

#HaberinDevamıHabercininRefahı



2023-2024 PRESS FREEDOM REPORT

PREPARED BY ÜLKÜ ŞAHİN AND İLYAS COŞKUN
JOURNALISTS' UNION OF TURKEY

tgs
TÜRKİYE GAZETECİLER SENDİKASI
www.fgs.org.tr





This project is funded by the European Union

PRESS FREEDOM REPORT 2023-2024



This publication is prepared through the funding provided by the European Union.
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PREFACE

Unfortunately, freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Turkey have been confined to topics such as journalist trials, arbitrary arrests, law enforcement violence, censorship, and self-censorship. However, job security, economic and social rights, and the demand for fair wages are also directly related to freedom of the press.

Millions of working people in Turkey are struggling to survive in a severe economic crisis. Of course, journalists are not exempt from this crisis. Like the minimum wage earners, civil servants, and pensioners whose voices they try to make heard almost every day, they struggle to make ends meet. Especially in the last two years, there have been exorbitant price increases in all basic consumption items from food to housing, energy to school fees. Is there be a link between the cost of living and impoverishment and freedom of the press?

In our interviews and observations in the field, we realize that journalists working in economic anxiety and without job security cannot freely use their pens. Journalism has yapılmı never been a highly lucrative profession. However, we are now going through a process where we have to think about how we will pay the rent and the bills. Gone are the days when we participated in at least one social activity a week when we did not feel it a burden to buy books and newspapers, and when we did not calculate our children's school expenses down to the last penny.

We are not satisfied with where we are today. We go to the markets and compare the prices of basic needs. We have a hard time buying books in conditions where watching movies, theater, and concerts is considered a luxury. Never before have press workers been so worried about their livelihood.

Of course, the current economic crisis is not solely responsible for the current situation. Step by step, journalists have been brought to this point.

With the anti-unionization operations that began in the 1990s, a profile of journalists was created who would settle for whatever the boss gave them. In those years, journalists working in big media were far from worrying about making a living. After the de-unionization operation, the rights gained were gradually trimmed so that the idea of a union would not spread again in the sector.

When the Press Labor Law, which still protects journalists today, albeit minimally, was drafted, the priority was not journalists, but the public's right to information and freedom of the press. There were many protective clauses in the law to ensure that journalists could prepare their news freely, free from the pressure of bosses and the government, and work without worrying about the future. Foremost among these were provisions such as advance payment of wages, five percent interest for each day of unpaid wages, vacation pay, and seniority increases. These safeguards allowed journalists to report their news without worrying

about their livelihood and were measures to curb press freedom violations by bosses.

Journalism, which turned into a disorganized professional group with the disappearance of union security, has not been able to resist the legal rights taken away from us one by one by the high judiciary in the last 15 years.

During this period, attacks on freedom of the press increased and the main agenda of the profession became arrests, detentions, and trials. The struggle for journalists' freedom became a priority. Under this dual attack, journalists were unable to protect their job security, social rights, and wages in the face of pressure from bosses and the government.

While in the past there were complaints about wage gaps, in this new era wages have been equalized at the bottom. Although journalists who unionized gained the power to bargain with their bosses and started to enjoy better conditions, this was only possible for a small part of the sector. Moreover, existing collective bargaining agreements were suppressed while the sector as a whole was unionized, without job security, and under the threat of unemployment.

Today, the vast majority of journalists struggle to make ends meet with incomes below the poverty line or even at the minimum wage level. The overwhelming majority of those working in local media struggle to earn even the minimum wage. It is not possible for journalists working under these conditions to improve themselves and invest in their profession to produce universal quality journalism, let alone under pressure from the government and bosses. This is why journalist poverty was the main topic of this year's report. To get the most up-to-date data from the field, we wanted to measure our members' perceptions of poverty and gather information on their economic and social consumption behaviors. You will find the striking results of the survey we conducted for this purpose in the report.

It is a fact that the political repression of the last two decades has led to a transformation in the media, which has brought down the trust in journalism to rock bottom. In addition to the loss of trust, centralized news reporting, rising costs, etc. have reduced viewing/reading/listening and purchasing rates, but journalists are not to blame for all this.

Journalists have no choice but to unionize and redress the balance at the bargaining table to escape this poverty trap. Such a media climate will undoubtedly improve the economic and social rights of journalists, increase freedom of expression, and build the trust our profession deserves.

Before concluding, I would like to thank Tim Dawson, Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists, who contributed to our report with his article titled "The War on Journalists in Gaza". I would like to pay tribute to our Palestinian colleagues who were killed while practicing their profession in their occupied country and convey our solidarity as the TGS family to our colleagues who were maimed and subjected to violence.

GÖKHAN DURMUŞ

Journalists Union Of Turkey President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contributing to the preparation of this report and showing solidarity,

To Attorney Ali Deniz Ceylan, Attorney Devrim Avcı Özkurt, Attorney Enes Hikmet Ermaner, Attorney Emine Özhasar, Attorney Fatih Aydın, Attorney Merve Kurhan, Attorney Muhammed Ünsal, Attorney Nuray Özdoğan, Attorney Resul Temur, Attorney Tolgay Güvercin for sharing information on freedom of the press cases;

To journalists Cansu Pişkin, Deniz Tekin, Erol Önderoğlu, Eylem Sonbahar, and Özgür Öğret for their support and generous sharing of information;

For their valuable contributions, we would like to thank the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA), P24 Platform for Independent Journalism, International Press Institute (IPI), Media Monitoring Database, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Turkish, Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFGD), Freedom of Expression Association (İFÖD) and Initiative Against Thought Crime(?!)

Thank you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Anadolu Agency
USA	United States of America
AFP	Agence France-Press
AP	Associated Press
AYM	Constitutional Court
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIK	Press Ads Agency
BTK	Information Technologies and Communications Agency
CIMER	Presidency Communications Department
CGD	Contemporary Journalists Association
DW	Deutsche Welle
EPA	The European Pressphoto Agency B.V (European News Agency)
ETHA	Etkin News Agency
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IPC	International Press Card
ILO	International Labor Organization
IDDK	Council of State, Plenary Session of Administrative Law Chambers
IHA	Ihlas News Agency
MA	Mezopotamya Agency
RAI	Radio Audizioni Italiane
RTUK	Radio and Television Supreme Council
SGK	Social Security Agency
GNAT	Grand National Assembly of Turkey
TCK	Turkish Criminal Code
CBA	Collective Labor Agreement
TMK	Anti-Terrorism Law
TMMOB	Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects
TUIK	Turkish Statistics Agency
VOA	Voice of America

INTRODUCTION

The 2023-2024 Press Freedom Report by the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) was prepared to identify and share the interventions against press freedom over the past year.

This year, the main theme of our report is the poverty of journalists. We wanted to share in our report the extent of the poverty faced by journalists working for low wages, long hours, and without union representation. While editorial independence is one pillar of press freedom, the other pillar is economic and social rights and security. The decline in press freedom and the fact that journalists have become more economically vulnerable are not separate issues. To reveal the extent of the poverty experienced by journalists and their economic and social level, the "Poverty Survey: Economic and Social Level Survey" is also in our report.

As before, this year we are analyzing the forms of interference in freedom of the press under headings. To this end, our report includes the list of imprisoned journalists, the distribution of the crimes attributed to journalists in indictments, the status of journalist arrests in Turkey in the last year, the names released, and data on detentions and investigations against journalists. Under the heading 'Trials', we have presented numerical data on the legal processes carried out against journalists in the last year and summarized the individual application decisions published by the Constitutional Court. We have also presented the current balance sheet of the crime of "Publicly Disseminating Misleading Information" (TCK 217/A), which has been used against journalists since it entered into force in 2022. We have also presented the current status of attacks against journalists and journalist murder cases.

Under the heading of 'Interventions on the Internet', we have again touched upon access blocking and content removal decisions against online media in the last year. In the section titled 'Interventions against Media Organizations', we have explained the interventions of RTÜK and BİK in detail. The details of all these data can be found in the tables presented in the Annex. In the section titled 'Changes in Legislation', we provided information on legal amendments that closely concern journalists and media organizations, as well as the lawsuits filed against these amendments.

Under the heading 'Overview of the Sector', we focused on data on the economic and social status of journalists, especially in the context of collective rights. Under the sub-heading 'General Assessment of the Sector', we shared data on the general outlook of the sector. In the sub-heading 'Number of Employees in Press Organizations', we presented the current figures on the number of registered journalists in the sector and how this number is distributed across classes. In the sub-heading 'Two Threats: Unemployment and Precarious Employment', we examined two economic and social phenomena that have long put pressure on the collective rights of journalists. In the sub-heading 'A Struggle for Dignity: A Struggle for Dignity: Trade Union Activity', we provided an update on the union activities carried out by TGS despite all the adversities. You can find a comprehensive assessment of the AFP and Sputnik strikes that took place during the reporting period in the sub-heading 'AFP and Sputnik Strikes'. We have tried to show the impact of economic instability and lengthy judicial processes on journalists' economic claims in the sub-heading 'Journalists' Compensations Turned into Nothing'. 'Poverty Survey: Economic and Social Level' at the end of the report.

METHODOLOGY

The report covers one year of data between April 2023 and April 2024. The primary source of the data used is the applications, complaints, information, and support requests received directly by TGS, as well as the interviews and observation notes taken during the union's visits to cities and workplaces.

In addition, data from the "Economic and Social Level Survey" was also used as a primary source in the report. In this context, two separate survey forms were prepared for members in authorized and unauthorized workplaces. These forms were sent to all union members via e-mail on April 5, 2024. The survey remained open until April 18, 2024. The questionnaire prepared for authorized workplaces was attended by 63 out of a total of 420 members under the contract. In the survey prepared for unauthorized workplaces, 168 out of a total of 1625 members in these workplaces participated. The participation rate was 10.33% for unauthorized workplaces and 15% for authorized workplaces.

Litigation proceedings conducted by the legal department, lawsuits filed against regulatory acts, and information requests directed to official institutions are also the main sources for the report. During the preparation phase, data from official institutions, especially the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and labor and professional organizations were used, especially for the current outlook of industrial relations in the line of work. In addition, academic texts on journalism labor and the profession as well as studies conducted by the TGS in the relevant period were also used as references in the report. Traditional and social media were scanned daily; news and posts were processed. The websites of official institutions, the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Official Gazette, which contain updates on labor legislation and jurisprudence, were monitored daily and the relevant data were included in the report.

However, as in previous years, some difficulties were encountered during the preparation of this report. The fact that official institutions only provide data on formal employment made it relatively difficult to make an overall assessment of the sector. Confirmation of the information accessed during the literature review, difficulties in accessing some journalists who were subjected to rights violations and file information, and the attitude of official institutions violating the right to information have narrowed the data set included in the report. Due to these limitations, the report has been prepared in line with the current information we were able to access. Despite the number of cases, problems, and violations that are not reflected in the report due to such obstacles, it is believed that the data presented in the report has at least identified the problems and demands. Following this methodology, solutions to the problems identified have been developed.



Photo: Zain Jaafar / AFP

I. THE WAR ON GAZA'S JOURNALISTS

Tim Dawson¹

The natural reaction to the bombardment experienced by Gaza's journalists would be despair. Nearly 11 percent of media workers in the enclave have lost their lives – a mortality rate nearly ten times higher than the general population. Almost all have lost their homes and are living in tents. Bereavements are commonplace, they have little food and water. Lack of fuel forces them to walk to work carrying equipment on their shoulders.

The whole Strip has experienced something nearly without precedent in human history. A tiny, sealed parcel of land whose population has been subjected to the full horrors of modern warfare. Most civilians react to bullets and bombing by running. Gazans don't have that option. The journalists, however, have been subjected to an even more terrible punishment.

The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has access to some of the most sophisticated surveillance equipment available. They can secretly infect mobile phones, and extract from them copious geo data about the phone's user – as well as all of their communications, of course. Geolocation data can then be fed into AI-enhanced targeting software such as Gospel, which directs drones and bombs to deliver death with the precision of the postman.

¹ Tim Dawson, Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

The journalists' predicament has been exacerbated by the exclusion of international journalists from Gaza. After 7 October, Israel sealed Gaza's borders and has prevented outside reporters from entering – save on very limited occasions when they have been conducted on tightly controlled tours by the IDF.

IFJ general secretary Anthony Bellanger traveled to Israel in December and tried to mount a protest at the exclusion of the world's press from Gaza. The Israeli government refused to meet with him. Netanyahu and his colleagues have similarly rebuffed petitions from large groups of foreign reporters – among them one coordinated by Sky TV's Alex Crawford.

Despite their extraordinary suffering, Gaza's journalists have continued providing the world's media with words, sounds, and pictures of the tragedy that has befallen Gaza. Tahseen al-Astall, the vice president of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate (PJS), who is based in Gaza says: "There are stories in every square inch of Gaza and we are determined to tell them all. Conditions are very harsh, however. Water and fuel are extremely expensive, there is very little food, and we struggle to access electricity and internet connections".

Help has come from journalists around the world and their unions. From the outset of the conflict, the International Federation of Journalists sent funds to PJS that paid for individual blast-trauma packs and batteries for cameras and other equipment. Al Astall and other union officials toured the streets distributing these to journalists on the streets.

As the conflict and the death toll mounted, journalists and their unions responded with extraordinary solidarity donations to the IFJ's Safety Fund. There were large offerings – €10,000 each from our US affiliates, The News Guild, and the National Writer's Union. The Media Arts Alliance Australia, and their colleagues at E tũ in New Zealand sent €8,000, and the International Transport Workers' Federation provided another €6,000. The National Union of Journalists UK+Ireland has donated around €40,000.

Hundreds of individual donations have also kept up the flow of money, providing essentials. Nasser Abu Baker, president of the PJS said: "Such generosity from many people, all over the world is a source of great hope for me. The suffering in Gaza, and the West Bank is beyond easy description. All these funds raised, however, will be of immediate and significant help to journalists in Gaza. Everyone who has helped has their heartfelt appreciation".

The IFJ's next initiative in Gaza will be the opening of two solidarity centers to provide journalists with support and a space to work. The first of these has been made possible with significant support from the Canadian Union, Unifor, and the Norwegian Journalists' Union. It will be based in Khan Younis and will provide a base from which journalists can work, recuperate, and exchange information. Critically, it will also provide facilities where complete broadcast packages can be made – rather than simply selling raw footage.

Fundraising began last week to finance a second solidarity center – probably to be located in Rafah (although this will depend on what happens militarily in the coming days). The drive to pay for this received a significant boost this week, with the announcement that PJS is to receive the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The IFJ nominated its Palestinian affiliate, and while the prize will be to all Palestine's journalists, the \$25,000 prize will be received by PJS.

While immediate efforts aim to sustain Gaza’s journalists, the IFJ is also working to ensure that those responsible for this carnage are held to account. Two years ago the IFJ lodged complaints about the IDF targeting journalists with the International Criminal Court. The best known of these cases is that of Shireen Abu Akleh, but she is one of many believed to have lost their lives to IDF gunfire.

To these cases will be added some from the current conflict. How many have yet to be determined, not least because of the extreme difficulties in compiling sufficient evidence after such devastating bombardment.

“The application of international law when so many journalists have lost their lives is absolutely critical”, said IFJ general secretary Anthony Bellanger. “Even more than is usual with any war, accusations and stories swirl around this conflict. What we need, is for actual evidence to be tested in a judicial environment. This is all the more important if the faith of Palestinians in international law is to be restored”.

The IFJ has already organized two meetings at the UN in Geneva to press this case, but the need to keep up pressure on the ICC remains critical. Last December, its lead prosecutor Karim Khan did visit the West Bank, and met with PJS leaders, to whom he gave assurances about an ‘ongoing investigation’.

Based on progress to date, however, international bodies will need to work hard to keep this issue at the top of the agenda, if the ICC is to be kept to its word.

Given the resilience demonstrated by Gaza’s brave reporters, surely as an international body of journalists, we owe them nothing less? Avoiding despair against such a terrible backdrop is an example to every journalist who has thought the odds against them were insurmountable. It is a demonstration too of the power of international solidarity. To serve all those who rely on us for information, journalists have to stand together.

You can donate to the IFJ’s International Safety Fund
here: <https://donorbox.org/donation-to-the-ifj-safety-fund>

II. JOURNALISTS IN PRISON, ARRESTS AND RELEASES

In the past year, at least 55 journalists have been imprisoned. While some of these journalists have been released, some of them are still in prison as detainees or convicts. In this section, we will share information about journalists in prison as of the date of this report. Then, data on journalists arrested and released in the last year will be presented.

A. Journalists in Prison

The list of journalists whose case files were examined by the TGS and found to be imprisoned due to their professional activities can be seen in Table 1. According to the latest information we have received in line with this list;

- As of April 1, 2024, 13 journalists have been deprived of their freedom in various prisons in Turkey for their journalistic activities.
- Of the journalists in prison, four are under arrest and eight are convicted. We have not received clear information about the current situation of one journalist.
- Of the journalists in prison, one is a woman and 12 are men.

Table 1: List of Journalists in Prison as of April 1, 2024

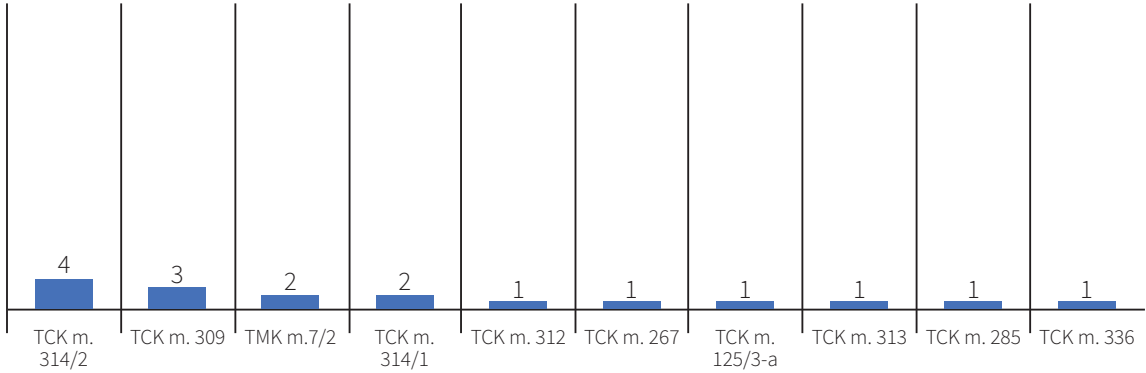
	FULL NAME	ORGANIZATION	DUTY
1	Ali Ünal	Zaman Newspaper	Author
2	Diren Keser	PIRHA	Correspondent
3	Erdal Süsem	Eylül Art and Literature Magazine	Editor
4	Erol Zavar	Odak Magazine	Owner and Editor-in-Chief
5	Gültekin Avcı	Bugün Newspaper	Author
6	Hatice Duman	Atılım Newspaper	Owner and Editor-in-Chief
7	Kenan Karavil	Radio Dünya	Editor-in-Chief Coordinator
8	Mehmet Baransu	Taraf Newspaper	Author
9	Murat Çapan	Nokta Magazine	Managing Editor
10	Mustafa Gök	Ekmek ve Adalet Magazine	Ankara Representative
11	Sami Tunca	Mücadele Birliği Magazine	Registrar
12	Sertan Önal	Halkın Günlüğü Newspaper	Correspondent
13	Süleyman Gençel	A3 News	Editor-in-Chief

B. Charges Against Journalists in Prison

Table 2 presents the numerical distribution of the charges against arrested and convicted journalists based on the referral items in their indictments. It should be noted that it is possible to encounter more than one accusation in the indictment of a journalist. Accordingly, 4 of the 13 journalists in prison are charged with Article 314/2 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), 'Membership of an Armed Organization', while three journalists are in prison on charges of 'Violating the Constitution' under the abrogated TCK Article 146 (new

TCK 309). One journalist charged with membership of an armed organization is also charged with Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Law, 'Propaganda for a Terrorist Organization'; one journalist is charged with Article 285 'Breach of Confidentiality' and Article 336 'Disclosure of Prohibited Information'. Two journalists are in prison on charges of Article 314/1 'Establishing or Leading an Armed Terrorist Organization'; one journalist on charges of Article 312 'Crime against the Government'; one journalist on charges of Article 313 'Armed Rebellion against the Government of the Republic of Turkey'; one journalist on charges of Article 267 'Slander' and Article 125/3-a 'Insulting a Public Official due to his/her Position'.

