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Freedom in the World 2020 - Turkey

NOT FREE

32 / 100

Political Rights (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2020#PR>) 16 / 40

Civil Liberties (<https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2020#CL>) 16 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

31 / 100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. See the methodology. (<https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>)

Overview

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has ruled Turkey since 2002. After initially passing some liberalizing reforms, the AKP government showed growing contempt for political rights and civil liberties, and its authoritarian nature was fully consolidated following a 2016 coup attempt that triggered a dramatic crackdown on perceived opponents of the leadership. Constitutional changes adopted in 2017 concentrated power in the hands of the president. While Erdoğan exerts tremendous power in Turkish politics, opposition victories in 2019 municipal elections demonstrated that his authority was not unlimited.

Key Developments in 2019

- Opposition candidates won the mayoralties of Istanbul and Ankara in March, defeating AKP rivals in the country's two largest cities. The Supreme Electoral Council (YSK), which is effectively controlled by the AKP, ordered a rerun of the election in Istanbul, but opposition candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu won again in June. Opposition parties governed nine of the ten largest urban areas in the country after winning in Istanbul and Ankara.
- Prosecutions and harassment campaigns against opposition politicians and prominent members of civil society continued throughout the year. Selahattin

Demirtaş, leader of the Kurdish-oriented People's Democratic Party (HDP), remained imprisoned on new charges of terrorism despite calls for his release. Canan Kaftancıoğlu, the Istanbul chair of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), was convicted in September on charges that included insulting President Erdoğan and spreading terrorist propaganda, though she remained free pending appeal. In December, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) called for the release of philanthropist Osman Kavala, who was charged with attempting to overthrow the government for supporting a 2013 protest; despite the ruling, he remained imprisoned at year's end.

- In October, Turkey launched a new military offensive into northern Syria, and those who criticized the campaign were subject to arrest and harassment. That same month, President Erdoğan announced a plan to resettle as many as one million Syrian refugees in the captured areas.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority 2 / elected through free and fair elections? 4

The president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms, but is eligible to run for a third term if the parliament calls for early elections during the president's second term. If no candidate wins an absolute majority of votes, a second round of voting between the top two candidates takes place. President Erdoğan has retained a dominant role in government since moving from the post of prime minister to the presidency in 2014. A constitutional referendum passed in 2017 instituted a new presidential system of government, expanding presidential powers and eliminating the role of prime minister, effective after the snap presidential vote in June 2018.

The June 2018 presidential election, which was originally scheduled for November 2019, was moved up at Erdoğan's behest, as he claimed an early election was necessary to implement the new presidential system. The election was held while Turkey was still under a state of emergency, which was put into place in 2016 after an abortive coup attempt.

Erdoğan, who leads the AKP, won a second term in June 2018, earning 52.6 percent of the vote in the first round. Muharrem İnce of the CHP won 30.6 percent. Selahattin Demirtaş of the HDP won 8.4 percent, while Meral Aksener of the nationalist İyi (Good) Party won 7.3 percent; other candidates won the remaining 1.1 percent. Since Erdoğan's first term ended ahead of schedule, he is eligible for a third term, and could hold office through 2028 if he is reelected again.

Election observers with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) criticized the poll, reporting that electoral regulators often deferred to the ruling AKP and that state-run media favored the party in its coverage. The OSCE additionally noted that Erdoğan repeatedly accused his opponents of supporting terrorism during the

campaign. Ince, the CHP candidate, also criticized the vote, calling it fundamentally unfair. Demirtaş, the HDP's candidate, campaigned from prison, having been charged with terrorism offenses in 2016.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections? **2 / 4**

The 2017 constitutional referendum enlarged the unicameral parliament, the Grand National Assembly, from 550 seats to 600, and increased term lengths for its members from four to five years; these changes took effect with the June 2018 elections. Members are elected by proportional representation, and political parties must earn at least 10 percent of the national vote to hold seats in parliament.

According to the OSCE, the 2018 elections were marred by a number of flaws, including misuse of state resources by the ruling party to gain an electoral advantage, and an intimidation campaign against the HDP and other opposition parties. Media coverage of the campaign, particularly in state-run outlets, definitively favored the AKP. Reports of irregularities such as proxy voting were more prevalent in the south and southeast.

