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Press Release

WE STAND FOR DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, AND CITIZENS' RIGHT TO VOTE AND BE ELECTED

Recent developments are deeply concerning for the state of democracy in our country. The arrest of Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and other mayors—who were elected by the people—on political and unjust grounds, in violation of legal principles, is unacceptable. This situation targets not only an individual, but also the will of the people and the right to democratic representation.

It is a fundamental right, protected by both the Constitution and international conventions, for citizens to express their democratic reaction through peaceful protests in the face of such injustice. However, in recent days, we have witnessed disproportionate use of force, detention, and punitive measures against citizens exercising these rights. Journalists and media workers striving to uphold the public's right to information have also faced detentions and punitive actions.

Article 20 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*¹ clearly states that everyone has the right to “freedom of peaceful assembly and association.” Article 34 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye*² declares that “everyone has the right to hold unarmed and peaceful meetings and demonstration marches without prior permission.” Additionally, Article 11 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*³ explicitly defines the right to “freedom of assembly and association.”

Democracy is a system in which people can freely express their opinions and raise their voices against injustice. Any state that claims to be a democratic rule of law must act in accordance with this principle at all times. As the Turkish Publishers Association, we emphasize that in an environment where the rule of law and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms are not upheld, it is not possible to speak of democracy or social peace.

We call on all authorities to comply with national and international legal obligations and to listen to the democratic demands of the people.

Turkish Publishers Association

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

² <https://cdn.tbmm.gov.tr/TbmmWeb/Yayinlar/Dosya/ea266075-d26a-4bad-8007-efa2b7b773a8.pdf>

³ https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_eng