Table 2: Numerical Breakdown of the Crimes Attributed to Journalists in Prison in the Indictments



C. Arrested Journalists

According to the data available to us, 14 journalists were imprisoned in the last year. Arrested journalists in the last one year are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Arrested Journalists between April 2023 and April 2024

	FULL NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	DATE OF ARREST
1	Beritan Canözer	Jinnews	Correspondent	27.04.2023
2	Mehmet Şah Oruç	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	27.04.2023
3	Abdurrahman Gök	Mesopotamia Agency	Editor	27.04.2023
4	Sedat Yılmaz	Mesopotamia Agency	Editor	03.05.2023
5	Dicle Müftüoğlu	Dicle Fırat Journalists Association	Co-chair	03.05.2023
6	Barış Pehlivan	Cumhuriyet Newspaper - Halk TV	Author	17.05.2023-16.08.2023
7	Merdan Yanardağ	TELE1	Editor-in-Chief	27.06.2023
8	Fırat Can Arslan	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	25.07.2023
9	Barış Pehlivan	Cumhuriyet Newspaper - Halk TV	Author	16.08.2023
10	Tolga Şardan	t24	Columnist	02.11.2023
11	Nazlı Ilıcak	-	Author	04.12.2023
12	Furkan Karabay	Gerçek gündem	Correspondent	29.12.2023
13	Süleyman Gençel	A3 News	Editor-in-Chief	02.02.2024
14	Diren Keser	PIRHA	Correspondent	28.02.2024

D. Evicted Journalists

In the last year,

- According to the information we received, 43 journalists were released from prison.
- Of the 34 arrested journalists, 27 were released at the first hearing before a judge, four were released with an interim decision, and three were released after an appeal against their arrest warrants.
- Nine convicted journalists were released from prison after the execution of their sentences ended or they were eligible for probation.
- Table 4 presents the journalists released and the manner of their release.

Table 4: List of Journalists Released from Prison between April 2023-April 2024 and Their Release Methods

	FULL NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	FORM OF EVACUATION
1	Cihan Acar	Bugün Newspaper	Correspondent	End of execution
2	Berivan Altan	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
3	Ceylan Şahinli	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
4	Diren Yurtsever	Mesopotamia Agency	Registrar	Interim decision
5	Deniz Nazlım	Mesopotamia Agency	News Chief	Interim decision
6	Emrullah Acar	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
7	Hakan Yalçın	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
8	Salman Gozelyüz	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
9	Ümmü Habibe Eren	JinNews	Correspondent	Interim decision
10	Öznur Değer	JinNews	Correspondent	Interim decision
11	Barış Pehlivan	Cumhuriyet Newspaper	Author	End of execution
12	Abdulkadir Turay	Tigris News Agency	Correspondent	End of execution
13	Safiye Alağaç	JinNews	News Director	Interim decision
14	Sezgin Kartal	Karşı Mahalle	Correspondent	Interim decision
15	Beritan Canözer	JinNews	Correspondent	Arrest review
16	Abdurrahman Öncü	Pel Production	Cameraman	Interim decision
17	Aziz Oruç	Mesopotamia Agency	Editor	Interim decision
18	Elif Üngür	Pia Production	Server	Interim decision
19	Lezgin Akdeniz	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
20	Mazlum Güler	Pia Production	Cameraman	Interim decision
21	Mehmet Ali Ertaş	Xwebûn Newspaper	Registrar	Interim decision
22	Mehmet Şahin	Xwebûn Newspaper	Author	Interim decision
23	İbrahim Koyuncu	Gün TV	Cameraman-Video Editor	Interim decision
24	Neşe Toprak	Pel Production	Server	Interim decision

25	Ömer Çelik	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
26	Ramazan Geciken	Pel Production	Cameraman	Interim decision
27	Serdar Altan	Dicle Fırat Journalists Association	Co-chair	Interim decision
28	Suat Dođuhan	Ari Production	Concessionaire	Interim decision
29	Zeynel Abidin Bulut	Xwebûn Newspaper	Editor	Interim decision
30	Alaaddin Akkaşođlu	Kütahya Akis Regional Newspaper - Gediz Newspaper /Karşı Newspaper	Concessionaire	End of execution
31	Merdan Yanardađ	TELE1	Editor-in-Chief	Release with sentence
32	Fırat Can Arslan	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Acquittal
33	Mehmet Şah Oruç	Mesopotamia Agency	Correspondent	Interim decision
34	Tolga Şardan	t24	Columnist	Acceptance of detention objection
35	Barış Pehlivan	Cumhuriyet Newspaper - Halk TV	Author	Probation
36	Furkan Karabay	Gerçek Gündem	Correspondent	Interim decision
37	Nazlı Ilıcak		Author	End of execution
38	Dicle Müftüođlu	Dicle Fırat Journalists Association	Co-chair	Interim decision
39	Abdurrahman Gök	Mesopotamia Agency	Editor	Interim decision
40	Sedat Yılmaz	Mesopotamia Agency	Editor	Interim decision
41	Mustafa Ünal	Zaman Newspaper	Ankara Representative	End of execution
42	Ercan Gün	Now TV	News Editor	End of execution
43	Mahmut Gülecan	Özgür Halk Magazine	Managing Editor	End of execution

III. INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations against journalists continued unabated this year as they do previous years. Members of the press became the subject of investigations due to their professional activities. Due to these investigations, they were taken into custody on the streets or in their homes in the early hours of the morning.

In total between April 2023 and April 2024, according to available data²,

- At least 69 journalists were detained
- 74 detentions were made
- Journalists were detained for a total of 153 hours
- 52 journalists testified in connection with investigations against them

IV. TRIALS

The trials analyzed under this heading are those currently ongoing at the first instance stage, as reported in the press and compiled based on applications received by TGS. Cases pending before the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Cassation are excluded from this data. However, these trials are undoubtedly the tip of the iceberg. We can estimate that many trials are going on locally, especially outside Istanbul, which do not known to the press and professional organizations. Under this heading, after presenting the numerical data on criminal and compensation proceedings, we will briefly mention the individual application decisions of the Constitutional Court published last year. Afterwards, we will try to shed light on the status of the TPC 217/A regulation, which entered our criminal legislation in 2022, in practice.

According to the data we have received in the last year, 280 journalists have been put on trial in at least 140 cases. While 126 of these trials are criminal proceedings, 14 of them are private civil lawsuits demanding compensation.³

A. Criminal Proceedings

- Last year, 340 journalists were tried in 183 criminal cases
- While 102 trials continued, verdicts were announced in 81 cases
- Journalists were sentenced to 47 years, 1 month, and 24 days in total
- 60 journalists were acquitted
- A total judicial fine of 31.160,00 TL was imposed
- Four journalists were sentenced to defer the announcement of the verdict
- It was decided to postpone the announcement of the verdict for four journalists. Sentencing of five journalists postponed. A decision was made to drop six files. One trial was stopped. In one trial, it was decided that there was no need to impose a penalty.

B. Compensation Proceedings

- According to the latest information available to us during this period, there were 21 trials with 2.690.00 TL (in total) compensation claims.
- 14 journalists and six media outlets were tried in these cases.
- A total of 45.000,00 TL compensation was awarded in these cases.
- Among the cases heard, two cases with a total value of 130.000,00 TL were partially accepted. In these cases, a total compensation of 45.000,00 TL was awarded.
- Seven cases with a total value of 720.000,00 TL were rejected.

² The details of the investigation data can be found in the **Annex**.

³ The details of the judgment data can be found in the **Annex**.

C. Individual Application Decisions

i. Nurcan Kaya Application⁴

AYM made an important decision last year. The Supreme Court, which had previously ruled many times that arrest, the most severe of judicial control measures, violates freedom of expression and freedom of the press, broke new ground by ruling that the judicial control measure of a ban on leaving the country is also a violation of rights. The ruling is a precedent in terms of travel bans imposed without legal conditions, which are frequently encountered in recent times in the field of thoughtcrime.

A criminal investigation was initiated against Nurcan Kaya, a columnist, and a lawyer, allegedly she committed the crime of "Public Incitement to Hatred and Enmity" due to her social media posts. Kaya was detained on October 27, 2019, when she was about to travel abroad to attend a meeting organized by the United Nations, her passport was seized and she was given a judicial control order with a ban on leaving the country. The ban was imposed for a month and a half.

In its judgment, the Constitutional Court pointed out that the judicial control order issued against the applicant due to a social media post had a deterrent effect on the applicant's will to express his views in a public debate and that the application of similar measures could lead to self-censorship of other journalists or columnists who would criticize public debates, such as the applicant.

The court unanimously ruled that Kaya's freedom of expression was violated due to the judicial control imposed and awarded 13,500 TL in non-pecuniary damages.

ii. Özgür Boğatekin Appeal⁵

Another of last year's AYM decisions concerns the application filed by Özgür Bogatekin, a reporter for the Gerger Fırat newspaper.

The Constitutional Court ruled that the imprisonment sentence imposed on Boğatekin for defamation upon a complaint filed by the district governor of Adıyaman Gerger district due to his columns was a violation of freedom of expression and press freedom.

The Constitutional Court ruled that it was not foreseeable in terms of the principle of legality to conclude that the applicant aimed to open an administrative or judicial investigation against the district governor of the district and acted with this intention. The high court stated that the applicant, as a journalist, did not aim to open an investigation against the district governor, but to question some of his actions and behaviors in the eyes of the public, and emphasized that the court of first instance, although it knew that the applicant did not commit the unlawful act, it could not show that he attributed it to the complainant based on conclusive evidence and free from any doubt.

With a majority of eight votes against four, the Constitutional Court ruled that freedom of expression and press freedom was violated and also decided to pay 30.000,00 TL non-pecuniary damages to the applicant.

4 Constitutional Court, Nurcan Kaya, B. No: 2019/39847, 25/1/2024, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2019/39847> (Accessed on 05.04.2024).

5 Constitutional Court, Özgür Boğatekin [GK], B. No: 2020/23730, 14/6/2023, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2020/23730> (Accessed on 05.04.2024).



Photo: Abdurrahman Antakyali

V. CRIME OF DISINFORMATION

The crime of TCK 217/A "Publicly Disseminating Misleading Information", which was proposed by the ruling partners AKP and MHP with the claim of combating disinformation and fake news, became law with Article 29 of Law No. 7418 dated 13.10.2022. Under the regulation, anyone who publicly disseminates untrue information about the internal and external security, public order, and public health of the country, with the sole intention of creating anxiety, fear, or panic among the public, in a way that is conducive to disrupting public peace, will be sentenced to imprisonment from one year to three years. In addition, if the perpetrator commits the crime by concealing his/her real identity or within the framework of the activities of an organization, the penalty will be increased by half. Furthermore, according to the following Article 218 titled "Common Provision", if this offense is committed through the press and broadcasting, the penalty to be imposed will be increased by half. However, according to the same provision, statements of opinion that do not exceed the limits of reporting and are made for criticism will not constitute a crime.

While it was still at the proposal stage, the TCK 217/A regulation was met with criticism, especially from professional organizations of the press, claiming that it would destroy freedom of the press, target journalists and constitute a censorship regulation. Numerous protests were organized against the proposal and the regulation was at the center of criticism against the omnibus bill during the law-making process.⁶

A. The Crime of Disinformation with Data

In its implementation over the past year and a half, TPC 217/A has come into practice in a way that confirms the predictions of press professional organizations. The crime type has been the subject of

⁶ TGS Press Freedom Report 2022-2-2023, p. 30-31 <https://tgs.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/TGS-Basin-Ozgurlugu-Raporu-2022-2023.pdf> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024)

numerous investigations against journalists who covered the February 6, 2024 earthquakes, the mining accident in Elazığ İllic, and the elections.

According to the data detailed in the Annex, from October 2022 to April 2024, when the regulation entered into force, at least⁷,

- A total of 46 investigations were opened against 40 journalists.
- 10 journalists were detained.
- Four journalists were arrested.
- As a result of the investigations, 14 lawsuits were filed. Five cases resulted in acquittal. One case resulted in a 10-month prison sentence. In eight cases, the trial continues.
- 14 investigations were declared non-prosecution and 18 investigations are ongoing.

When we examine the investigation files, three points stand out:

1. Most of the investigations are based on police open-source investigation reports known as "virtual patrols". However, the Constitutional Court annulled this authorization in a ruling in 2020⁸, this decision is not being implemented. These reports, which constitute unlawful evidence, constitute the main element of the proceedings as the only evidence in the investigations.
2. The judicial authorities can issue indictments, conduct trials and even convict without any concrete evidence of the existence of the danger, assuming that the danger arises with the execution of the act, without a concrete danger occurring. However, in the article justification of the proposed law, it was stated that this crime is a crime of concrete danger, in other words, the occurrence of a real danger will be taken into account⁹. However, it seems that practitioners perceive Article 217/A of the TCC as an abstract danger offense. The existence of concrete danger is not examined in judicial processes.
3. Judicial authorities resort to arrest and judicial control measures in the absence of concrete evidence of strong suspicion of a criminal offense, without the legal conditions being met. In such investigations based on published news reports and social media posts, these measures are applied without the possibility of destroying the evidence, without any new evidence that needs to be collected, and without concrete evidence of suspicion of flight. In this regard, the judges issue blanket decisions without any justification. So much so that in some decisions we see that Article 217/A of the TCC is considered an automatic reason for arrest, even though it is not among the catalog crimes listed in Article 100 of the TCC, which regulates the conditions for arrest.

B. Constitutional Court TCK 217/A Decision

Due to its vague wording, TCK 217/A, which raises serious debates in terms of the principle of legality in crime and punishment, was subject to an annulment lawsuit by the main opposition CHP immediately after its publication in the Official Gazette. Although many journalists were investigated for nearly a year on this charge, the Constitutional Court did not even include the case on its agenda.

In early November 2023, t24 writer Tolga Şardan was detained and arrested in a police raid on his home in Ankara as part of an ex official investigation launched by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office into his article titled "*What's in the 'judicial report' submitted by MIT to the Presidency?*". The Constitutional Court took the case to its agenda. Professional organizations, democratic mass organizations, and political parties held vigils and protests at the door of the Constitutional Court to demand the annulment of the regulation. However, the high court, which examined the regulation at its session on November 8, 2023,

⁸ Constitutional Court, E.2018/91, K.2020/10, 19/02/2020, <https://normkararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/ND/2020/10?EsasNo=2018%2F91> (Accessed 04.04.2024), TGS Press Freedom Report 2020-2021, p. 84.
⁹ <https://tgs.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TGS-BASIN-OZGURLUGU-RAPORU.pdf>
⁹ <https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem27/yil01/ss340.pdf> (Accessed 04.04.2024).

rejected the annulment request with a majority vote of seven members against five and found the regulation constitutional. The rationale for the decision was announced about three months later¹⁰.

In its majority opinion, the high court stated that the regulation meets the conditions of legality, the material and moral elements of the crime, the nature and amount of the sanction for the crime, and the qualified forms of the crime are clearly and regulated in the rule in a way that leaves no room for any doubt, and therefore the rule is not ambiguous and unpredictable. In the justification of the decision, it was also stated that the rule has a legitimate purpose to protect and ensure public order and security, and that the dissemination of untrue information in a manner conducive to disrupting public peace may jeopardize important public interests related to the country's internal and external security, public order and public health, and that the regulation introduced by the rule is intended to meet a compelling social need, considering that the said information will not contribute to public debate.

According to the Constitutional Court, the following conditions must be met for this offense to occur:

1. The perpetrator knows that the information is false
2. The information is related to the country's internal and external security, public order, and public health
3. Public dissemination of information in a manner conducive to disrupting public peace (In this respect, while judicial authorities are evaluating whether an act constitutes a crime under the rule, it is obligatory to demonstrate that it is conducive to disrupting public peace with evidence and/or facts).
4. The perpetrator has the sole motive of creating anxiety, fear, and panic among the public

According to the Constitutional Court, in the absence of any of the aforementioned conditions, the offense regulated in the rule will not occur.

On the other hand, President of the Constitutional Court Zühtü Arslan, Deputy President Hasan Tahsin Gökcan, member judges Engin Yıldırım, M. Emin Kuz, Yusuf Şevki Hakyemez, and Kenan Yaşar did not agree with this opinion. In their dissenting opinions, the judges drew attention to the ambiguity of the regulation and stated that it did not meet the requirements of legality and that the rule, which envisaged a prison sentence of up to three years, was contrary to freedom of expression.

Since the Constitutional Court, which issued a highly controversial decision, ruled on the merits of the case, the same norm cannot be reapplied for being unconstitutional until 10 years have passed since the decision was published in the Official Gazette. Therefore, TCK 217/A will continue to put pressure on freedom of expression and freedom of the press for at least another 10 years unless there is a change in the law.

¹⁰ AYM, E.2022/129, K.2023/189, 08/11/2023.
<https://normkararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/ND/2023/189?EsasNo=2022%2F129> (Date of Access: 14.04.2024)

VI. ATTACKS AND IMPUNITY

Journalists faced serious threats to their safety in the 2023-2024 period as well. Journalists, who were seen as targets in the political tension that increased between the two elections, were subjected to armed attacks in front of their homes, at their workplaces, while following the news, and on the streets. In this section, firstly, the physical and verbal attacks against journalists in the last year will be presented with numerical data, followed by information on the ongoing trials of unsolved murders of journalists that have been dragged into impunity.

According to the data available at¹¹ at least in the last year alone,

- **66 journalists were physically attacked.**
- **26 journalists were verbally threatened.**
- **1 media institution was targeted.**

The biggest reason for the increase in attacks on the press is undoubtedly the impunity with which journalist murder trials end. The dismissal of the Musa Anter case due to statute of limitations, the good behavior discount applied in the retrial of the Umut Case, the transfer of the Cemal Khashoggi case to Saudi Arabia, the failure to shed light on the darkness behind the murders of Uğur Mumcu and Hrant Dink despite all the time that has passed, embolden potential perpetrators.

If we look at the journalist murder cases in the last year,

A. Hrant Dink Assassination Trials

Hrant Dink, Editor-in-Chief of Agos Newspaper, was murdered on January 19, 2007. Efforts by his family, lawyers, and friends to shed light on his murder continue. In 2021, the verdict was delivered in the main trial¹². Currently, the trial is being conducted through three branches at the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court.