The People's Alliance, which had formed in February 2018 and included the AKP and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), won a total of 344 seats with 53 percent of the vote, while the CHP won 146 seats with 22 percent. The HDP won 11 percent and 67 seats, and the İyi (Good) Party entered parliament for the first time with 10 percent of the vote and 43 seats.

In April 2018, two HDP members of parliament were removed from office due to criminal convictions for "insulting a public employee" and membership in a terrorist organization, respectively, bringing to 11 the total number of HDP deputies ousted as a result of criminal convictions or absenteeism caused by imprisonment. The HDP also reported that 394 party members were detained during the campaign.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies? **1 / 4**

The YSK's electoral judges oversee voting procedures. In 2016, the parliament passed a judicial reform bill that allowed AKP-dominated judicial bodies to replace most YSK judges. Since the reform bill was enacted, the YSK has increasingly deferred to the AKP in its rulings, most notably in May 2019, when it ordered a rerun of the Istanbul mayoral election; the CHP's candidate had narrowly won the race in March, but the YSK scrapped the result based on selective technicalities, claiming that some polling documentation went unsigned and that a number of ballot officials were not civil servants as required by law.

The electoral authority's decision was met with derision, with CHP candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu calling it "treacherous." The European Parliament rapporteur on Turkey, Kati Piri, warned that the decision threatened the credibility of Turkey's democratic institutions. A CHP lawmaker claimed in a television interview that the AKP had

threatened judges with imprisonment if they did not call for a rerun. Despite the annulment of the first election's results, İmamoğlu won the second vote for the mayoralty that June, increasing his margin of victory over the AKP candidate.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free 2 / of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or 4 groupings?

Turkey maintains a multiparty system, with five parties represented in the parliament. However, the rise of new parties is inhibited by the 10 percent vote threshold for parliamentary representation—an unusually high bar by global standards. The 2018 electoral law permits the formation of alliances to contest elections, allowing parties that would not meet the threshold alone to secure seats through an alliance. Parties can be disbanded for endorsing policies that are not in agreement with constitutional parameters, and this rule has been applied in the past to Islamist and Kurdish-oriented parties.

After a cease-fire with the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) collapsed in 2015, the government accused the HDP of serving as a proxy for the group, which is designated as a terrorist organization. A 2016 constitutional amendment facilitated the removal of parliamentary immunity, and many of the HDP's leaders have since been jailed on terrorism charges. In September 2018, Demirtaş, the HDP's presidential candidate, was sentenced to four years and eight months in prison for a 2013 speech praising the PKK in the context of peace negotiations.

In November 2018, the ECHR ordered Demirtaş's immediate release, finding that his arrest was politically motivated and his nearly two-year-long pretrial detention was unreasonable. As of 2019 he remained in prison on new terrorism charges that could lead to a 142-year prison term.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or 2 / gain power through elections? 4

Since coming to power in 2002, the ruling AKP has asserted partisan control over the YSK, the judiciary, the police, and the media. The party has aggressively used these institutional tools to weaken or co-opt political rivals in recent years, severely limiting the capacity of the opposition to build support among voters and gain power through elections.

The Turkish government has also resorted to arresting and charging opposition leaders, accusing of them of offenses varying from terrorism to insulting the president. The HDP has regularly been subjected to this tactic; while Sırrı Süreyya Önder, a party deputy in Ankara, was released in October 2019 on the orders of the Constitutional Court, leader Selahattin Demirtaş and party official Figen Yüksekdağ both remained in prison as the

year ended. Canan Kaftancıoğlu, the chair of the CHP in Istanbul, was given a prison sentence of almost 10 years in September, after she was charged with insulting the president and spreading terrorist propaganda. Kaftancıoğlu, who managed her party's campaign in Istanbul during the 2019 municipal elections, called the charges politically motivated and remained free pending appeal.

Despite the AKP's ability to limit the success of opposition parties, it lost ground in the municipal elections, with the CHP winning important mayoral races in Ankara and Istanbul. By the time the municipal elections were completed, opposition parties controlled nine of Turkey's ten largest urban areas.

