television market includes 24 national, 16 regional and 215 local television stations as of 2010. The quality of audiovisual media is limited by a lack of diversity and creativity among the media, and a "monolithic understanding of television broadcasting" given the quick imitation of popular programs across channels.

**Internet:** Internet in Turkey has been available to the public since 1993, the first available connections were dial-up. Cable Internet has been available since 1998 and Asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) since 2001. Internet users in Turkey reached 26.5 million in 2008, with a 34.5% penetration (up from 7.5% in 2004 and 13.9% in 2005), also thanks to internet cafés and workplace access. ADSL subscribers were 4.5 million in 2008. Only 7% of Turkish women used internet in 2009, the estimated internet penetration reached 51% in 2014.