One of these cases is the ongoing trial of fugitive defendants such as Fethullah Gülen, Adem Yavuz Arslan, Ekrem Dumanlı, and former prosecutor Zekeriya Öz, whose files were separated from the main case in 2021.¹³ The other case continues in the court of first instance after the Court of Cassation overturned the verdict of the main case last year. On the other hand, after the Court of Cassation decision, the lawyers of the Dink Family applied to the Constitutional Court on the grounds of violation of the right to life and the right to know the truth and demanded a retrial¹⁴.

An important development in the case last year was the release of Dink's killer Ogün Samast. Samast was sentenced to 22 years and 10 months in prison on July 25, 2011, four years after the murder. Samast, who was released in November 2023, was also charged with "committing a crime on behalf of an armed terrorist organization without being a member of it".

The third case is a new file opened against some of the defendants, including some who have already been convicted. In this new case, which was initiated upon the filing of a criminal complaint against the suspects, 11 defendants, including Erhan Tuncel, Ramazan Akyürek, Yasin Hayal, and Ali Fuat Yılmaz, are charged with "Attempting to Overthrow the Constitutional Order", "Being a Member of an Armed Terrorist Organization" and "Intentional Killing". The case filed against Samast after his release was merged with this case on the grounds of actual and legal connection.

¹¹ Details of the attack data can be found in the Annex.

¹² TGS 2020-2021 Press Freedom Report, pp. 79-80.

<https://tgs.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2020-2021-BASIN-%C3%96ZG%C3%9CRL%C3%9C%C4%9E%C3%9C-RAPORU.pdf> (Date of Access: 29.03.2024).

¹³ Agos, "Dink Murder: Those whose files were separated are on trial"

<https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/29080/dink-cinayeti-dosyasi-tefrik-edilenler-yargilaniyor> (Date of Access: 29.03.2024).

¹⁴ Agos, "Dink Family lawyers apply to the Constitutional Court"

<https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/28921/dink-ailesi-avukatlari-anayasa-mahkemesi-ne-basvurdu> (Date of Access: 29.03.2024).

B. Uğur Mumcu Assassination Trial

On January 24, 1993, the Ankara 5th High Criminal Court continued to hear the case against Oğuz Demir, who is on trial on charges of "Violating the Constitutional Order" and who is allegedly wanted through Interpol as the person who caused the death of journalist Uğur Mumcu by planting a bomb in his car. Demir is thought to be responsible for 17 murders and actions, including the killing of journalist Ahmet Taner Kışlalı in a bomb attack in 1999¹⁵.

C. Jamal Khashoggi Murder Trial

The file of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in the Saudi Consulate General in Istanbul on October 2, 2018, was transferred to Saudi Arabia upon the opinion of the Ministry of Justice while the trial was ongoing. Objections against the decision were rejected. Thereupon, Khashoggi's fiancée Hatice Cengiz filed an individual application claiming that the right to life was violated due to the lack of effective investigation of the murder. With its decision dated 2023, the Constitutional Court¹⁶ ruled that the procedural aspect of the right to life regarding the conduct of an effective criminal investigation was not violated.

¹⁵ Bianet, "Day by day, three months of media/expression freedom violations (Full Text)" <https://bianet.org/haber/gun-gun-uc-aylik-medya-ifade-ozgurlugu-ihlalleri-tam-metin-290411> (Date of Access: 29.03.2024).

¹⁶ Constitutional Court, Hatice Cengiz, B. No: 2022/53952, 10/5/2023, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2022/53952> (Date of Access: 29.03.2024).

VII. INTERVENTIONS AGAINST THE INTERNET PRESS

Despite the violation and annulment decisions of the Constitutional Court, access blocking and content removal orders continued to be issued against many news contents published on, and news websites published on¹⁷ the internet were closed down.

According to the data we have access to¹⁸ at least in the last year,

- 5 sites were blocked,
- 395 news contents were blocked based on URL, 147 of them also removed from the content,
- Names or photographs were removed from 14 news contents,
- Decisions were made on 3 issues within the scope of the right to be forgotten.

A. Constitutional Court Decisions on Access Blocking

Last year, the Constitutional Court issued a second pilot decision on access blocking and content removal orders issued against websites on the grounds of violation of personal rights under Article 9 of Law No. 5651 on "Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Combating Crimes Committed through These Publications". In the application of Abdullah Kaya and others¹⁹ The Constitutional Court combined 502 applications and issued a new decision. One of these applications was the application made by TGS on behalf of Journo.com.tr²⁰.

In the 2021 Keskin Kalem Yayıncılık ve Ticaret A.Ş. and Others decision²¹ The Constitutional Court, which found that Article 9 constituted a structural problem and proposed solutions, decided to notify the TGNA and to postpone the examination of the applications made on the same subject and those to be made after the decision for one year from the date of publication of the decision in the Official Gazette. However, more than two years have passed and the TGNA has not taken any steps in this regard²⁰. In the Abdullah Kaya and Others judgment, the Constitutional Court noted that its first judgment was not implemented by the legislature and the executive and reiterated that the source of the interference was Article 9, which does not meet the requirements of legality, and ruled that the freedom of expression was violated. The Supreme Court also ruled that the right to an effective remedy in connection with freedom of expression was also violated, considering that the system envisaged under the aforementioned provision contains a structural problem in terms of the right to an effective remedy, given the fact that the objection requests made against the access blocking decisions are consistently rejected without taking into account the claims and demands of the objectors and without providing relevant and sufficient justification. The high court reminded the criminal judgeships of peace to examine the constitutionality of the legal provisions they will apply and, if necessary, to object to their unconstitutionality. The Court ruled that the finding of a violation did not eliminate the grievances, that the legislature did not make legal amendments to solve the structural problem identified in the pilot decision of the Constitutional Court, and that other public authorities did not take measures in this regard, and ruled that there was a legal interest in a retrial and awarded moral damages in favor of the applicants. Last year, the Constitutional Court issued another important annulment decision on access blocking decisions within the scope of norm review. Article 9 of Law No. 5651 was amended by Omnibus Law No. 6158 in 2014. Article 9, which was the subject of an annulment case, was annulled by the Constitutional Court's decision dated 2023²². In its reasoning, the Court referred to the Keskin Kalem Yayıncılık ve Ticaret A.Ş. and others' decision and ruled that the decision would enter into force nine months after its publication in the Official Gazette, i.e. on 10.10.2024.

17 See "iii. Constitutional Court Decisions on Blocking Access" under the heading "Individual Application and Norm Supervision" under the section "Judgments".

18 The details of the interventions against the online press can be found in the Annex.

19 Constitutional Court Abdullah Kaya and others, B. No: 2016/1430, 22/11/2023, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2016/1430> (Date of Access: 05.04.2024).

20 In an article published on Journo titled "In the last 3 months, Cumhuriyet and BirGün's news were blocked the most", the announcements of the Freedom of Expression Association were compiled. Upon the application of Bilal Erdoğan, the son of AKP Chairman and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Istanbul Anatolian 10th Criminal Judgeship of Peace issued a decision to "block access and remove the content from publication." <https://journo.com.tr/bilal-erdogan-sansur-aym-karar-journo> (Access Date: 05.04.2024).

21 Constitutional Court, Keskin Kalem Yayıncılık ve Ticaret A.Ş. and others [GK], B. No: 2018/14884, 27/10/2021, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2018/14884> (Accessed on 05.04.2024).

22 Constitutional Court, E.2020/76, K.2023/172, 11/10/2023, <https://normkararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/ND/2023/172?EsasNo=2020%2F76> (Date of Access: 05.04.2024).

VIII. INTERVENTIONS AGAINST PRESS ORGANIZATIONS

A. RTÜK Interventions

Once again this year, RTÜK imposed high fines on media outlets for their news and critical program contents. According to the Supreme Council Decisions, the details of which are presented in the Annex, election period broadcasts and criticism of the government were heavily penalized²³,

- There were 38 separate administrative fines imposed on media outlets, totaling 40,744,956.00 TL. The highest of these fines was a single administrative fine of 13,394,147.00 TL imposed on Fox TV (Later Now TV).
- TELE1 received the highest number of administrative fines with 12 decisions, while Halk TV was fined seven, Flash Haber TV six, and Fox TV four times.
- 16 broadcast suspension orders were issued.
- TELE1's screen was blacked out for seven days.
- When we examine the justifications for the decisions made by RTÜK during last year, we see that 34.2 percent of the them were based on the principle of clause (ç) of the first paragraph of the 8th article of Law No. 6112 which says "*Media Services ...shall not be contrary to human dignity and the principle of respect to privacy, shall not include disgracing, degrading or defamatory expressions against persons or organizations beyond the limits of criticism...*"; 21 percent of the decisions were based on the clause (i) "*News bulletins and news programmes shall be predicated on the principles of impartiality, truthfulness and accuracy and shall not impede the free formation of opinions within the society; the news that can be investigated within the framework of journalistic code of ethics shall not be broadcast without having been investigated and assured of its accuracy...*"; 13,1 percent were based on clause (b) "shall not incite the society to hatred and hostility by making discrimination on the grounds of race, language, religion, sex, class, region and sect or shall not constitute any feelings of hatred in the society" ; 10,5 percent were based on clause (f) "*Media services ...shall not be contrary to the national and moral values of the society, general morality and the principle of protection of family.*"; and 7.8 percent of the fines were based on violations of the principle in clause (d): "*Broadcasting services ...shall not present the act, the perpetrators and the victims of terror in a way serving for the interests of the terror.*"

Table 5: Distribution of Fines Imposed by RTÜK between April 2023 and April 2024 by Institutions

Name of Institution	Number of Decision	Administrative Fine	Broadcast Suspension
Fox TV/Now TV	4	35.167.003,00 TL	-
Halk TV	7	2.691.916,00 TL	5 times program blocking
TELE1	12	1.078.978,00 TL	7 days broadcast suspension 3 times program blocking
Flash Haber TV	1	514.428,00 TL	5 times program blocking
SZC	1	429.049,00 TL	

²³ You can find the details of RTÜK decisions in the **Annex**.

KRT	4	342.952,00 TL	3 times program blocking
TGRT	1	213.294,00 TL	-
TV52	1	135.860,00 TL	-
İlke TV	1	85.738,00 TL	-
Cadde TV	1	85.738,00 TL	-

Access was also blocked to Deutsche Welle (DW) and DW Turkish, as well as to the addresses of amerikaninsesi.com and VOA Turkish, which were blocked in 2022 upon RTÜK's request for not applying for a license.

B. Press Advertisement Agency Interventions

In its pilot individual application decision dated 2022, the Constitutional Court ruled that the arbitrary fines imposed by the Press Advertisement Agency violated freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The high court ruled that Article 49 titled "Sanctions" of Law No. 195 on the Organization of the Press Advertisement Agency, which is the basis of the fines, should be revised as it constitutes a structural problem and that the examination of the applications to be filed after the decision should be postponed for one-year²⁴. However, although more than two years have passed since the publication of the decision, no regulation has been made on this issue, and the regulation has not even been put on the parliamentary agenda.

On the other hand, it is worth briefly mentioning the lawsuits filed against BİK. As is known, with its decision dated August 22, 2022, the institution completely canceled the advertisements and advertisements it had not given to the Evrensel newspaper since 2019. The grounds for the decision were that readers bought more than one newspaper from dealers and that the institution's subscriptions and registration books were not kept regularly. Evrensel newspaper filed an appeal to BİK against the cancellation decision, but BİK rejected the appeal because no reasonable and acceptable grounds were presented. Following the decision, Evrensel newspaper took the process to court in December 2022²⁵. As a result of the trial, Istanbul's 2nd Administrative Court dismissed the case with its decision dated 30/11/2023 and numbered 2023/300 E. 2023/2915 K. The court concluded that there was no violation of the law in the actions subject to the lawsuit regarding the termination of the right to publish official announcements and advertisements, since it was understood that the minimum actual sales condition required by the legislation was not met, excluding the bulk sales made in terms of the plaintiff newspaper. The newspaper took its legal struggle to the Court of Appeal.

Like Evrensel, another organization that took the process to court was the Association of Journalists. There was an important development in this case. Bakırköy 9th Civil Court of First Instance filed an application to the Constitutional Court in the lawsuit filed by the Association of Journalists against the

²⁴ For a review of the decision, see TGS 2022-2023 Press Freedom Report <https://tgs.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/TGS-Basin-Ozgurlugu-Raporu-2022-2023.pdf> p. 42-43. Constitutional Court General Assembly on 10/3/2022, Yeni Gün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık A.Ş. and others (B. No: 2016/5903) application, <https://kararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/BB/2016/5903> (Access Date: 04.04.2024)

²⁵ Evrensel, "Press Advertisement Agency rejected our objection for the 2nd time: Evrensel's court process begins" <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/477084/basin-ilan-kurumu-itirazimizi-2-kez-reddetti-evrenselin-mahkeme-sureci-basliyor> (Date of Access: 04.04.2024).

²⁶ On the other hand, in the lawsuit filed by the TGS and the Journalists' Association against the 10th Chamber of the Council of State with E. 2022/5473 regarding the annulment of the General Assembly Decision on the Principles of Press Ethics dated 27/05/2022 and numbered 216, a request was made for the unconstitutionality of Article 49 of Law No. 195, which is the basis of the transaction subject to the lawsuit. Although the request for stay of execution was rejected by majority vote in the decision dated 23/02/2023, it was stated in the letters of the examining judge and dissenting votes that an application for unconstitutionality should be made. Upon the objection filed by the plaintiff institutions against the stay of execution decision, 5 out of 13 members voted against the unconstitutionality of the regulation in the rejection decision of the Council of State Administrative Appeals Board dated 18/05/2023 with YD Appeal No. 2023/256.

official advertisement cut-off penalty imposed by BİK on 24 Saat Newspaper, of which it is the concessionaire. The court of first instance asked the Constitutional Court to annul Article 49 titled "Sanction" of Law No. 195 on the Organization of the Press Advertisement Agency²⁶. In its decision, Bakırköy 9th Civil Court of First Instance stated that the conditions regarding the penalties for cutting off official announcements and advertisements should be framed, and in its reasoning, the court said, *"The procedures for cutting off official announcements and advertisements in Article 49 of the Law. "While determining the scope of the official announcement and advertisement cut-off procedure in Article 49 of the Law, balancing criteria should be taken into consideration and it should be taken into account that the relevant rules should be designed to allow as narrow an area of application as possible and that their use should be specific to situations necessitated by an urgent social need, in this context, which legal consequences will be attached to which behaviors or facts and what kind of intervention authority will arise for institutional authorities in this context should be revealed with a certain degree of certainty, within this framework, Article 49. In this framework, the limits of the protection offered by Article 49 to increase the ethical qualities of the press should be clarified. Criteria such as determining a criterion/threshold value should be established as to which actions will violate these qualities, and it has been necessary to decide to apply for an appeal to the AYM with the request for annulment due to the unconstitutionality of Article 49 of the said Law No. 195."*



Photo: Sinan Tartanoğlu

IX. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

In the last year, several changes were made in press legislation. Institutional arrangements were made in the Regulation of the Press Advertisement Agency²⁷, and for the first time since 1977, the General Assembly Decision on the Press Advertisement Agency-Lending Money and Aids was amended²⁸. In addition to these regulations, the execution of some articles of the Regulation on Official Advertisements and Advertising published in 2023 was suspended and important amendments were published. In this report, we will discuss the legislative amendments concerning freedom of the press. In the following section, we will discuss the amendments made by the European Freedom of the Media Act.

A. Amendment to the Regulation on Official Announcements and Advertisements

Following the entry into force of Law No. 7418, a new Regulation on Official Announcements and Advertisements was published on February 1, 2023²⁹. A partial stay of execution was granted in the lawsuit filed by the Journalists' Union of Turkey and the Journalists' Association against some of the unlawful provisions of this regulation with the 10th Chamber of the Council of State with the number 2023/2938 E. Following this decision, two separate amendments were made to the regulation.

i. December 8, 2023, dated Regulation Amendment³⁰

With the amendment made on December 8, 2023, BİK established a measurement tool called *BİK Analitik*, which collects visitor traffic information of internet news websites. The Regulation stipulates that if websites use blocking applications or do not take the necessary measures regarding this measurement tool, which entered into force as of January 1, 2024, their traffic information will be considered zero, the conditions of use and technical details of this measurement tool will be determined by the General Directorate and announced on the website of the Agency. It was also regulated that an audit will be conducted once a year by the institution determined by the Board of Directors among the authorized independent audit institutions on whether the measurement of BİK Analytics is accurate or not and that this institution must be authorized by the Public Oversight, Accounting, and Auditing Standards Authority according to the Turkish Auditing Standards. In addition, the mandatory sales price to be stated on the first page of the issue of each publication day was increased from 1.5 to 4 Turkish liras for local and regional newspapers and from 2 to 6 Turkish liras for mainstream newspapers. A regulation has been added stating that commission-free invoices issued for the sale of newspapers will not be taken into account in the calculation of actual sales.

ii. October 4, 2023 Decision on Stay of Execution

In the lawsuit filed by the Journalists' Union of Turkey and the Journalists' Association and heard by the 10th Chamber of the Council of State with E. 2023/2938, the court partially accepted the request for a stay of execution with its decision dated 04.10.2023³¹.

The decision suspended the requirement for newspapers and online news websites employing writers to publish their columns at least twice every seven days.

Again, the duration of the sanction to be imposed by the BİK Board of Directors to cut official announcements and advertisements was uncertain. The 10th Chamber of the Council of State ruled for a

27 Amendment dated 22.06.2023 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2023/06/20230622-1.htm>,

Amendment dated 16.09.2023 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2023/09/20230916-22.htm>,

Amendment dated 06.03.2024 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2024/03/20240306-4.htm> (Access Date: 01.04.2024).

28 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2024/02/20240226-9.pdf> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024).

29 TGS 2022-2023 Press Freedom Report p. 31-32. <https://tgs.org.tr/tgs-basin-ozgurlugu-raporu-2022-2023/> (Access Date: 01.04.2024).

30 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2023/12/20231208-2.htm> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024)

31 It was decided to suspend the execution of the phrase "...and the phrase "...and the phrase "...and the phrase "...from this date..." in the 2nd sentence of the 6th paragraph of Article 107, "...according to the period determined..." in the 2nd sentence of the 6th paragraph of Article 107, and the phrase "...from this date..." in the 3rd paragraph of Article 111.

stay of execution on the grounds that the mandatory provision of the Law had been exceeded.

Another regulation whose execution was suspended was the provision regulating the resumption of the right to publish official announcements, stating that if the violation that led to the suspension of the right to publish is determined to have been remedied as a result of the audit, the right to publish will be resumed effective from this date. However, there was uncertainty as to whether the date in this provision was the date on which the violation was determined to have been remedied or the date on which the violation ended. The Court suspended this provision as well..

iii. Amendment dated March 6, 2024

BOOn March 6, 2024, the Press Advertisement Agency amended the Regulation on Official Announcements and Advertisements dated 2023³² by introducing several changes in addition to the three regulations whose execution was suspended.

Following the suspension of the requirement that those who employ writers for newspapers and online news websites must publish their own articles at least twice every seven days, the requirement that these writers must publish their own opinions and thoughts on social issues once every seven days has been suspended.

The uncertainty regarding the duration of the sanction to be imposed by the BİK Board of Directors to cut off official advertisements and advertisements was clarified with the amendment to the regulation as follows: *"If the Board of Directors decides to cut off official advertisements and advertisements for a period not exceeding two months, the application is made by reducing the indicators in the monthly official advertisement quota and distribution tables. If there is only one newspaper or internet news website in the place of publication or quota, the procedure shall be applied in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 112."*

In the article regulating the resumption of the suspended right to publish official announcements, the ambiguity in the regulation on the date from which the right to publish will be resumed if it is determined that the violation that caused the suspension of the right to publish has been eliminated as a result of the audit, has been resolved with the addition of the date on which the violation has been eliminated.