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 due to opposition victories in key municipal elections, despite politicized interventions by electoral authorities.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 3 / 4

The civilian leadership has asserted its control over the military, which has a history of intervening in political affairs. This greater control was a factor behind the failure of the 2016 coup attempt, and the government has since purged thousands of military personnel suspected of disloyalty. However, the AKP's institutional dominance threatens to make the state itself an extension of the party that can be used to change political outcomes.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, religious, gender, LGBT, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 1 / 4

Critics charge that the AKP favors Sunni Muslims, pointing to an overhaul of the education system that favored Islamic education in secular schools and promoted the rise of religious schools in the 2010s. The AKP also expanded the Directorate of Religious Affairs, using this institution as a channel for political patronage. Among other functions, the party uses the directorate to deliver government-friendly sermons in mosques in Turkey, as well as in countries where the Turkish diaspora is present.

The non-Sunni Alevi minority, as well as non-Muslim religious communities, have long faced political discrimination. While religious and ethnic minorities hold some seats in the parliament, particularly within the CHP and HDP, the government's crackdown on opposition parties has seriously harmed political rights and electoral opportunities for Kurds and other minorities.

Women remain underrepresented in politics and in leadership positions in government, though they won a slightly larger share of seats—104, or about 17 percent—in the 2018 parliamentary elections. While the AKP's policies and rhetoric often do not serve women's interests, opposition parties, notably the HDP, espouse the expansion of rights for women and minorities.

LGBT+ people have little representation in Turkish politics, though a small number of openly gay candidates have run for office. Sedef Cakmak of the CHP was the first openly LGBT+ candidate to take part in a city council race; she won her seat in Beşiktaş, a district of Istanbul, in 2014. The first openly gay parliamentary candidate was backed by the HDP in the 2015 general elections, but did not win a seat. Despite these efforts, LGBT+ people remain politically marginalized, and the government has used public morality laws to restrict the formation of organizations to advocate for their interests.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative 2 / representatives determine the policies of the government? 4

The new presidential system instituted in June 2018 vastly expanded the executive's already substantial authority. With the elimination of the prime minister's post, President Erdoğan now controls all executive functions; he can rule by decree, appoint judges and other officials who are supposed to provide oversight, and order investigations into any civil servant, among other powers. Erdoğan and his inner circle make all meaningful policy decisions, and the capacity of the parliament to provide a check on his rule is, in practice, seriously limited.

The state of emergency, which gave the president the authority to suspend civil liberties and issue decrees without oversight from the Constitutional Court, was formally lifted in July 2018 after two years in effect. However, analysts argued that the change would do little to curb the continued consolidation and abuse of executive power.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 1 / 4

Corruption—including money laundering, bribery, and collusion in the allocation of government contracts—remains a major problem, even at the highest levels of government. Enforcement of anticorruption laws is inconsistent, and Turkey's anticorruption agencies are generally ineffective, contributing to a culture of impunity. The purge carried out since the failed 2016 coup attempt has greatly increased opportunities for corruption, given the mass expropriation of targeted businesses and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Billions of dollars in seized assets are managed by government-appointed trustees, further augmenting the intimate ties between the government and friendly businesses.

In January 2018, Turkish banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla was found guilty in a US court of helping Iran evade sanctions, and he was given a 32-month prison sentence that May. During the trial, Turkish-Iranian businessman Reza Zarrab testified that senior Turkish officials had accepted bribes as part of the scheme, and that Erdoğan himself approved some of the bribes during his tenure as prime minister; Erdoğan unsuccessfully lobbied the US government not to continue in its prosecution of Atilla. In July 2019, Atilla completed his sentence, with credit for time served in pretrial detention, and was deported to Turkey. In October, he was appointed general manager of the Istanbul stock exchange despite his conviction in the United States.

C3 0-4 pts**Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 0 / 4**

The political and legal environment created by the government's purge and 2016–18 state of emergency has made ordinary democratic oversight efforts all but impossible. In 2016, the Council of Europe criticized the state of emergency for bestowing "almost unlimited discretionary powers" on the government. Although Turkey has an access to information law on the books, in practice the government lacks transparency and arbitrarily withholds information on the activities of state officials and institutions. External monitors like civil society groups and independent journalists are subject to arrest and prosecution if they attempt to expose government wrongdoing.

