

*Kerem Altıparmak - Abstract - Censorship in Modern Era: Turkish Government's Internet Regulation*

As of the end of 2021 a total of 574.798 websites and domain names was blocked from Turkey. According to the Twitter and Facebook transparency reports, Turkey has been one of the top requesters from social media companies to remove content in the last decade. This is not surprising considering the high level of direct or indirect control of the traditional media by the government and the rising role of Internet and social media in the Turkish society. Alternative views could only be disseminated through Internet and social media.

However, the government has continuously developed tools to target this free space. Law No. 5651 on Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Combating Crimes Committed by Means of Such Publications, which was enacted 15 years ago, originally aimed to protect children from harmful content. Since then, the law has been amended 14 times. With each amendment, both quantity and quality of restrictions have increased to a level of suffocation of freedom of speech on the Internet. In combination with criminal proceedings, civil suits, administrative sanctions targeting online freedom of speech, Turkish government has developed a complex but very effective system of censorship.

This presentation will provide information about the new Internet censorship system. Potential legal challenges that might be brought against this new type of censorship before international human rights bodies will also be briefly discussed.