In addition to these regulations, with the amendment to the regulation dated March 6, 2024, the unique visitor regulation, which is one of the conditions for Internet news websites to receive an advertisement, was changed from a visitor logging in to the Internet news website from the same IP and counted only once to each unique visitor logging in during the day. In addition, according to the regulation that stipulates that internet news websites must have four opinion workers to be included in the General Category, the qualifications and number of people who can be included in the opinion worker positions have also been changed. Accordingly, those who are students of daytime education and secondary education (excluding open and distance education) in another province, those who have been recruited for military service, and those on unpaid leave will not be able to take part in the staff of opinion workers. In cooperatives, it is regulated that managers, members of the board of directors and supervisory boards, and persons authorized to represent publications belonging to themselves or others cannot be included in the staff of intellectual workers. Graduates of master's or doctoral programs in the field of communication have also been added to the list of intellectual workers who can be included in the staff. Adjustments were made in sales and printing additional indicators. In addition, the procedures and principles regarding the rules that internet news websites must comply with technically will be determined by the Board of Directors. The conditions that internet news websites must fulfill to be included in the General Category have been regulated in detail. Regulations were also made regarding the 24-month waiting period for online news websites to publish official advertisements and the six-month waiting period, which is an exception to this period..

³² <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2024/03/20240306-5.htm>

B. European Media Freedom Act³³

In March 2024, the European Union's first legal instrument in this area, the Media Freedom Act, was approved. For the first time, the law provides legal safeguards for journalists to protect their news sources and limits the use of spyware by governments against them. It also binds media outlets outside the EU and requires financial transparency disclosures.

In September 2022, the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union, presented the first draft of the Media Freedom Act. The process moved forward and the European Parliament, the Union's legislative body, approved the draft by 464 votes to 92. 65 MEPs abstained.

It will be sent to the EU Council, which includes ministers from the member states, where it must be approved by a two-thirds majority. Only Hungary is against the law. It is therefore expected to be approved in its current form. Six to 15 months after the Council's approval, all articles of the law will enter into force across the EU.

The new law gives all EU governments the responsibility to protect media freedom more effectively and not interfere with their editorial independence. It also aims to prevent large media monopolies, prevent political interference in journalism, protect journalists, and combat disinformation on platforms.

In this context, government and state authorities in the EU shall not,

- Put pressure on journalists and editors to reveal their news sources (detention, searches, and other sanctions);
- Use spyware against journalists, except in exceptional cases;
- Use public media for political purposes through staffing (hiring and firing managers) and financing (public advertising, etc.) practices that undermine editorial independence.

Some articles of the Media Freedom Act also bind news organizations in non-EU countries, including Turkey. These articles require news organizations to report the state support they receive. As in the EU, media outlets in non-EU countries will also have to transparently disclose their ownership structure and sources of income.

A new EU institution called the "European Board for Media Services" will be created to implement the law. It remains to be seen how this body will enforce the law and how far states will adhere to it. For example, it is not yet clear what will happen if a media outlet in a country fails to report whether it receives state funding.

Although it is reported that civil society organizations can take media outlets that do not comply with transparency rules to court, in countries with a problematic legal system, such as Hungary, it is possible that the issue could go all the way to the European Court of Justice and start a legal process that could take years.

During the drafting and negotiation of the law, the European Parliament demanded a complete ban on the use of spyware such as Pegasus and Predator against journalists. The use of this software in Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Spain has already been revealed. However, several member states, including France, Italy, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, and Finland, opposed a total ban. They argued that communications between journalists and news outlets could be monitored if necessary for national security reasons.

In response, the relevant articles in the draft law were softened. In the end, no total ban was imposed, but it was put into law that states could only resort to this measure as a "last resort". However, even in exceptional cases on national security grounds, the journalist concerned will be informed that his or her communications are being monitored and will have the right to appeal in court. Despite some concessions and uncertainties, journalism organizations generally see the law as an important step forward for media freedom in Europe.

³³ This section of the report is taken verbatim from Journo's "European Media Freedom Act".
<https://journo.com.tr/avrupa-medya-ozgurlugu-yasasi> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024).



Photo: TGS Archive

X. SECTOR OVERVIEW

A. General Evaluation of the Business Line

Founded on July 10, 1952, TGS operates in the 'Press, Publication and Journalism' business line, which is branch number eight. In January and July of each year, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security publishes statistics on the number of registered workers in the country, the number of unionized workers within this number, and the unionization rate. According to the latest statistics released in January 2024, the total number of registered employees in our industry is 96,675. In the previous period (July 2023), this number was 97,720. The number of employees in the sector seems to be on a downward trend in the long term. For example, in January 2013 statistics, the number of registered workers in the sector was 104 thousand 141. When the January 2013 and January 2024 periods are taken into account, it is understood that the currently registered employment in the line of business has contracted by 7.17%.

B. Number of Employees in Press Organizations

In addition to the data released by the Ministry in the relevant months, the monthly lists of workplaces³⁴, which are accessible only to union executives, also provide important data on the number of registered journalists. According to the research we conducted on these lists, the number of registered employees in journalism businesses and the change in the last four years are as follows:

³⁴ These data, which are released by the Ministry at the beginning of each month, can only be seen by union headquarters executives. Access is closed to the public. This data is based on the "Workplace List" announced by the Ministry in April 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Table 6: Number of Registered Employees in Enterprises Engaged in Journalism Activities (2020-2024)

Class	Number of Employees				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Publishing newspapers	9.748	10.105	10.148	11.934	12.145
Television programming and broadcasting activities	7.139	8.038	8.354	9.341	9.666
Activities of news agencies	3.920	4.097	4.378	4.969	5.281
Radio broadcasting	945	1.184	1.027	997	951
Total	21.752	23.424	23.907	27.241	28.043

Table 6 shows that the number of registered employees in enterprises engaged in journalistic activities has been on an upward trend in the last four years. The highest number of employees is in the "publishing of newspapers" class, while the lowest number of employees is in the "radio broadcasting" class. Although journalists constitute the overwhelming majority of the total number, this number also includes administrative staff, which can be considered auxiliary jobs in journalism³⁵.

C. Directorate of Communications Does Not Provide Information on Press Card Ownership

In previous years, we were able to compare the number of registered employees in journalistic businesses with the number of journalists holding official press cards and reach a more accurate conclusion. However, for the last two years, the Directorate of Communications has not responded positively to our requests in this regard. Our applications for information on this issue are evaluated negatively in accordance with Article 7 of the Right to Information Law, which states that "*Institutions and organizations may respond negatively to applications for information or documents that can be generated as a result of a separate or special study, research, examination or analysis.*"

We do not know what has changed at the Directorate of Communications, which until the last two years responded positively to our requests for information in this regard. However, we do know that our appeal to the Right to Information Evaluation Board was concluded positively. On the other hand, we would like to share that we did not receive any positive feedback from the Directorate until the report was finalized.

To summarize, considering the data for 2024, the ratio of the number of registered employees in the "Press, Broadcasting and Journalism" sector (28,43), who we believe to be practicing the profession of journalism, to the total number of registered employees (96,675) is approximately 29%.

D. Two Threats: Unemployment and Precarious Employment

Unemployment and precarious forms of employment continued to rank among the top obstacles to freedom of the press in this period.

According to the data announced by TurkStat on March 25, 2024³⁶,

1. In 2023, the number of unemployed persons aged 15 years and above decreased by 318 thousand persons compared to the previous year and became 3 million 264 thousand persons. The unemployment rate decreased by 1.0 points to 9.4%.
2. In 2023, the youth unemployment rate, which covers the 15-24 age group, decreased by 2.0 points compared to the previous year and became 17.4%.

³⁵ In order to compare the available data with the data of the Social Security Institution (SSI) and to present a clearer picture, the Union made an information request to the relevant institution on 12.01.2024 on the basis of occupational codes. However, as in 2022 and 2023, the SSI did not provide information to our Union this year without any justification.

³⁶ TurkStat "Labor Force Statistics, 2023", <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-2023-53521> (Date of access: 30.03.2024).

3. The unemployment rate among college and faculty graduates declined from 11.3% in 2022 to 9.8% in 2023.
4. The unemployment rate among journalism graduates declined from 15.7% in 2022 to 12.7% in 2023.
5. In 2023, journalism graduates (12.7%) continued to have the third highest unemployment rate after social services (21.5%) and manufacturing and business (15.6%) graduates.

These data suggest that the unemployment rate among journalism graduates is higher than the general unemployment rate. On the other hand, TurkStat has announced that it will make a new adjustment in its calculations in 2022 in line with international standards³⁷. For example, according to TurkStat data, the unemployment rate among journalism graduates was 23.8% in 2018, 21.8% in 2019 and 28.2% in 2020. In 2021, when the new calculation was applied for the first time, this rate was measured as 18.3%. In 2022, it was 15.7%, and in 2023 it continued its downward trend with 12.7%.

With this new calculation method, the upward trend in the unemployment rate has been broken and the decline seems to have continued in 2023. Regardless of the calculation method, even if we assume that unemployment among journalism graduates has decreased, the fact that it continues to be the third segment with the highest unemployment rate calls for reflection.

This level of unemployment puts pressure on both entry into and duration of active employment and threatens the job and income security and collective rights of working journalists. The results of our interviews and observations are very similar to those of last year:

1. The common wage level in local media, with exceptions, is the minimum wage,
2. Before starting to work informally, journalists were forced to work in many media organizations (including online media), regardless of whether local or national, under the name of "royalty" or "intern", sometimes unpaid, sometimes below the minimum wage and without insurance,
3. The de facto disappearance of promotion raises in media outlets, whether local or national (the gap between the salaries of senior journalists and new hires has closed to a large extent),
4. Many local media organizations do not employ more journalists than the number of staff required to receive advertisements from the Press Advertisement Agency (BİK),
5. The vagueness of the job description offered in recruitment processes or the expectation to perform more than one job (editor, reporter, photojournalist, editing operator, voice-over, etc.) for a low salary,
6. Especially in local media organizations, news monitoring through agencies is preferred instead of employing reporters,
7. Long working hours are imposed on journalists in media organizations lacking union guarantees, and overtime work is not paid,
8. We find that journalists in media organizations lacking union guarantees have almost no bargaining rights over wages and working conditions.

In addition to unemployment and precarious working conditions, the wrong economic program implemented in the country and the high inflation caused by it also put pressure on the economic and social rights of journalists. Under conditions of constant depreciation of the Turkish lira and constant increases in basic consumer goods, the gains achieved through CBAs in authorized enterprises are very short-lived. Additional protocols, which come into play as a solution, act as a brake against economic and social losses.

E. A Struggle for Dignity: Trade Union Activity

The TGS is trying to dispel the pessimism caused by unemployment and precarious employment in the sector through its organizing campaigns. The table below shows the unionization rates in the sector according to the latest Ministry data and the contribution of the TGS to the unionization rate in the sector:

37 "Should we rejoice? According to TÜİK, unemployment among journalism graduates decreased by 10 points in one year", <https://journom.com.tr/gazetecilik-istihdam-verileri-egitim-tuik> (Date of access: 19.03.2024)

Table 7: Number and Rates of Unionization in the Line of Business

Period	TGS	Medya-İş	Basın-İş (TÜRK-İŞ)	Basın İş (DİSK)	Lider Medya Sen	Basın Pol-Sen
January 2024	2087 / %2,16	6599 / %6,83	2626 / %2,72	397 / %0,42	1 / %0,01	7 / %0,01

This table contains information on the number and membership rates of the six unions operating in the "Press, Publishing and Journalism" sector. According to the data, only three unions are authorized to sign collective agreements (exceeding the 1% threshold).

In general comparison, "Press, Publishing and Journalism" is the ninth sector with the lowest unionization rate of 12.15% among the 20 sectors³⁸. In a sector where the majority are non-unionized and precarious, where unemployment puts pressure on economic and social rights, the TGS is working with all its strength to organize new workplaces.

TGS's authorized institutions and contract start dates as of April 2024 are as follows:

Table 8: Enterprises Authorized by TGS

Number	Institution	Beginning of CBA
1	Evrensel	July 2014
2	Bianet	February 2016
3	Dokuz Eylül	September 2017
4	Reuters	April 2019
5	Refinitiv	April 2019
6	Gazete Duvar	June 2019
7	Podfresh	January 2020
8	İz Newspaper	March 2021
9	AFP	March 2021
10	BBC	August 2021
11	AP	October 2021
12	Dokuz8 News	February 2022
13	Medya A.Ş.	March 2022
14	Yenigün	July 2023
15	EPA	December 2023
16	Diken	December 2023
17	ANKA	December 2023
18	Artı Gerçek	January 2024
19	Artı TV	January 2024

In addition to this table, there are also media outlets where the TGS has the majority but the process has been taken to the judiciary due to the employers' objection to the authorization, or where the strike continues. These organizations can be seen in the two tables below:

³⁸ Working Life Statistics, <https://www.csgeb.gov.tr/istatistikler/calisma-hayati-istatistikleri/sendikal-istatistikler/isci-sayilari-ve-sendikalarin-uye-sayilari-hakkinda-tebligler/>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

Table 9: Workplaces in the Judicial Phase

Number	Institution	Start of Trial
1	Hürriyet	November 2019
2	Halk TV	June 2021
3	Discovery Channel	November 2023

Table 10: Workplace Where Strike Continues

Number	Institution	Start of Strike
1	Sputnik	August 17, 2023

When we evaluate the last three tables together, the following four elements stand out:

1. TGS is an authorized union in 19 different enterprises in total.
2. Considering only the media sector, TGS is authorized in 17 out of 19 enterprises with collective bargaining agreements³⁹.
3. TGS continues to grow despite employers' objections to authorization, protracted lawsuits for authorization, and employers' threats to fire members during this process.
4. The TGS stands out as the only union among journalists with a history and experience of organizing.

F. AFP and Sputnik Strikes

During the reporting period, union members went on strike for their economic and social rights in two workplaces. These were the AFP and Sputnik Turkey offices.

The strike at AFP's Turkey bureau began on May 3, 2023, World Press Freedom Day, after negotiations broke down. In this respect, the strike was a first in the history of the Turkish press. The strike ended on the ninth day after a reasonable offer was made and approved by the members⁴⁰.

The strike at Sputnik Turkey's Istanbul and Ankara bureaus failed to achieve a similar result. The struggle, with its causes and consequences, has taken its place in the history of the Turkish press.

i. The Company Defying the Constitution: Sputnik

Journalists working in the Sputnik Turkey liaison offices, whose trade name is "Rossiya Segodnya International News Agency", became members of the TGS in 2022. In January 2023, the required majority was achieved at Sputnik. The TGS then applied for authorization to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. The Ministry declared our union authorized on January 16, 2023.

In February 2023, TGS and the Sputnik employer began negotiations. Despite all the goodwill and solution-oriented proposals of the members, the employer did not make any proposals, especially on wages, and the negotiations broke down in July 2023. As there was no agreement within the official timeframe, the Ministry appointed a mediator. The employer did not come with an offer at the mediation stage either. Due to the employer's uncompromising attitude, no agreement was reached. In accordance with the legal process, on July 24, 2023, TGS posted a "strike notice" in both Ankara and Istanbul offices of Sputnik. In a statement made during the strike announcement, the union invited the employer to the negotiation table and to reach an agreement⁴¹.

Despite our efforts, the Sputnik employer and Turkish managers of the company forced our members to

³⁹ This calculation includes TRT and AA, where Medya İş is authorized.

⁴⁰ For more information on the strike and its consequences: "We have a dream: We will put an end to jungle laws in the media sector", May 14, 2023, <https://journos.com.tr/reuters-afp-tgs-grev-zafer> (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

⁴¹ "TGS hangs strike decision at Sputnik", July 24, 2023, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/495411/tgs-sputnikte-grev-kararini-asti>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

resign, ignoring the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Turkey. Persuasion rooms were set up in their offices, employees were asked whether they were members or not, and they were pressured to resign. During this process, the employer moved its office in Yenibosna, Istanbul to Süzer Plaza in Şişli, Istanbul, where the monthly rent was hundreds of thousands of liras. At the same time, it informed the union and the ministry that it would carry out mass layoffs "for economic reasons".

On August 7, 2023, 24 TGS members, four from the Ankara bureau and 20 from the Istanbul bureau were dismissed. In response to this intimidation by the employer, TGS went on strike on August 17, 2023⁴².

ii. Intolerance of Strike Declaration

With the announcement of a strike at Sputnik Turkey offices, the union has been subjected to more attacks, insults, and black propaganda than ever before. The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and labor legislation have been openly insulted by the employer of Sputnik, owned by the Russian Federation. First, on July 24, 2023, the strike notice posted on the Sputnik Ankara office door was illegally removed and thrown away by the employer's official in Ankara, Elena Kocetkova⁴³. After the strike started, black and dirty anti-union propaganda was carried out by the employer's representatives, scabs, and their political supporters. A statement by the union exposed the malicious statements and scabs.

The unionized Sputnik employees withstood all these attacks and continued their struggle with the support of the Turkish public⁴⁴.

iii. Joint Parliamentary Question by 10 MPs with Journalist Origins

Ten MPs from five different political parties with journalist backgrounds submitted a parliamentary question to Minister of Labor and Social Security Vedat Işıkhan about the strike and called on the ministry to take responsibility⁴⁵. During the 2024 budget talks of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey's Planning and Budget Commission, MPs also asked Minister Işıkhan about the illegal actions of the Sputnik employer⁴⁶. Representatives of political parties and MPs who visited the picket lines declared that they would not give any comments or statements to Sputnik during the strike⁴⁷. Then CHP Group Chairman Özgür Özel also visited the strike site in Ankara and said that the CHP would not give any comment to Sputnik during the strike⁴⁸. Intellectuals, artists, writers and representatives of democratic mass organizations also participated in this solidarity.

iv. The first demonstration in Taksim after the Gezi Resistance

The ban on meetings and demonstrations in and around Taksim Square was overcome by the unions of the Istanbul Trade Union Branches Platform (İSŞP), which organized a march in support of the Sputnik strike. The massive and spectacular solidarity action was the first mass gathering of trade unions in Taksim Square after the Gezi Resistance⁴⁹.

42 TGS, "Now it's GREV time", August 17, 2023, <https://tgs.org.tr/simdi-grev-zamani/>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

Note: At the time of writing, the legal strike at the workplace was still ongoing.