Civil Liberties**D Freedom of Expression and Belief****D1 0-4 pts****Are there free and independent media? 1 / 4**

The mainstream media, especially television broadcasters, reflect government positions and routinely carry identical headlines. Although some independent newspapers and websites continue to operate, they face tremendous political pressure and are routinely targeted for prosecution. More than 150 media outlets were closed in the months after the attempted coup in 2016.

In August 2019, the parliament further limited media freedom by placing online video services under the purview of the High Council for Broadcasting (RTÜK), the country's broadcast regulator. As a result, online video producers must obtain licenses to broadcast in Turkey, even if they operate abroad. The RTÜK's members are appointed by the parliament, and are almost exclusively members of the AKP and its political ally, the MHP.

New outlet closures and arrests of journalists occur regularly, with an increase during the Turkish incursion into Syria in October 2019. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that 47 journalists were imprisoned as of December. A group of 13 journalists and executives working for the independent newspaper *Cumhuriyet* were retried and convicted on charges of terrorism in November 2019, even though their original conviction was overturned by the Court of Cassation; the group remained free pending an appeal at the end of the year. Human Rights Watch noted that Kurdish journalists were disproportionately targeted by the authorities, and that reporting from within the predominantly Kurdish southeast was heavily restricted.

The Turkish government used national security powers to ban Wikipedia in 2017, saying the website contained terrorist content. While an Ankara court upheld the ban that same year, the Constitutional Court overturned it in a late December 2019 ruling, finding that the original decision violated freedom of expression.

D2 0-4 pts

**Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief 2 /
in public and private? 4**

While the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the public sphere is increasingly dominated by Sunni Islam. Alevi places of worship are not recognized as such by the government, meaning they cannot access the subsidies available to Sunni mosques. The number of religious schools that promote Sunni Islam has increased under the AKP, and the Turkish public education curriculum includes compulsory religious education courses; while adherents of non-Muslim faiths are generally exempted from these courses, Alevis and nonbelievers have difficulty opting out of them.

Three non-Muslim religious groups—Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Armenian Christians—are officially recognized. However, disputes over property and prohibitions on training of clergy remain problems for these communities, and the rights of unrecognized religious minorities are more limited.

D3 0-4 pts

**Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from 1 /
extensive political indoctrination? 4**

Academic freedom, never well respected in Turkey, was weakened further by the AKP's purge of government and civil society after the 2016 coup attempt. Schools tied to Fethullah Gülen—the Islamic scholar whose movement was blamed for the coup attempt and deemed a terrorist organization in Turkey—have been closed. Thousands of academics have been summarily dismissed for perceived leftist, Gülenist, or PKK sympathies.

In July 2018, President Erdoğan issued a decree giving him the power to appoint rectors at both public and private universities. The government and university administrations now routinely intervene to prevent academics from researching sensitive topics, and political pressure has encouraged self-censorship among many scholars.

Academics who openly discuss sensitive or politically charged subjects have found themselves targeted by the government. In 2016, more than 2,000 academics signed an open letter calling on Turkey to stop a military offensive in the Kurdish southeast; the government dismissed at least 400 participants in response, and 204 were given prison sentences by late 2019. However, the Constitutional Court ruled in favor of a group of purged academics in a July 2019 decision. Some of the educators who were still on trial for their involvement were acquitted in a series of lower court rulings in September as a result.

D4 0-4 pts

**Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other 1 /
sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 4**

Many Turkish citizens continue to voice their opinions openly with friends and relations, but more exercise caution about what they post online or say in public. While not every utterance that is critical of the government will be punished, the arbitrariness of prosecutions, which often result in pretrial detention and carry the risk of lengthy

prison terms, is increasingly creating an atmosphere of self-censorship. In October 2019, authorities detained hundreds of people for social media posts criticizing the latest Turkish military offensive into Syria.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

Although freedom of assembly is theoretically guaranteed in Turkish law, authorities have routinely disallowed gatherings by government critics on security grounds in recent years, while progovernment rallies are allowed to proceed. Restrictions have been imposed on May Day celebrations by leftist and labor groups, protests by purge victims, and opposition party meetings. Police use force to break up unsanctioned protests.

