

World's press urges Kerry to raise press freedom issues with Turkey

ANKARA, TURKEY: The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum have called on the newly appointed US Secretary of State, John Kerry, to raise press freedom concerns with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan during Kerry's visit to Turkey on Friday.



In a letter to Secretary Kerry, WAN-IFRA, the global organisation of the world's newspapers and news publishers, highlighted the plight of jailed journalists in Turkey and called for greater press freedoms and the end to the use of criminal charges to punish journalists simply for doing their jobs.

Turkey has more journalists in its jails than any other country in the world.

"Turkey's position as the world's largest jailer of journalists is simply unacceptable," said the WAN-IFRA letter. "A country often hailed as the democratic example for the aspirations of an entire region, one with such a history-rich and high-calibre press, cannot condone the imprisonment of journalists."

'Terrorists' armed with *laptops and cameras*?

Turkey denies jailing journalists and often instead claims they are 'terrorists'. The international community has firmly rejected this contention.

Evidence published in an October 2012 report by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists suggests authorities "have conflated the expression of political views the government finds offensive with outright terrorism." There are at least 400 journalists in Turkish jails, according to the CPJ report.

Turkey's restrictive legal environment, and its sweeping national security measures and anti-terrorism legislation, are frequently deployed against journalists to silence critical voices.

Having written to Turkish authorities over a range of issues in recent years, WAN-IFRA is urging Secretary Kerry to raise the issue of press freedom and "to seek the freedom of all journalists imprisoned for their writing as a matter of urgency."

[Read the full letter.](#)

More on WAN-IFRA and WEF press freedom initiatives can be found at <http://www.wan-ifra.org>.