43 The strike notice was put up by the same person after a legal warning by the Union.

44 TGS, "Susmadık, sinmedik, vazgeçmeyeceğiz", September 13, 2023, <https://tgs.org.tr/susmadik-sinmedik-vazgecmeyecegiz/>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

45 TGS, "Question on Sputnik strike from 10 MPs with journalist roots", September 28, 2023, <https://tgs.org.tr/gazeteci-kokenli-10-vekil-den-sputnik-greviyle-iglli-soru-nergisi/>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

46 Anka News Agency, "OPPOSITION MPs ASK MINISTER İŞIKHAN ABOUT TGS'S SPUTNIK STRIKE: 'YOU ARE SILENT ABOUT THE SLAUGHTER BY A RUSSIAN COMPANY'", November 2, 2023, https://ankahaber.net/haber/detay/muhalefet_milletvekilleri_bakan_isikhana_tgsnin_sputnik_grevini_sordu_bir_rus_firmasin_in_yapmis_oldugu_kiyima_ses_siz_kaliyor_sunuz_158463, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

Anka News Agency, "BURCU KÖKSAL ASKED MINISTER İŞIKHAN ABOUT JOURNALISTS FIRED FROM SPUTNIK TURKEY: 'DO YOU HAVE WORK ON THE REJECTION OF 24 SENDIKA MEMBERS TO WORK, GUARANTEED BY CBA?'", November 2, 2023, <https://x.com/dokuz8haber/status/1720053894946885760>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

47 Gazete Duvar, "Sputnik strike is on its 13th day: Support came from politicians", August 29, 2023, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/sputnikte-grev-13-gununde-siyasilerden-des-tek-geldi-haber-1635082>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

48 BirGün, "Özgür Özel'den Sputnik strike visit", August 30, 2023, <https://www.birgun.net/haber/ozgur-ozel-den-sputnik-grevine-ziyaret-464788>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024)

49 Gazete Duvar, "İstanbul Labor Unions Branches Platform'ndan Sputnik strike'ine destek", 22 October 2023, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/istanbul-isci-sindikalari-subeler-platfordundan-sputnik-grevine-destek-haber-1643584>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

v. Strikers Called to Police Station

In response to the public interest in the strike and the support of political parties, democratic mass organizations, and trade unions, the employer filed a criminal complaint. The employer filed a complaint against the TGS Executive Board and eight strikers, claiming that our legal and lawful strike violated "Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations". Not content with this, the employer accused us of violating the freedom of work and labor and disturbing peace and tranquility⁵⁰.

Throughout the strike, TGS acted with common sense and persistently invited the employer to the table, but was constantly met with illegal and immoral words and actions. In addition to the above-mentioned violations of rights, the employer

- Claimed that the strike was unlawful and filed a lawsuit. The judiciary rejected this claim and ruled that the strike was legal.
- Dismissed the workplace union representative for economic reasons. The court ruled for his reinstatement at the first hearing.
- Illegally hired new workers to break the strike. In response, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security inspected the workplace. Inspectors determined that the mass layoffs were not for economic reasons but for union reasons and imposed administrative fines on the employer.

vi. Legal Aspects of Strikes and Dismissals

The Republic of Turkey, like the Russian Federation, is a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Both countries have ratified all 10 core ILO conventions and three of the four priority ILO conventions.

In Turkey, trade union rights and freedoms are protected by the Constitution and laws. Article 51 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey states that "*No one shall be forced to join or leave a trade union*". The "Law No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining Agreements" and the "Labor Law No. 4857" provide clear guarantees of trade union rights and freedoms. What is happening at the Sputnik Turkey office is in clear violation of the ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise and the Right to Collective Bargaining and Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining, to which both countries are signatories, as well as the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, in particular Law No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining and Labour Law No. 4857. The Sputnik employer's persistence in violating the law is likely to expose it to a range of legal sanctions and penalties at the national and international levels.

vii. A New Phase in the Struggle

With the announcement made on the 200th day of the strike (March 4, 2024), the strike at Sputnik Turkey offices entered a new phase. At the end of the meeting with the striking members, it was decided to continue the strike, but to stop waiting at the picket lines and to follow the lawsuit process⁵¹.

Of course, a number of factors contributed to the members' decision. For 200 days, the strike was supported by many national and international professional organizations with solidarity messages and visits. Trade unions from different business sectors, pro-labor political parties, professional chambers, associations and other democratic mass organizations showed solidarity many times. Sputnik's listeners, readers, guests and commentators stood with the striking workers where they should, against the violation of the Turkish Constitution by the Sputnik employer and against the unethical words and actions of the scabs.

On the other hand, unfortunately, the relevant ministries, the Presidency of Communication and RTÜK remained silent against the employer's behavior that violated the Constitution. In other words, the official institutions of the Re-

50 TGS, "Sputnik strikers called to the police station!", January 3, 2023, <https://tgs.org.tr/sputnik-grevcileri-karakola-cagrildi/>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

51 TGS, "Sputnik strike is entering a new phase!", March 4, 2024, <https://tgs.org.tr/sputnik-grevinde-yeni-bir-asamaya-geciyoruz/> (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

public of Turkey left their own citizens alone during the strike at a foreign state-owned company. In this process, the fact that there was not enough support for the strike, except for a few professional organizations, was also noted in history⁵².

G. Journalists' Compensation Turned to Dust

As mentioned above, the last year for journalists has been marked by high unemployment, precarious working conditions, low wages and intolerance of union rights. In addition, journalists' salaries have continued to erode day by day in the current economic instability.

Some of the legal safeguards that existed for journalists to be able to report news without economic concerns have been removed over time. One of these guarantees is the right to 5% interest. The regulation on the payment of journalists' wage receivables and overtime with 5% interest for each day of unpaid overtime was canceled by the AYM in 2019⁵³. This right, which had previously been eroded by the Supreme Court of Appeals' practice of "equitable deduction" for years, was preferred by the high judiciary to the freedom of enterprise of employers. The justification for the annulment of this regulation, which we can call the guarantee of freedom of the press, was the so-called "violation of the principle of equality".

At this point, the economic rights of journalists working under the Press Labor Law No. 5953 (former Law No. 212) have declined compared to those working under the Labor Law No. 4857. However, the deterioration is not limited to this. Journalists' receivables are also rapidly eroding in the face of the country's wrong economic program and high inflation. The receivables of workers subject to the Labor Law can be protected against inflation to some extent by the highest deposit interest rate actually applied by banks to Turkish lira deposit accounts. However, the 9% annual "legal interest" applied to the compensation of 212 press workers is causing the compensation to rapidly erode.

At the beginning of 2019, a journalist's receivables amounting to 100 thousand TL would only reach 147 thousand 243 TL by March 2021 with 9% legal interest. On the other hand, the same amount of receivables of an employee subject to Law No. 4857 reaches 249 thousand 328 TL.

Table 11: Difference in Interest on Journalists' and Workers' Claims

	JOURNALIST SUBJECT TO LAW NO. 5953	WORKER SUBJECT TO LAW NO. 4857
Interest Commencement	01.01.2019	01.01.2019
End of Interest	31.03.2024	31.03.2024
Principal Receivable	100.000,00	100.000,00
Interest Type	Legal Interest 9%	Highest Deposit Interest Actually Applied by Banks to TL Deposits
Interest Amount	47.243,84	149.328,46
Total Amount	147.243,84	249.328,46

Table 12 shows the erosion between the two interest rates more clearly in terms of the increase in the minimum wage. According to TURKSTAT data, annual inflation in 2019 was 11.84%, while according to March 2024 data, annual inflation was 68.50%. According to this table, a journalist's receivable of 100 thousand TL at the beginning of 2019 corresponded to 59.3 times the minimum wage at the end of the year, while this ratio was 61.2 for a worker subject to 4857. In the period until 2024, the amount to be received by a journalist decreases to 8.66 times the minimum wage, while this ratio remains at 14.6 for a worker subject to 4857.

⁵² The Association of Journalists, the Contemporary Journalists Association Headquarters and the Ankara branch should be singled out here and thanked for their solidarity.
⁵³ TGS 2020-2021 Press Freedom Report, pp.78-80, <https://tgs.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TGS-BASIN-OZGURLUGU-RAPORU.pdf>, (Date of access: 24.03.2024).

Table 12: Status of Interest on Journalists' and Workers' Claims against Net Minimum Wage over the Years⁵⁴

	A	B	C	D	E	F ⁵⁵	G	H
2019	%11,84	2.020,59	%9	108.975,34	53,9	%26	123.712,60	61,2
2020	%14,60	2.324,71	%9	118.000,00	50,7	%13,84	138.072,64	59,3
2021	%36,08	2.825,90	%9	127.000,00	44,9	%19	158.701,89	56,1
2022	%64,27	4.253,40- 5.500,35	%9	136.000,00	31,9- 24,7	%28,38	188.570,92	44,3-34,2
2023	%64,77	8.506,80- 11.402,32	%9	145.000,00	17,0-12,7	%30	234.359,97	27,5-20,5
March 2024	%68,50	17.002	%9	147.243,84	8,66	%60	249.328,46	14,6

Unfortunately, the judicial authorities are indifferent to this economically disadvantageous situation. Proceedings regarding journalists' receivables take a very long time. Requests to bring the proceedings forward, based on economic data and the difference between interest rates, are rejected without examination⁵⁶. Undoubtedly, the data in Table 12 encourages employers to terminate journalists' employment contracts without compensation and not to pay their receivables. Receivables that erode over years of judicial proceedings give employers an advantage. Journalists, who are deprived of legal guarantees and protection, are hesitant to use the judiciary for their rights. In order to secure their receivables, they are forced to make agreements far below what they deserve during the exit process.

All this contradicts the Constitutional principles of equality and the rule of law. It is clear that state institutions do not protect the economic rights of journalists.

H. Journalists' Visa Problem and Green Passport Rights

Journalists, like hundreds of thousands of citizens in the country, face visa problems. The visa crisis with the Schengen area continues to escalate. The visa problem has turned into an obstacle that prevents journalists from practicing their profession. The applications of journalists, who travel frequently due to their profession, are rejected without any justification or journalists are given visas for very short periods of time. EFJ criticizes the Schengen countries' systematic obstacles to Turkish journalists in visa applications and calls for an end to the "de facto visa embargo⁵⁷".

⁵⁴ Regarding Table 2;

A: Annual Inflation (CPI)

B: Net Minimum Wage

C: Legal Interest

D: Legal interest accrued on the original receivable of TL 100.000,00 as of 01.01.2019

E: Legal Interest Accrued Receivable/Net Minimum Wage

F: Highest Deposit Interest Rate Actually Applied by Banks to TL Deposits

G: Deposit interest accrued on the original receivable of TL 100.000,00 on 01.01.2019

H: Interest on Deposits/Accrued Receivable/Net Minimum Wage

⁵⁵ Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey Data on Maximum Interest Rates Actually Applied to Deposits by Banks

<https://www.tcmb.gov.tr/wps/wcm/connect/TR/TCMB+TR/Main+Menu/Istatistikler/Faiz+Istatistikleri/Bank+Deposit+Azami+Faiz/>, (Date of Access : 14.04.2024)

⁵⁶ 19 of the 45 Hürriyet employees dismissed at the end of 2019 are currently awaiting review by the Court of Appeal. The applications made by the union's lawyers for the trial to be brought forward have been rejected, with only the case of serious illness reportedly being considered for priority review.

⁵⁷ "Turkey's journalists' visa problem on Europe's agenda"

<https://tgs.org.tr/turkiyedeki-gazetecilerin-vize-sorunu-avrupa-gundeminde/> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024)

In a similar vein, journalists have long been pushing for the right to a Special Passport (also referred to as the Green Passport which allows the bearer to travel visa-free to the European countries (except the UK and Ireland), and some 67 countries). A new one has recently been added to the numerous law proposals⁵⁸. In his speech on January 10, Working Journalists' Day, Numan Kurtulmuş, the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, said, "It would be a very elegant and natural behavior to give green passports to our valuable press members who have worked in this profession for a certain period."⁵⁹. However, neither the visa crisis nor the passport issue had been resolved by the time of this report.

I. Research on Poverty: Economic and Social Level Survey

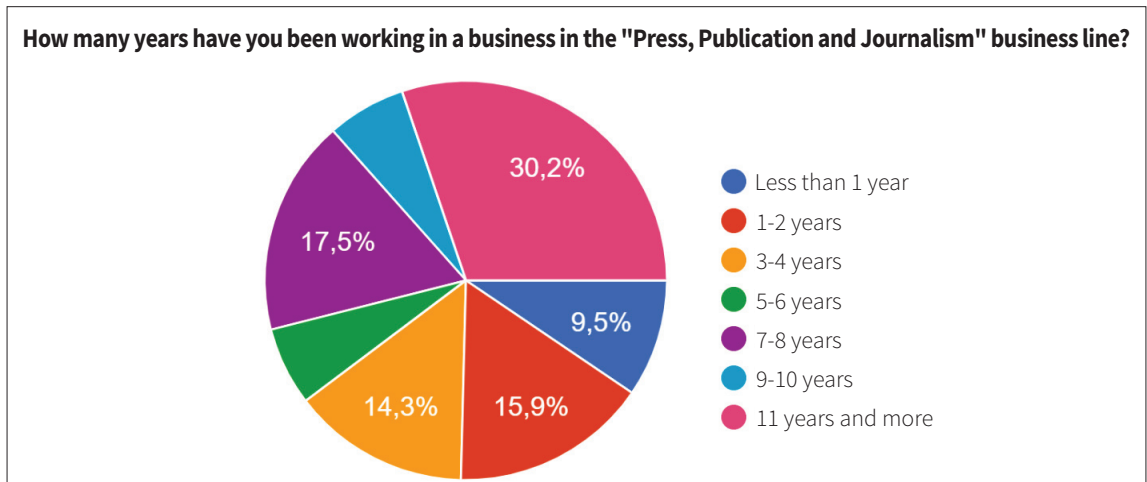
For the first time this year, the union surveyed journalists' perception of poverty and gathered information on their economic and social consumption behaviors. You can find the results of the survey below.

i. A Balanced Distribution of Professional Seniority

The answer to the first question shows that the professional seniority of the participants shows a balanced distribution.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 30.2% of the respondents (19 people) have been working in a business in the "Press, Publication and Journalism" line of business for 11 years or more, the second most common line of business is 7-8 years with 17.5% (11 people). This is followed by those who have been working for 1-2 years with 15.9% (10 people), 3-4 years with 14.3% (9 people), and less than 1 year with 9.5% (6 people). The lowest rate is observed in employees working between 9-10 years and 5-6 years with 6.3% (4 people).



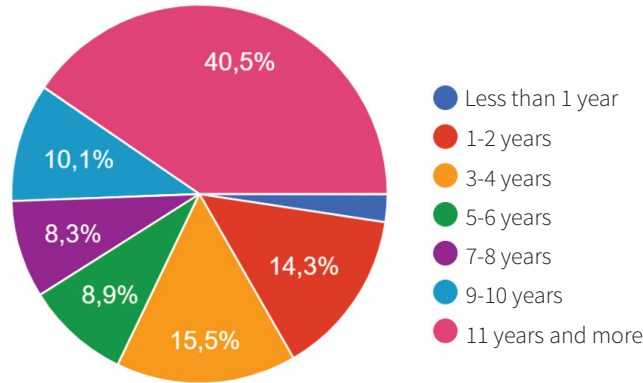
2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

40.5% of the respondents (68 people) say that they have been working in an enterprise in the line of business for 11 years or more. This rate is higher than the same preference in authorized workplaces. This is followed by 15.5% (26 respondents) with 3.4 years, 14.3% (24 respondents) with 1.2 years, 10.1% (17 respondents) with 9-10 years, 8.9% (15 respondents) with 5-6 years, and 8.3% (14 respondents) with 7-8 years. The lowest rate is 2.4% (4 people) with less than one year of employment..

58 "MHP Deputy Chairman and Kayseri Deputy Ismail Özdemir has submitted a proposal for a green passport for members of the press with 15 years of professional seniority: "Green passport proposal for journalists" <https://bianet.org/haber/gazeteciler-icin-yesil-pasaport-teklifi-290211> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024)

59 "TBMM Speaker Kurtulmuş: Giving green passports to our press members would be a very elegant behavior", <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/tbmm-baskani-kurtulmus-basin-men-subu-arkadaslarimiza-yesil-pasaport-verilmesi-gayet-sik-bir-davranis-olur/3101952> (Date of Access: 01.04.2024)

How many years have you been working in a business in the "Press, Publication and Journalism" business line?



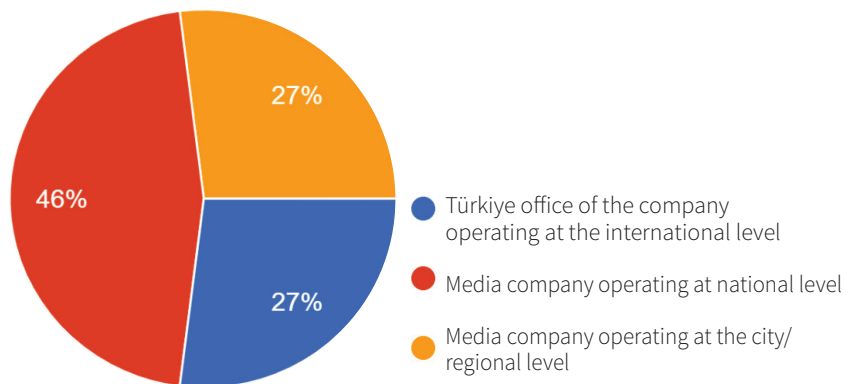
ii. Consistent Distribution at the Enterprise Scale

When we look at the distribution of the union's total members according to the scale of the organization, media companies operating at the national level come first place. In second place are companies operating at the city/regional level, which can be named as "local media". The last rank is occupied by the offices of companies operating at the international level in Turkey. A breakdown of the enterprises with which the union has signed contracts by scale shows that nine out of 19 enterprises operate at the national level, four at the local level, and six at the international level. Especially in the last four years, the successful organizing campaigns of the Turkish offices of international companies have been effective in this distribution.

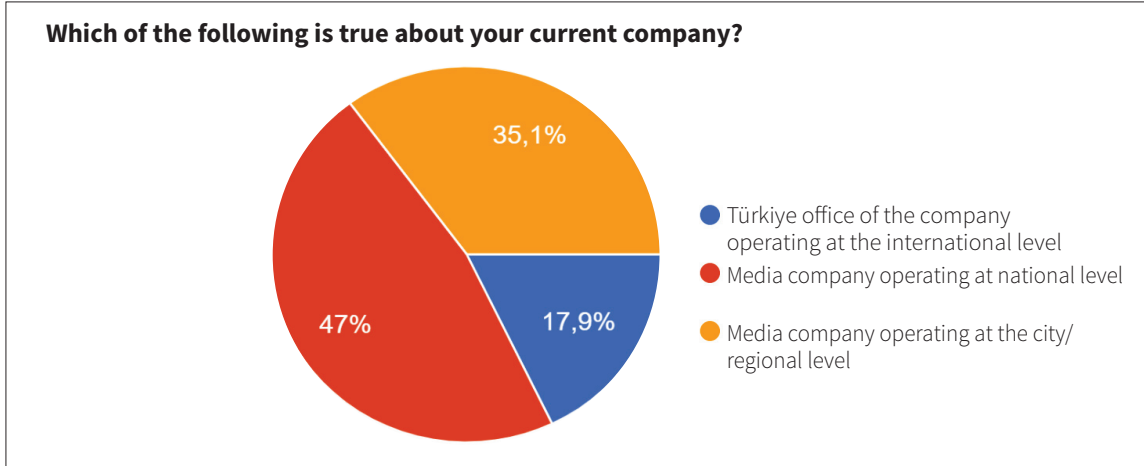
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

46% of the respondents (29 people) answered "a media company operating at the national level". "Turkey office of an international company" and "media company operating at the city/regional level" have the same percentage, 27% (17 respondents).