Commemorations by Saturday Mothers, a group that protests forced disappearances that took place during a 1980 coup d'état, have been routinely broken up by police; many participants, including elderly people, have been arrested. In August 2018, police stopped the group's assembly in Istanbul's Galatasaray Square, using tear gas and arresting participants. The government claimed that Saturday Mothers was connected to the PKK, an allegation the group denied. Saturday Mothers was not allowed to return to the square in 2019, and has held sit-ins in a local human rights office instead.

The government has also targeted LGBT+ events in recent years. Istanbul's pride parade, which once hosted tens of thousands of participants, was banned for the fifth consecutive year in 2019. Participants who tried to march faced tear gas and rubber bullets when police dispersed their gathering. Rallies were also banned in Ankara and the coastal city of Izmir.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights- and governance-related work? 1 / 4

The government has cracked down on NGOs since the 2016 coup attempt, summarily shutting down at least 1,500 foundations and associations and seizing their assets. The targeted groups worked on issues including torture, domestic violence, and aid to refugees and internally displaced persons. NGO leaders also face routine harassment, arrests, and prosecutions for carrying out their activities.

Osman Kavala, a prominent civil society leader and philanthropist, was arrested in 2017 and charged in early 2019 with attempting to overthrow the government by supporting a protest in Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013. The indictment was heavily criticized by human rights organizations for lacking credible evidence. Kavala and 15 other defendants from Turkish civil society were finally put on trial in June 2019. In December, the ECHR ruled that Kavala's detention was unjustified and called for his release, but he remained behind bars awaiting a verdict as the year ended.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor 1 / organizations? 4

Union activity, including the right to strike, is limited by law and in practice; antiunion activities by employers are common, and legal protections are poorly enforced. A system of representation threshold requirements make it difficult for unions to secure collective-bargaining rights. Trade unions and professional organizations have suffered from mass arrests and dismissals associated with the state of emergency and the general breakdown in freedoms of expression, assembly, and association.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 1 / 4

The appointment of thousands of loyalist judges, the potential professional costs of ruling against the executive in a major case, and the effects of the postcoup purge have all severely weakened judicial independence in Turkey. More than 4,200 judges and prosecutors were removed in the 2016 coup attempt's aftermath. The establishment of the new presidential system in June 2018 also increased executive control over the judiciary. Under this new structure, members of the Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK), a powerful body that oversees judicial appointments and disciplinary measures, are now appointed by the parliament and the president, rather than by members of the judiciary itself.

Though the judiciary's autonomy is restricted, judges sometimes ruled against the government in significant cases in 2019, for example in the cases involving academics who had called for an end to state violence in Kurdish areas in 2016.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 0 / 4

Due process guarantees were largely eroded during the state of emergency between 2016 and 2018, and these rights have not been restored in practice since the emergency was lifted. Due process and evidentiary standards are particularly weak in cases involving terrorism charges, with defendants held in lengthy pretrial detention periods lasting up to seven years. In many cases, lawyers defending those accused of terrorism have faced arrest themselves. According to the Justice Ministry, more than 150,000 people were under investigation for terrorism offenses as of mid-2019, and roughly 70,000 were on trial; most were accused of links to the Gülen movement.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom 1 / from war and insurgencies? 4

Torture at the hands of authorities has remained common after the 2016 coup attempt and subsequent state of emergency. Human Rights Watch has reported that security officers specifically target Kurds, Gülenists, and leftists with torture and degrading

treatment, and operate in an environment of impunity. Prosecutors do not consistently investigate allegations of torture, and the government has resisted the publication of a European Committee for the Prevention of Torture report on its detention practices.

