

Damages inflicted in the field of education in the aftermath of the 15 July 2016 coup

Executive summary

In the aftermath of the coup attempt which Turkey witnessed on 15 July 2016, the state of emergency was declared (OHAL) and a total of 35 presidential decrees (KHK) have since been issued.¹ More than 130.000 public employees have been dismissed from their profession by these decrees.² The most detrimental effect of presidential decrees are visible in the field of education. These decrees have fundamentally damaged educational facilities and in the aftermath of the coup attempt, many teachers and students as well as the field of education has profoundly been affected.

The effects of the OHAL in education³

- 34.274 teachers in total were dismissed by statutory decrees (KHK).
- 6.086 academics were dismissed by KHK. In addition, around 2.808 academics, who worked for the closed down universities, became unemployed. In total, about 8.000 academics became ineligible to work.
- 1.421 administrative staff at universities, 15 officers at Student Selection and Placement Center, an officer at High Education Board were dismissed by KHK.
- 15 universities out of 193 were closed down by the KHK, afflicting 64.533 students who were studying at these closed down universities.
- The professional school union called Aktif-Eğitim was closed down.
- As of 20 December 2017 in total 1.069 private schools related to the Gulen movement throughout Turkey have been closed down.⁴ The number of pre-school education centers closed down is 87. The number of middle schools closed down is

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR4492102018TURKISH.PDF> (All sources in this document have been accessed on July 16, 2019)

² <https://turkeypurge.com/>

³ The following statistics are derived from the overview article 'The balance sheet of 2 years state of emergency' <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/40-bin-egitimci-khk-karariyla-ihrac-edildi-2705000> and <https://www.haberturk.com/son-dakika-2-yil-suren-ohal-in-bilancosu-2062195> unless stated otherwise

⁴ <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/turkiye-genelinde-1069-ozel-okul-fetoden-kapatildi-206187.html>

306. The number of primary schools closed down 274. The number of high schools closed down is 402.

- 109 private student dormitories, 20 magazines and 29 publishing houses were closed down.⁵
- Status of 301 students who were studying abroad was cancelled
- The number of arrested and sentenced students goes up to 77.081⁶
- The presidential decree (No. 677) was enacted to prevent inmates from taking exams.
- According to the report⁷ of Eđitim Sen titled “Situation of Education” in 2017, it is emphasized that most detrimental effect of dismissals witnessed at universities and MEB affiliated schools is seen in education sector. Due to the collective dismissal and suspension from profession, more than 1.5 million student were left without teachers. Education services were almost halted in some universities and faculties. The report also highlights that the education system moved away from science, secularism and public service in the hands of the government.
- The chairman of Eđitim Sen, Feray Aytekin Aydođan states “more than 1.5 million students were left without teachers owing to collective dismissals and suspension from profession in the OHAL process. Paid teachers were assigned in some regions. That vast majority of teachers were suspended from profession in some cities and provinces due to the arbitrary decisions caused the prevention of the right of students to education. It also made students deprived of their teachers and vice versa. Most severe trauma was experienced by the children whose teachers, parents were dismissed illegally. Tens of thousands children tried to pursue their education lives by dealing with desperation, sense of shame, sense of guilty, shyness, cowardice, anxiety, anger, fragility, distrust, worthlessness, meaninglessness etc. Guidance services and school administration did not conduct any work especially for the children whose parents were dismissed from public sector It gave rise to deterioration of psychological damages.”

⁵ <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1272968-ohal-kararnamesiyle-16-televizyon-3-haber-ajansi-45-gazete-kapatildi>

⁶ As of 11 april 2018 - https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/fetoden-tutuklanan-kisi-sayisi-77-bin-81.VMn_RQQcqUO5vHOBurL7iA

⁷ <http://egitimsen.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/E%C4%9Fitimin-Durumu-Raporu-8-Haziran-2017.pdf>

- The seized private schools in the aftermath of 15 July were converted into imam preachers school by completely political and administrative decisions.⁸
- Education was almost halted in some universities and faculties due to the collective dismissals. It made it impossible to pursue master studies.

OHAL Commission Decisions

As of 29/12/2018, the number of applications made at the Commission is 125.600. Taking into account the number of decisions taken by the Commission, the number of applications under consideration is 75.300.⁹

General Framework on the issue of Human Rights

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Data

As of 31/12/2018, there are 56.350 applications awaiting to be decided upon before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) of which 7100 of them have been made from Turkey.¹⁰ Turkey with 12.6% is the fourth country against which an application is brought. Russia with 20.9% comes first in the list, Romania with 15.1% holds the second place, and Ukraine with 12.9 comes third. Taking into consideration the population, this list can change like Romania, Ukraine, Turkey and Russia. Thus, Turkey is the third country against which an application is made among the members of the Council of Europe, considering the population rate.

According to the 2018 data released by ECHR 1.104 violation decisions were given. 146 of them were given against Turkey. Turkey with 14.39% is the second country after Russia against which ECHR rules. Taking into account the population rate of the countries, Turkey is the first against which ECHR rules. Most violated issues Turkey committed are the right to a fair trial with 41 files and the right to freedom of expression with 40 files.

⁸ <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/09/06/feto-okullari-imam-hatipe-devredildi>

⁹ <https://www.memurlar.net/haber/798993/ohal-komisyonu-aralik-ayinda-inceledigi-dosya-sayisini-acikladi.html>

¹⁰ https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Stats_analysis_2018_ENG.pdf

Data by Freedom House

According to 2018 report released by Freedom House, Turkey is given 32 points out of 100 and fell down to the category of non-liberal countries from the category of partly non-liberal country.¹¹

Based on the consideration into freedom scores by Freedom House throughout the last 10 years, Turkey is the first country with most decreased freedom in the world within this 10 year period. The Central African Republic, Mali and Burundi follow Turkey respectively.

In addition to all of this, Turkey lost 6 points in 2018 as compared to the last year point in the field of political and civil freedoms. It is therefore stated that Turkey becomes the fifth worsening country in the field of political and civil freedoms during the last 1 year in the world.

Reporters Without Borders

According to the report of Reporters without Borders in 2018, Turkey is ranked 157 among 180 countries in the field of press freedom.¹² Considering the finding of Reporters without Borders throughout the last 10 years, a worsening situation in the field of press freedom in Turkey stands out. While Turkey was ranked 102 in 2008, it fell down even to 157 in 2018.

According to the findings of Reporters without Borders in 2018, Turkey comes second in terms of the number of arrested professional reporters. China comes first with 52 reporters arrested. Turkey is ranked second with 43 arrested reporters. Syria comes third with 24 arrested reporters.

¹¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/turkey>

¹² <https://rsf.org/en/turkey>