Which of the following is true about your current company?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:



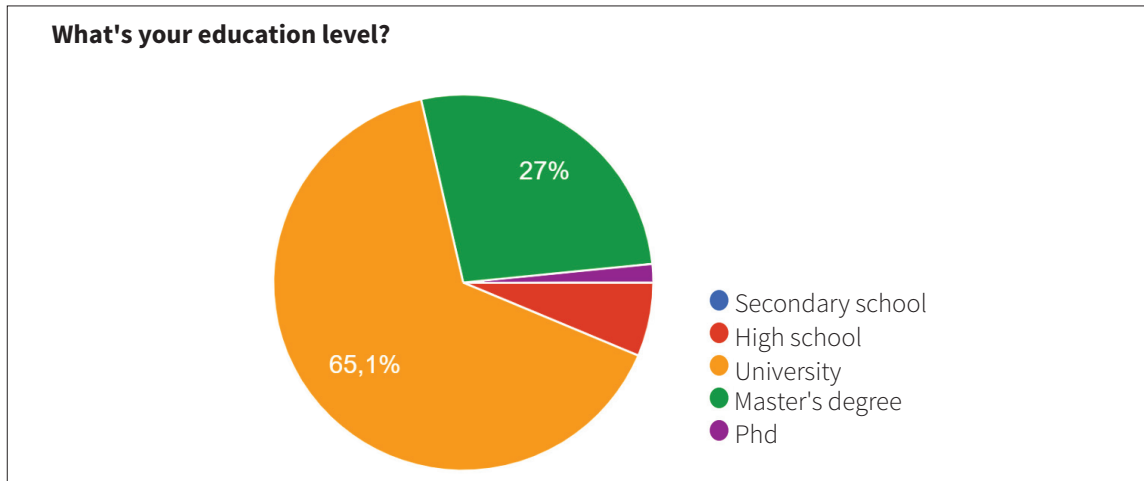
47% of the respondents (79 people) answered "a media company operating at the national level". The second most common response was "a media company operating at the city/regional level" with 35.1% (59 respondents). The third and last response was "Turkey office of a company operating at the international level" with a rate of 17.9% (30 respondents).

iii. Majority University Graduate

As is well known, journalism is a profession that requires a certain intellectual capacity, questioning, and analytical thinking skills. Through the survey, we also had the opportunity to measure the educational level of the members.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

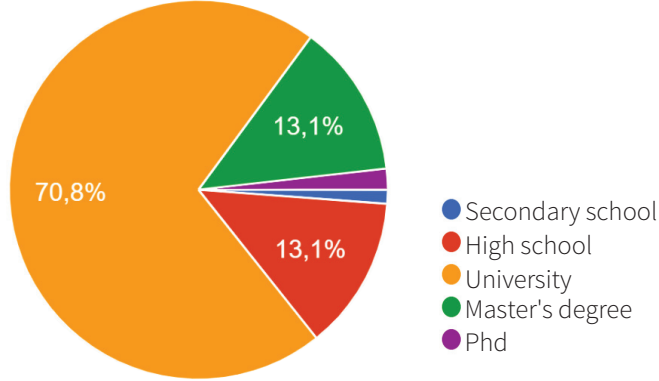
65.1% (41 people) of the participants are university graduates, while 27% (17 people) have a master's degree. High school graduates are in third place with 6.3% (4 people). PhD graduates are in the fourth and last place with 1.6% (1 person).



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

70.8% (119 people) of the participants are university graduates, 13.1% (22 people) are high school and master's degree graduates. The rate of those with doctorate level education is 1.8% (3 people), while secondary school graduates are noteworthy with 1.2% (2 people).

What's your education level?



iv. Wages Below Poverty Line

According to the responses of the participants, while the rate of those earning 25,000 TL or less was 58.9% in the survey of unauthorized workplaces, this rate decreased to 42.9% in the survey of authorized workplaces. While the rate of those with net earnings above the poverty line⁶⁰ is 25.4% in authorized workplaces, this rate is only 4.2% in unauthorized workplaces.

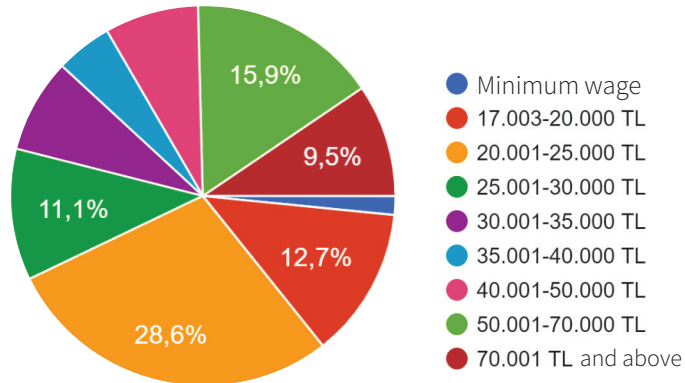
Since we have discussed the vulnerability of the sector (high unemployment, precarious employment, low wages, low unionization rate) above, we will not mention it again here. On the other hand, we can easily say that these negativities also put pressure on existing contracts. As can be seen from the survey results, even though the contracts increase economic-social rights compared to unauthorized enterprises, the existing pressure limits these gains. Both the small number of existing contracts and the pressure of the external factors listed above make it difficult for collective bargaining agreements to expand to unauthorized enterprises.

Another factor suppressing wages is the financial capacity and level of activity of enterprises. Even if the distribution of value created at the enterprise level can be intervened through collective bargaining, the wage range may not be sufficient for workers. The reason for this inadequacy is economic instability in the country. The state of the economy and high inflation erode contracts and contractual rights very quickly. Despite the extent and nature of the economic problems, organizing seems to be the only way out for both unions and workers.

60 In this calculation, Türk-İş's poverty line (total expenditure of a family of four) of 54,700.32 TL for March 2024 was taken into account: <https://www.turkis.org.tr/turk-is-mart-2024-acilik-ve-yoksulluk-siniri/>, (Date of access: 04.04.2024).

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

What is your monthly net earnings (including benefits)?

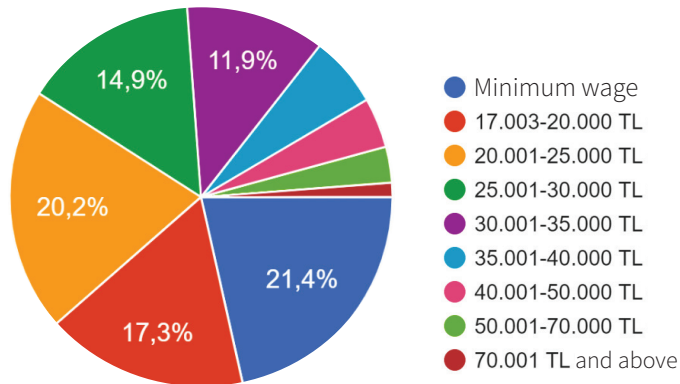


Of the respondents, 28.6% (18 people) reported earning between 20,001-25,000 TL. Those earning between 50,001-70,000 TL (10 people) come second with 15.9%. This is followed by those earning between 17,003-20,000 TL with 12.7% (8 people), those earning between 25,001-30,000 TL with 11.1% (7 people) and those earning 70,001 TL and above with 9.5% (6 people). Those earning between 30,001-35,000 TL and 40,001-50,000 TL have a share of 7.9% (5 people). The lowest shares are those earning between 35,001-40,000 TL with 4.8% (3 people) and those earning minimum wage with 1.6% (1 person).

2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

The highest share of the responses was 21.4% (36 people) who said "minimum wage". Then, 20.2% (34 people) between 20,001-25,000 TL, 17.3% (29 people) between 17,003-20,000 TL, 14.9% (25 people) between 25,001-30,000 TL, 11.9% (20 people) between 30,001-35,000 TL, 6% (10 people) between 35,001-40,000 TL, 4.1% (7 people) between 40,001-50,000 TL, 3% (5 people) between 50,001-70,000 TL and 1.2% (2 people) with earnings of 70,001 TL and above.

What is your monthly net earnings (including benefits)?



v. "I was never paid minimum wage"

An e-mail received by our union after the questionnaires were sent to members reveals the extent of the problem. We share below the message sent by our member, who works in an unauthorized workplace, by hiding his personal information and the institution where he works⁶¹ :

"Hello, first of all, thank you for the survey you sent. I am the Bureau Chief of Agency ... I am the Bureau Chief. When the personnel, including local and national press, are paid from the bank, the minimum wage is deposited. Subsequently, deductions are made from that deposited wage by hand. Currently, friends are working both locally and nationally up to 10 thousand TL per month. I have been a journalist for 15 years. I have never received minimum wage. I have always received 3 to 4 thousand TL below the minimum wage. We have a lot of working friends like me. Yes, we are insured, but we cannot get minimum wage. We want to do additional work but we can't. Because we cannot use open signatures on copyrighted news, we cannot do that either. There are so many associations working for journalists, but these associations do not even have any work or steps to improve the situation of journalists. I am married and have a child. To take care of them, I try to work for my party outside of journalism."

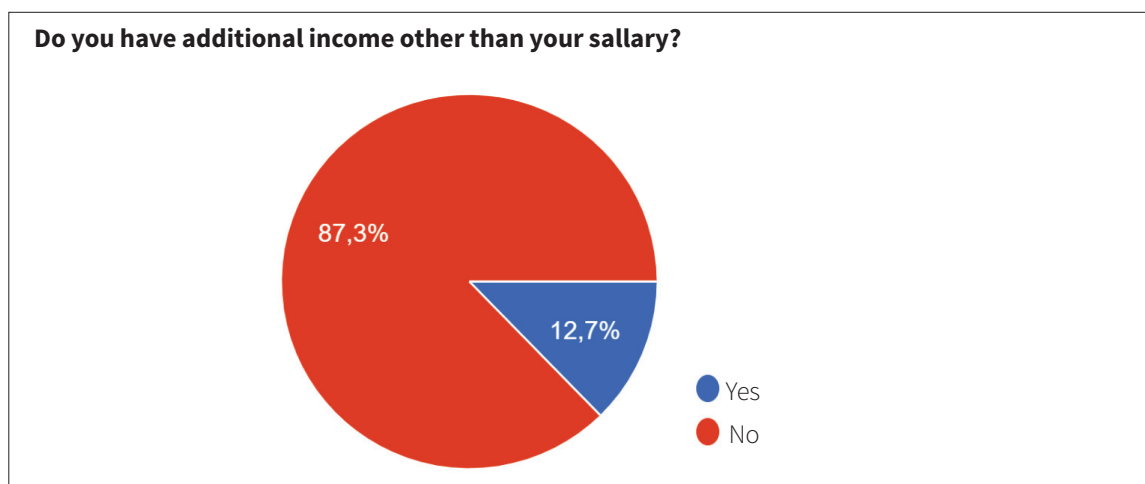
The above quote in itself is enough to show the economic difficulties that journalists, especially local journalists, face and the degree of poverty they experience.

vi. Salaries are the Only Source of Income

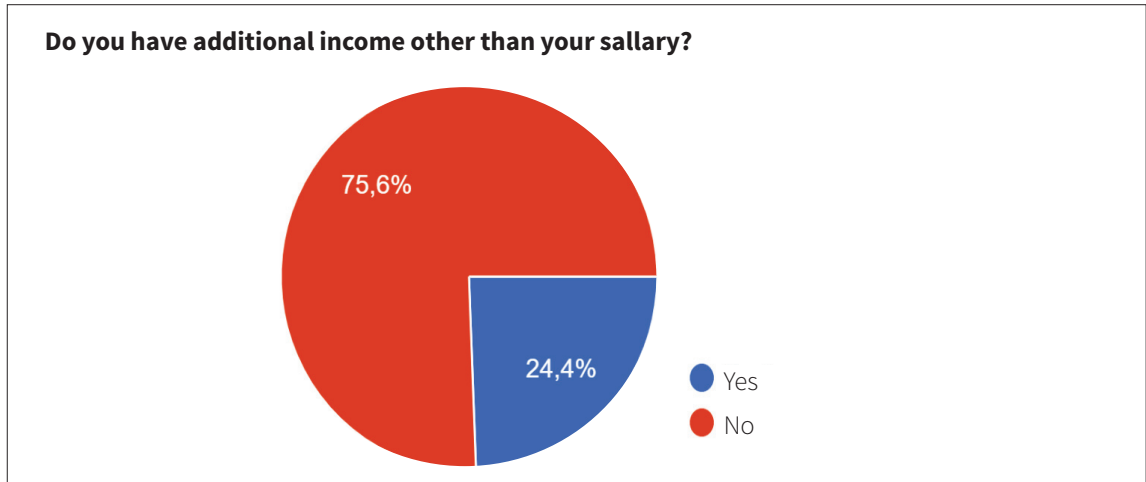
The results of both surveys show that the majority of respondents have no additional income other than their wages. On the other hand, we can see that respondents in the authorized workplaces survey are proportionally more likely to lack additional income (i.e. wage-dependent) than respondents in the unauthorized workplaces survey.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 87.3% of the participants (55 people) said they had no additional income, 12.7% (8 people) said they had additional income.



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:



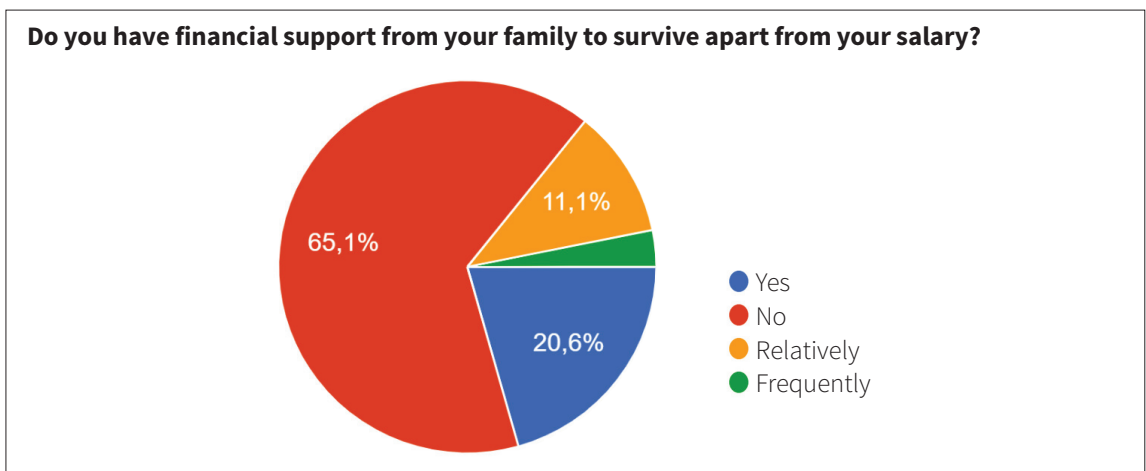
While 75.6% of the participants (127 people) stated that they had no additional income, 24.4% (41 people) answered "yes".

vii. Family's Financial Support Continues

In both surveys, a significant proportion of respondents reported receiving financial support from their families to make ends meet. In the survey of authorized workplaces, the total rate (those who chose "yes", "somewhat" and "often") was 34.9%, while in the survey of unauthorized workplaces, this rate increased to 42.3%. Contracts can be said to have a positive effect by reducing the financial support from family. On the other hand, the pressure caused by the fragility of the sector and the problems in the national economy makes it difficult for journalists to survive on their own.

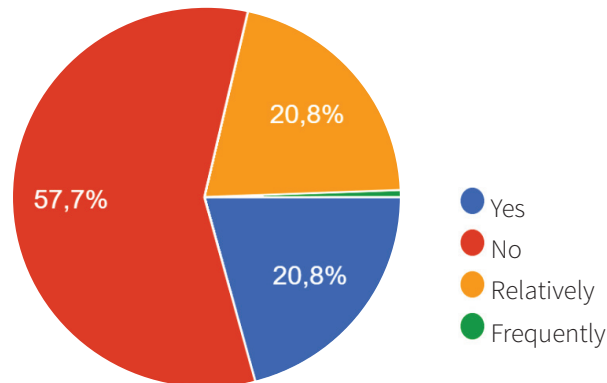
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 65.1% of the participants (41 people) answered "no" to this question, 20.6% (13 people) answered "yes". The rate of those who said they received "some" support from their families was 11.1% (7 people) and the rate of those who said they received "frequent" support was 3.2% (2 people).



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

Do you have financial support from your family to survive apart from your salary?



57.7% of the participants (97 people) answered "no". The rate of those who answered "yes" and "partially" was 20.8% (35 people). The lowest rate was "often" with 0.7% (1 person).

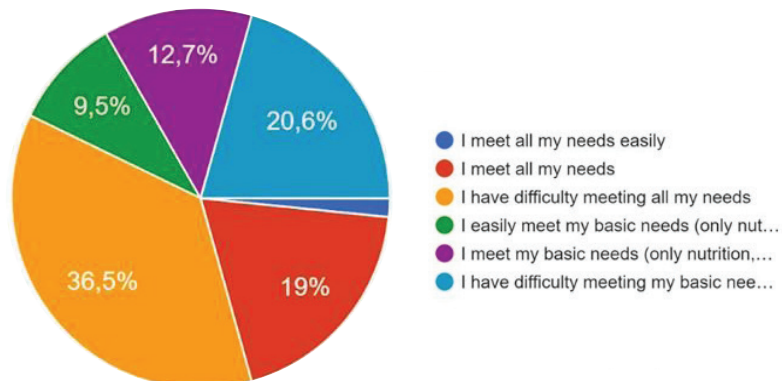
viii. All Needs Are Hard to Meet

We also asked respondents about the capacity of their income to meet their needs. We divided the needs into six options in two parameters: basic (only food, shelter, and transportation) and all (basic needs and more). In the survey of authorized workplaces, the capacity to meet all needs (including those with difficulties) was 57.1% in total, while this rate dropped to 45.2% in the survey of unauthorized workplaces. It is important to note that we did not limit the concept of "all needs" in the question and that the respondent responded by taking into account their subjective needs. The relatively positive impact of the agreements can be seen when comparing the responses.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

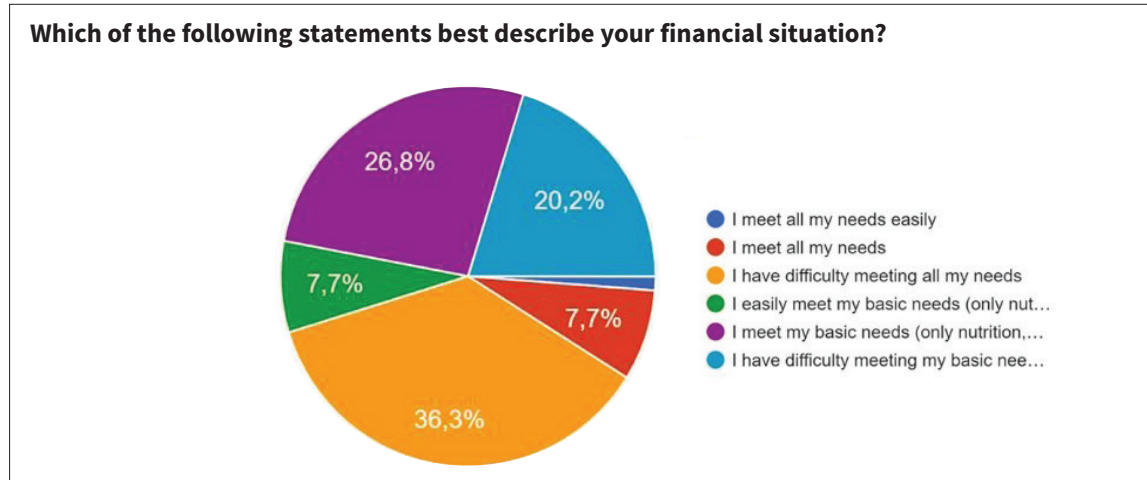
The rate of those who say that they meet all their needs easily is at the bottom with 1.7% (1 person). The rate of those who say they meet all their needs is 19% (12 people). 36.5% (23 people) of the respondents state that they have difficulty in meeting all their needs. The rate of those who can easily meet their basic needs is 9.5% (6 people), while the rate of those who can meet their basic needs is 12.7% (8 people). The rate of those who have difficulty even meeting their basic needs is 20.6% (13 people)..