The threat of terrorism decreased in 2018 with the weakening of the Islamic State (IS) militant group in neighboring Syria and Iraq; no large-scale terrorist attacks were reported during 2019. However, residents in the Kurdish southeast endured another year of conflict between security forces and the PKK, and have been subject to curfews as part of a new strategy to limit PKK activity. The conflict between security forces and Kurdish militants has killed more than 4,600 people within Turkey and in northern Iraq since July 2015, most of them soldiers or militant combatants.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various 1 / segments of the population? 4

Although Turkish law guarantees equal treatment, women as well as ethnic and religious minority groups suffer varying degrees of discrimination. For example, Alevis and non-Muslims reportedly face discrimination in schools and in employment, particularly in senior public-sector positions. Gender inequality in the workplace is common, though women have become a larger part of the workforce since the beginning of the century.

The conflict with the PKK has been used to justify discriminatory measures against Kurds, including the prohibition of Kurdish festivals for security reasons and the reversal of Kurdish municipal officials' efforts to promote their language and culture. Many Kurdish-language schools and cultural organizations have been shut down by the government since 2015.

Turkey hosts 3.6 million refugees from Syria, in addition to 400,000 refugees and asylum seekers from other parts of the world. While the government has worked to provide them with basic services, a large minority of refugee children lack access to education, and few adults are able to obtain formal employment. Popular resentment against this population has been rising for years and is felt across the political spectrum. In response to public pressure, the Turkish government in October 2019 announced a plan to resettle as many as one million Syrian refugees in a new buffer zone in northern Syria. That month, Turkey launched a military offensive to capture the territory in question from the Syrian Democratic Forces, a US-backed and Kurdish-led militia group that had waged a successful multiyear campaign against IS in Syria, but that Turkey opposed due to its alleged ties to the PKK. Also in October, Turkish authorities forced Syrian refugees to secure new residency permits or risk deportation.

Same-sex relations are not legally prohibited, but LGBT+ people are subject to widespread discrimination, police harassment, and occasional violence. There is no legislation to protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT+ people are banned from openly serving in the military.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 1 / 4

An upsurge in fighting between the government and the PKK in 2015 and 2016 resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in southeastern Turkey, and freedom of movement remains limited in the region as low-level clashes continue.

More than 125,000 public-sector workers have been fired in the purges that followed the 2016 coup attempt, and those who were suspended or dismissed have no effective avenue for appeal. Many purge victims were unable to find new employment in the private sector, due to an atmosphere of guilt by association.

The authorities also targeted purged workers and their spouses with the revocation of their passports. The government stated that it was working to reinstate passports in March 2019 and again in July, after the Constitutional Court overturned the regulation that allowed their original revocation. However, the matter remained unresolved at year's end.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 1 / 4

Private property rights are legally enshrined, but since 2013 many critics of the government have been subjected to intrusive tax and regulatory inspections. In the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt, the assets of companies, NGOs, foundations, individuals, media outlets, and other entities deemed to be associated with terrorist groups have been confiscated. According to news site European Interest, \$11 billion in private business assets, ranging from corner stores to large conglomerates, had been seized as of June 2018.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 2 / 4

The government has shown increasing disinterest in protecting vulnerable individuals from forced marriage and domestic violence. Child marriages, often performed at unofficial religious ceremonies, are widespread, and Syrian refugees appear to be particularly vulnerable. The Directorate of Religious Affairs briefly endorsed the practice, suggesting that girls as young as nine years old could marry when it published a glossary of Islamic terms in early 2018. The same document, which was retracted after public outcry, also defined marriage as an institution that saved its participants from adultery.

Despite legal safeguards, rates of domestic violence remain high; police are often reluctant to intervene in domestic disputes, and shelter space is both extremely limited and often geographically inaccessible. The AKP considered weakening domestic violence protections as part of a larger effort to dissuade women from seeking divorce;

a parliamentary report published in 2016 recommended that women should be required to prove their partner's violence in order to receive extended police protection. The recommendation was retracted after sparking public criticism.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation? 1 / 4

The weakness of labor unions and the government's increasing willingness to take action against organized labor have undermined equality of opportunity, protection from economic exploitation, and workplace safety. Workplace accidents have become more frequent in recent years, and laborers have little recourse if injured. According to the Workers' Health and Work Safety Assembly (İSiGM), more than 1,700 workers died in workplace accidents in 2019, including 67 child laborers and 112 migrant laborers. The large refugee population is especially vulnerable to exploitative employment conditions.

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