Which of the following statements best describe your financial situation?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

In this survey, the rate of those who state that they meet all their needs easily is at the bottom with 1.3% (2 people). The rate of those who say that they meet all their needs is 7.7% (13 people). 36.3% of the respondents (61 people) stated that they have difficulty in meeting all their needs. While the rate of those who can easily meet their basic needs is 7.7% (13 people), the rate of those who can meet their basic needs is 26.8% (45 people). The rate of those who have difficulty even meeting their basic needs is 20.2% (34 people).



ix. Minimum 30K TL Needed for Basic Needs

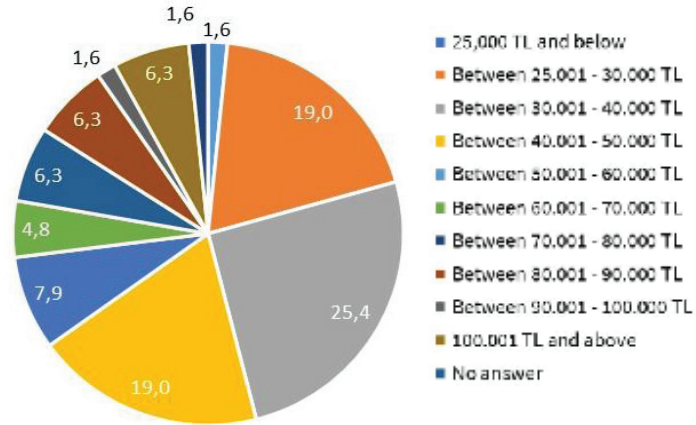
We also asked respondents about the amount of monthly earnings required to meet their basic needs (nutrition, shelter and transportation). It is important to note that the answer varies depending on the needs of the respondent and many other parameters (e.g. the city they live in, whether the housing they live in is rented or not, with whom they share their housing, how they commute to work, their daily diet, etc.). In both surveys, monthly earnings between 30,001-40,000 TL were the most preferred option. This was chosen by 25.4% (16 respondents) in the authorized workplaces survey and 31% (52 respondents) in the unauthorized workplaces survey.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

25.4% of the respondents (16 people) state that they need a monthly net income between 30,001-40,000 TL to meet their basic needs. Those who need a monthly income between 25,001-30,000 TL and 40,001-50,000 TL have the same percentage, 19% (12 people). 7.9% of the participants (5 people) state that they need to earn between 50,001 - 60,000 TL. The three options; 70,001 - 80,000 TL, 80,001 - 90,000 TL, and 100,001 TL and above have the same rate of 6.3% (4 people). The rate of those who say that they should have a monthly income between 60,001 - 70,000 TL is 4.8% (3 people). Lastly, 1.6% (1 person) need to earn between 90,001 - 100,000 TL, those who need to earn 25,000 TL or less, and those who did not respond.

"Nutrition accommodation and transportation are basic human needs"

According to definition above, how much TL monthly net income must you earn to meet your current **basic needs**?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

1% of the respondents (52 people) state that they need a monthly net income between 30,001-40,000 TL to meet their basic needs. Those who need to earn between 40,001 - 50,000 TL come second with 26.2% (44 respondents), while those who need to earn between 25,001 - 30,000 TL come third with 14.3% (24 respondents). This is followed by 9.5% (16 people) who need earnings between 50,001 - 60,000 TL and 8.3% (14 people) who need earnings of 25,000 TL or less. It is seen that the preference rate decreases as the salary range increases. Accordingly, 4.8% (8 people) need earnings between 60,001 - 70,000 TL, 2.4% (4 people) need earnings between 70,001 - 80,000 TL, 1.2% (2 people) need earnings of 100,001 TL and above, and 0.6% (1 person) need earnings between 80,001 - 90,000 TL and 90,001 - 100,000 TL. The rate of those who do not report the amount of earnings they need is 1.2% (2 people).

x. "You need to be a magician to make a living"

One respondent, instead of stating the income range he/she needs, points to the economic crisis in the country as an answer:

"The monthly basic needs of a person are at least 30 thousand liras, not including the other members of the family. You need to be a magician to make a living at a time when bagels cost 10 and bread 15 liras."

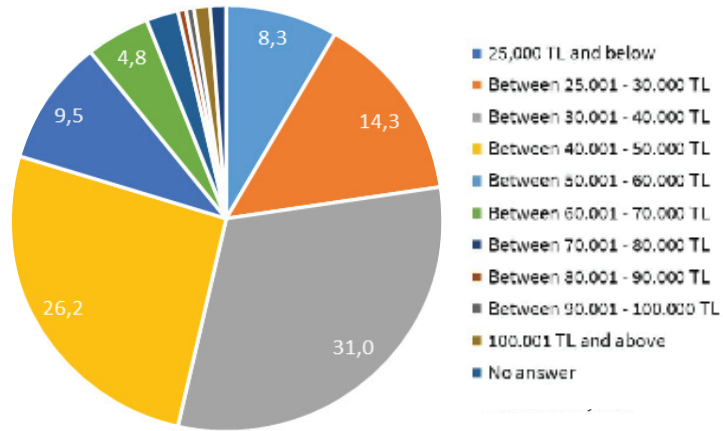
We accept this response as the voice of thousands of journalists who are deprived of secure working conditions, forced to work for low wages and long working hours, oppressed by unemployment and suffering poverty on top of that.

xi. They Will Do Additional Work If There is an Opportunity

We also asked respondents two questions about moonlighting, the first of which was whether they moonlighted. In the survey of unauthorized workplaces, the rate of additional work was (23.8%), while in the survey of authorized workplaces, the rate of additional work was (12.7%). We find this difference remarkable. The second question was whether they would do additional work if they had the opportunity. The responses to this question reveal the magnitude of the need for additional income. While 79.4% (50 people) in the survey of authorized workplaces would do additional work if they had the opportunity, this rate increases to 88.7% (149 people) in unauthorized workplaces.

"Nutrition accommodation and transportation are basic human needs"

According to definition above, how much TL monthly net income must you earn to meet your current **basic needs**?



1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 87.3% of the participants (55 people) answered "no" to this question, 12.7% (8 people) said that they do additional work.

2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 76.2% of the respondents (128 people) answered "no" to this question, 23.8% (40 people) said that they do additional work.

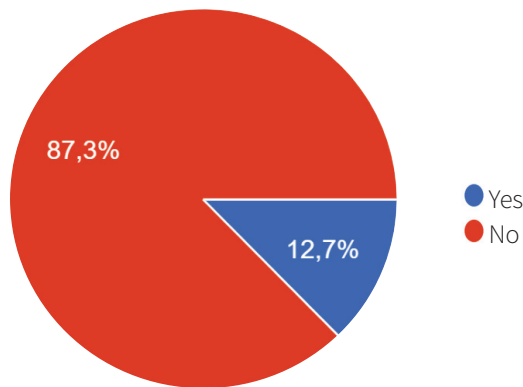
In the second question, the proportions of yes and no responses are reversed compared to the first.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

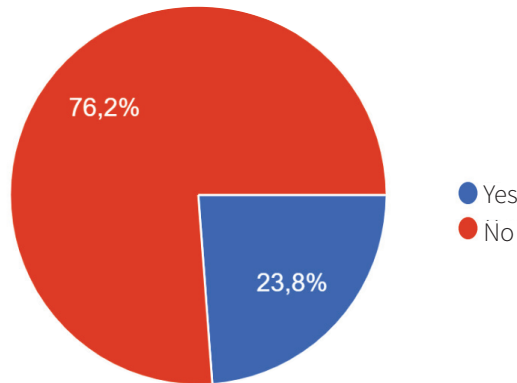
While 79.4% of the respondents (50 people) answered "yes" to this question, 20.6% (13 people) said that they would not do additional work even if they had the opportunity.

Do you have a second job?

63 answer



Do you have a second job?



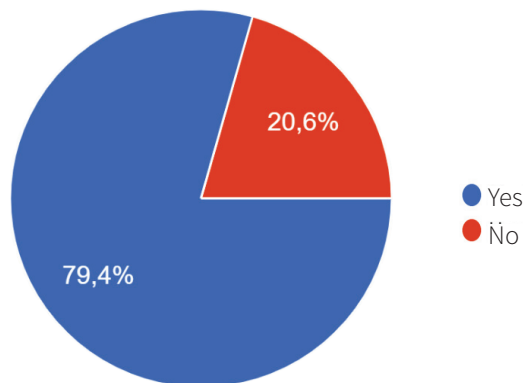
2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 88.7% of the respondents (149 people) answered "yes" to this question, only 11.3% (19 people) said that they would not moonlight even if they had the opportunity.

When the responses to the two questions are considered together, three observations stand out.

1. It can be said that the economic-social gain obtained through contracts reduces the need for additional work, albeit to a lesser extent.
2. Even if the contracts have a positive impact, journalists who cannot live on their current wages (both in authorized and unauthorized workplaces) are ready to do additional work when they have the opportunity.

If you have opportunity, would you have a second job to make ends meet?

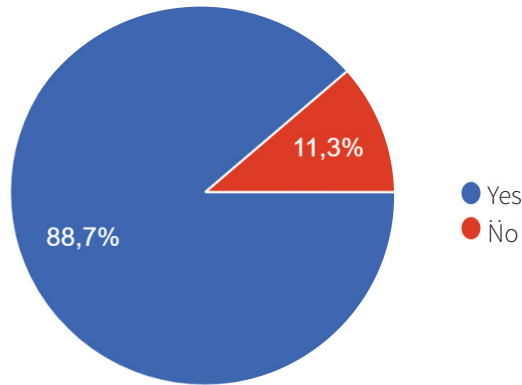


There are different reasons why they do not have the opportunity to do additional work. The first reasons that come to mind are the restrictions of the employment contract, long working hours at the main job not allowing for additional work, having dependents in their spare time, and lack of a suitable job.

3. The need for additional work (when considered together with other responses) may stem from an effort to reduce poverty.

If you have opportunity, would you have a second job to make ends meet?

168 answer



This high level of willingness to do additional work if the opportunity arises can be evaluated together with the items on which monthly income is (or is not) spent. Therefore, the next question and its answers are of particular importance.

Xii. Most Expenditures Are Made on Housing, Transportation and Food

When we look at the distribution of monthly expenditures, we see that nutrition/food, housing/rent, and transportation stand out in the first place.

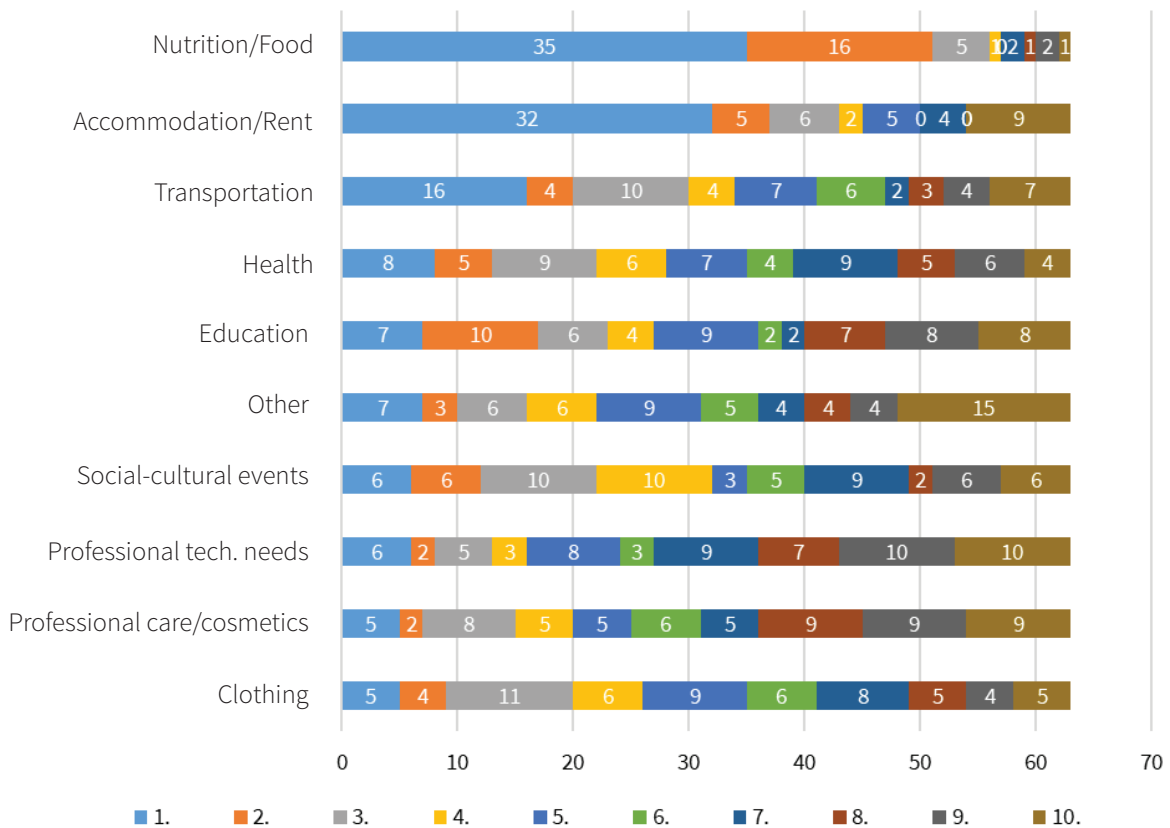
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

According to the responses of the participants, 55.56% (35 people) ranked nutrition/food as the first item of monthly expenditure. While 50.79% (32 people) ranked housing/rent first, 25.40% (16 people) ranked transportation first.

The second most preferred item is housing/rent with 25.40% (16 respondents). Social-cultural activities and transportation are the third most preferred topics with 15.87% (10 people). Education, clothing, and others follow with 14.29% (9 people). Clothing, personal care/cosmetics, and transportation are the three most preferred items in sixth place with 9.52% (6 people), while professional technical needs (camera, computer, etc.), social-cultural needs, and health are in seventh place with 14.29% (9 people). In eighth place, personal care/cosmetics is the most marked expenditure item with 14.29% (9 people). In the ninth place, professional technical needs are 15.87% (10 people), and in the last place, the other is 23.81% (15 people).

How do you list your monthly expense items from most to least?

Note: Please rank them as 1 being the most and 10 being the last.



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

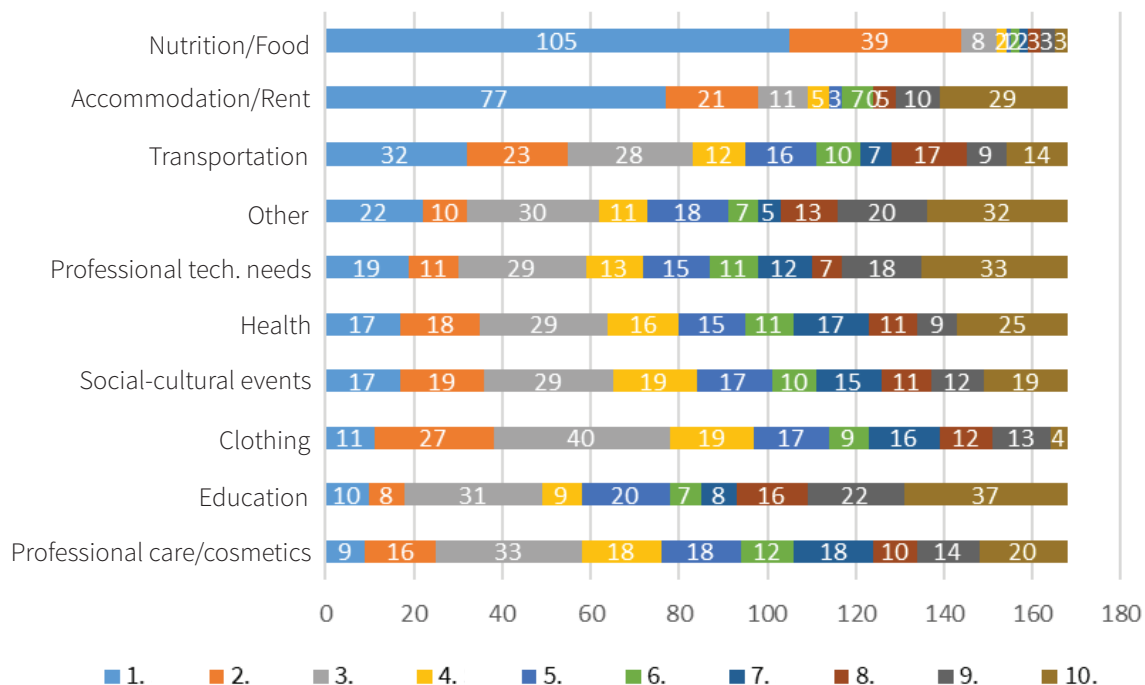
According to the responses of the respondents, 62.50% (105 people) ranked nutrition/food as the first item of monthly expenditure. While 45.83% (77 people) chose housing/rent as the first item, 19.05% (32 people) chose transportation as the first item.

The second most frequently selected option is again nutrition/food with 23.21% (39 respondents). The third most preferred option is clothing with 23.81% (40 people). In the fourth place, clothing and social-cultural activities come at the top with 11.31% (19 people). In fifth place, education with 11.90% (20 people); in sixth place, personal care/cosmetics with 7.14% (12 people); in seventh place, personal care/cosmetics again with 10.71% (18 people); in eighth place, transportation with 10.12% (17 people); in ninth place, education with 13.10% (22 people); and in tenth and last place, education again with 22.02% (37 people).

The first thing that stands out about the expenditure items is that nutrition/food, housing/rent, and transportation are quite high in both surveys. In authorized workplaces, 88.88% (56 respondents) ranked nutrition/food in the top three; 68.25% (43 respondents) ranked housing/rent in the top three; and 47.61% (30 respondents) ranked transportation in the top three. In unauthorized workplaces, these rates are 90.47% (152 people), 64.88% (109 people), and 49.40% (83 people), respectively.

How do you list your monthly expense items from most to least?

Note: Please rank them as 1 being the most and 10 being the last.



xiii. Majority Feel Poor

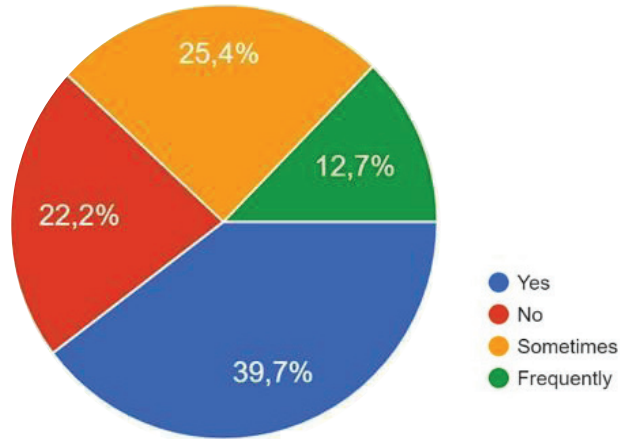
Following our definition of poverty, we asked respondents whether there was a time when they felt poor. In the survey of authorized workplaces, 77.8% (49 people) answered "yes", "often" and "sometimes", while 22.2% (14 people) answered "no". In unauthorized workplaces, the rates are 91.7% (154 people) and 8.3% (14 people) respectively. These rates provide important data on the extent of journalist poverty. The fact that the overall rate of those who feel poor is relatively low in the survey of authorized workplaces can be explained by the economic and social benefits of the contracts. However, as discussed above, the level of activity and financial capacity of authorized businesses determines both the limits of the material value created and the volume of the amount to be shared. When the economic crisis in the country is added to the financial problems of small-scale businesses, the high rate of those who feel poor in the survey of authorized businesses is rationalized.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

The "yes" answer to this question is 39.7% (25 people), while the "no" answer is 22.2% (14 people). The rate of those who feel poor "sometimes" is 25.4% (16 people), while the rate of those who answer "often" is 12.7% (8 people).

"Poverty is not having enough income to meet all or most of the monthly basic needs"

In the light above definition, is there any period(s) when you feel poor?

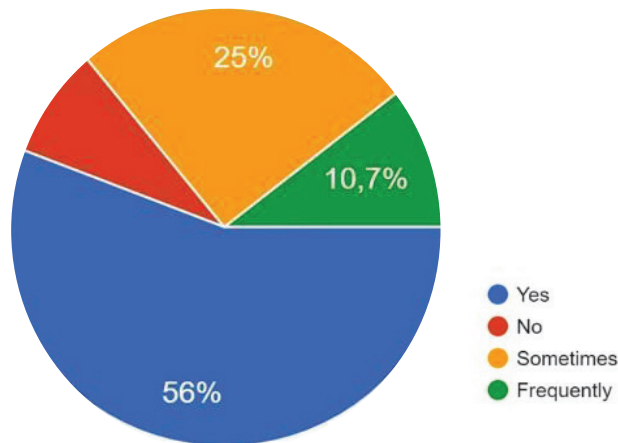


2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 56% of the respondents (94 people) answered "yes" to the question, only 8.3% (14 people) answered "no". While 25% (42 people) felt poor "sometimes", 10.7% (18 people) answered "often".

"Poverty is not having enough income to meet all or most of the monthly basic needs"

In the light above definition, is there any period(s) when you feel poor?



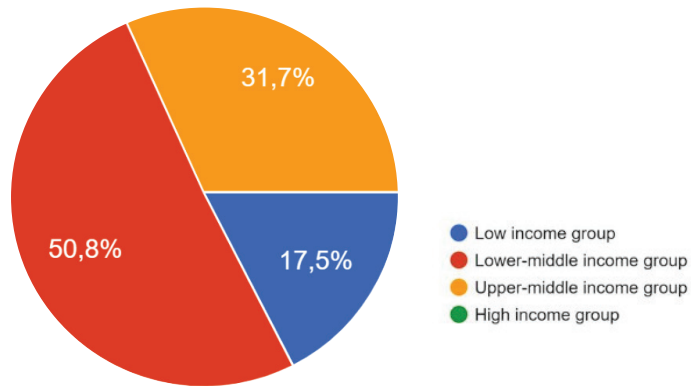
xiv. Journalists Perceive Themselves as Low-Income

In the survey of authorized workplaces, 31.7% (20 respondents) of the respondents stated that they felt themselves to be in the middle-income group. This rate dropped to 14.9% (25 respondents) in the survey of unauthorized workplaces.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

More than half of the respondents (50.8% / 32 people) said they felt they were in the low-income group. 31.7% (20 people) felt they were in the middle-income group and 17.5% (11 people) in the lowest-income group. There are no respondents who consider themselves in the upper-income group.

In which income group do you feel you are?

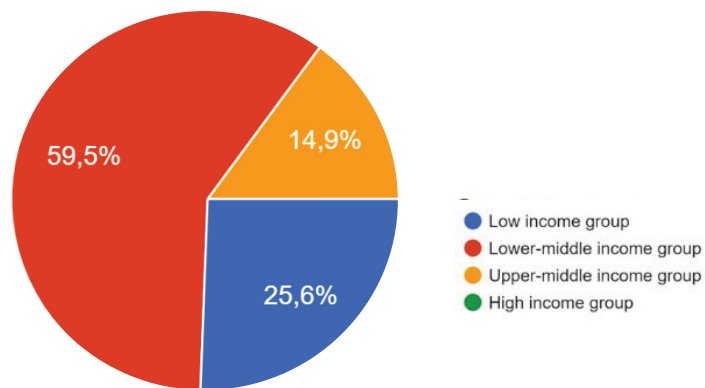


2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

59.5% of the participants (100 people) said that they considered themselves to be in the low-income group. 25.6% (43 people) felt they were in the lowest-income group, while 14.9% (25 people) felt they were in the middle-income group. In this survey, there are no respondents who consider themselves in the upper-income group.

xv. Declining Budget for Social and Cultural Development

In which income group do you feel you are?

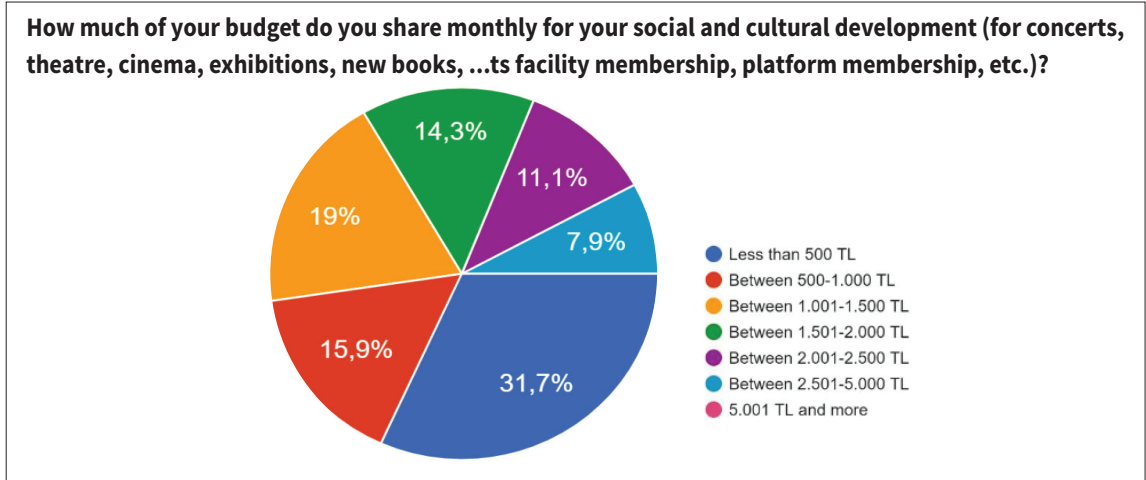


Journalism is a profession that requires continuous learning and the development of skills, knowledge, and abilities. For this reason, we asked our members how much of their monthly budget they allocate for social and cultural expenses and how this budget changed compared to last year.

In the survey of authorized workplaces, 68.2% (43 people) allocated a budget of 500 TL or more for their social and cultural development. This rate remained at 51.2% (86 people) in unauthorized workplaces. In 6 out of 19 contracted enterprises, social-cultural benefits are included as an outcome under various headings. In addition to this support provided by employers, the difference in the surveys in favor of authorized workplaces (members also spend from their budgets) may be due to the economic and social welfare provided by the contracts. On the other hand, the fact that 51.2% (86 people) in unauthorized workplaces allocate a budget of 500 TL or more indicates that journalists have difficulty developing their skills, knowledge, and abilities.

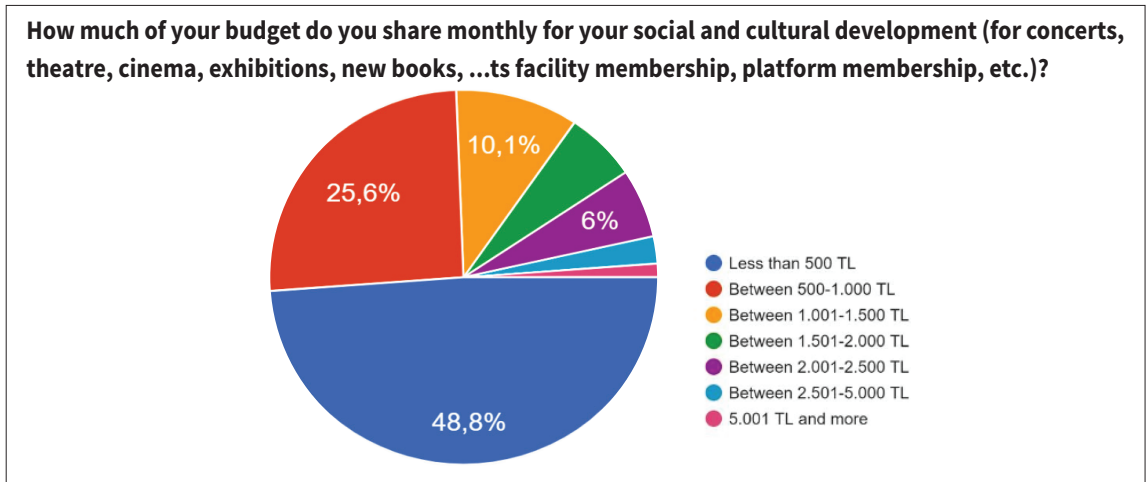
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

31.7% of the respondents (20 people) stated that they allocate a monthly budget of less than 500 TL for their social and cultural development. 19% (12 people) allocate a budget of 1,001-1,500 TL, 15.9% (10 people) allocate a budget of 500-1,000 TL, and 14.3% (9 people) allocate a budget of 1,501-2,000 TL. The rate of those who allocated a budget between 2,001-2,500 TL remained at 11.1% (7 people), while the lowest rate was 7.9% (5 people) for those who allocated a budget between 2,501-5,000 TL .



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

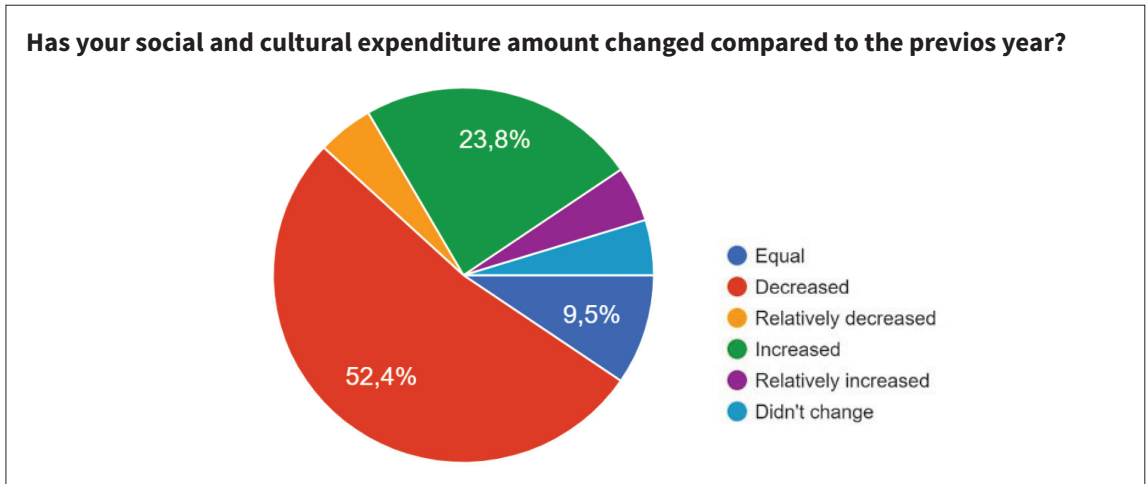
The highest rate was 48.8% (82 people) who allocated a budget of less than 500 TL. This was followed by 25.6% (43 people) with a budget of 500-1,000 TL and 10.1% (17 people) with a budget of 1,001-1,500 TL. Those who allocated a budget between 1,501-2,000 TL and 2,001-2500 TL made up 6% (10 people). The lowest rates were 2.3% (4 people) with 2,501-5,000 TL and 1.2% (2 people) with 5,001 TL and above.



Social and cultural expenditures decreased in both surveys compared to last year. These data reveal the negative impact of the economic crisis not only on wages but also on the financial capacity for professional development. The proportion of respondents who answered "increased" and "partially increased" was 14.9% (25 respondents) in the survey of unauthorized workplaces, while this rate was almost double, 28.6% (18 respondents) in the survey of authorized workplaces. It can be said that this difference is again due to the economic and social benefits arising from the contracts.

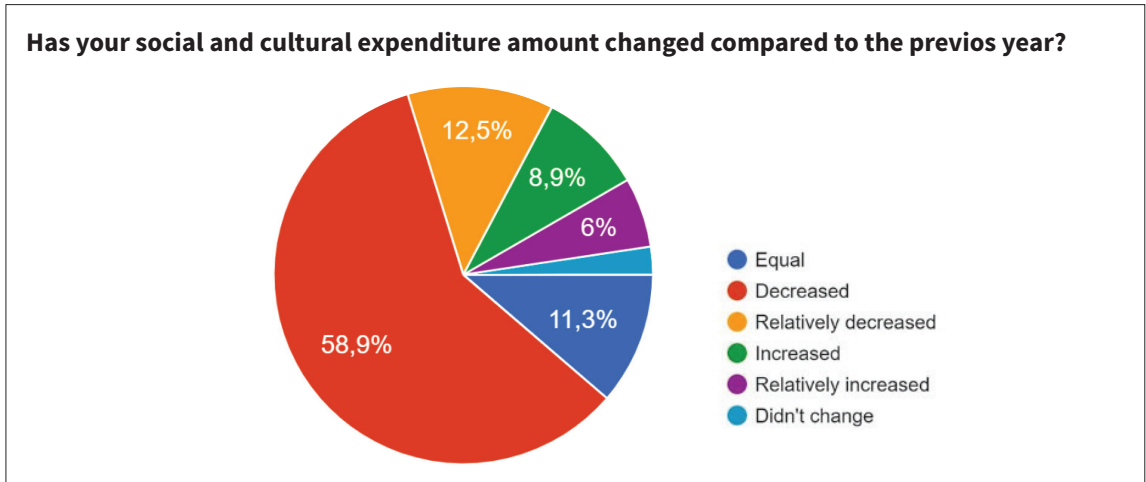
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

52.4% of the respondents (33 people) stated that their social and cultural expenditures decreased compared to last year. The rate of those who said it increased was 23.8% (15 people). While 9.5% (6 people) said that it remained the same, 4.8% (3 people) said that it partially decreased, partially increased, and did not change.



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

The highest share belongs to those who say it has decreased with 58.9% (99 people). This is followed by 12.5% (21 people) who said it decreased slightly, 11.3% (19 people) who said it remained the same, 8.9% (15 people) who said it increased, 6% (10 people) who said it increased slightly and 2.4% (4 people) who said it did not change..



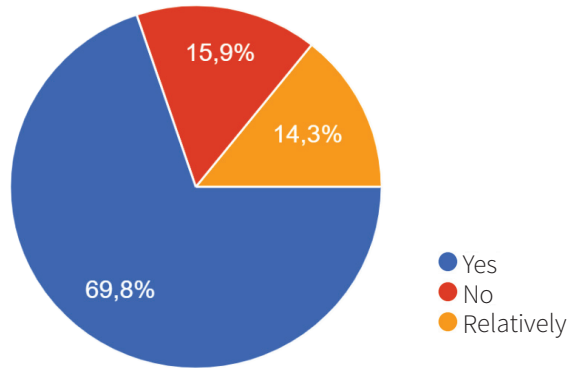
xvi. Bad Economy Suppresses Both Contracts and Rights

The total rate of "yes" and "partially" respondents in the authorized workplaces survey is quite high at 83.2% (53 respondents)..

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 69.8% (44 people) of the respondents think that the economic situation in the country puts pressure on the contract at the workplace, 15.9% (10 people) answered "no" to this question. The share of those who think that the pressure is partial is 14.3% (9 people).

Do you think the country's economic situation puts pressure on your economic and social rights?

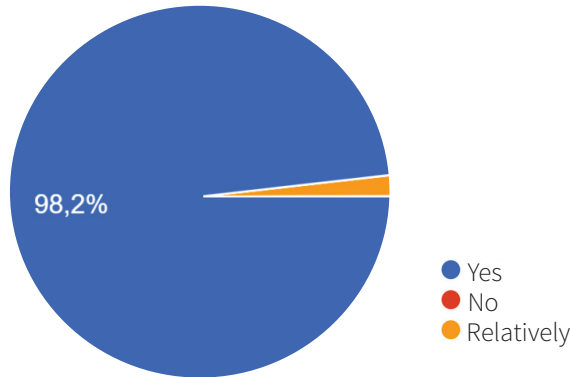


We asked a similar question to the one above in the survey of unauthorized workplaces, but this time we asked whether the economic situation in the country put pressure on economic and social rights rather than contracts.

2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 98.2% of the responses (165 people) were "yes", the remaining 1.8% (3 people) were "partially". Aside from the fact that no respondent answered "no", it is quite remarkable that the sum of "yes" and "partially" answers is 100%. This rate is a strong indication of the source of the poverty felt by members in unauthorized workplaces.

Do you think the country's economic situation puts pressure on your economic and social rights?



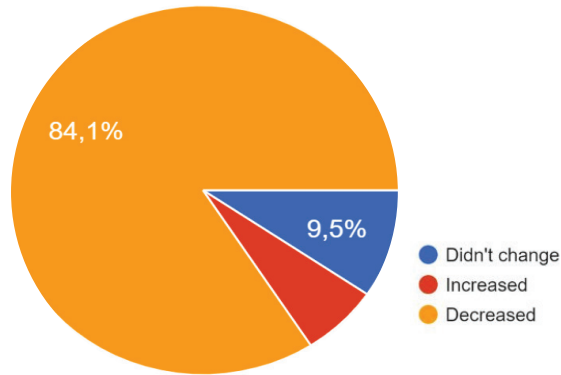
xvii. Purchasing Power Declined Compared to Last Year

We also asked respondents to compare their purchasing power with the previous year. 84.1% (53 respondents) of respondents in the authorized workplaces survey said that their purchasing power had decreased compared to last year. This figure was 91.1% (153 respondents) in the survey of unauthorized workplaces. The high percentage in the authorized survey suggests that the curbing feature of contracts alone is not sufficient in the ongoing slippery economic environment.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

84.1% of the respondents (53 people) stated that their purchasing power decreased compared to last year. 9.5% (6 respondents) said it had not changed, while only 6.3% (4 respondents) said it had increased.

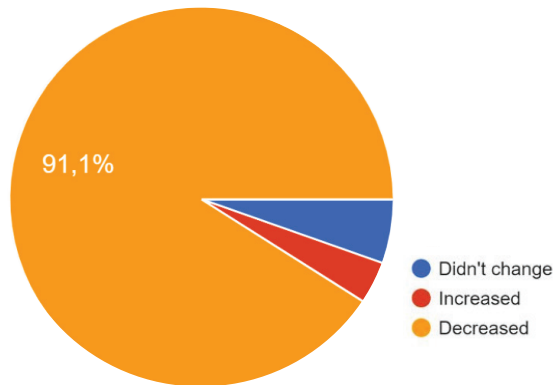
How would you evaluate your current purchasing power compared to the previous year?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 91.1% (153 respondents) said that their purchasing power had decreased compared to last year, 5.4% (9 respondents) said that it had not changed, and 3.5% (6 respondents) said that it had increased.

How would you evaluate your current purchasing power compared to the previous year?



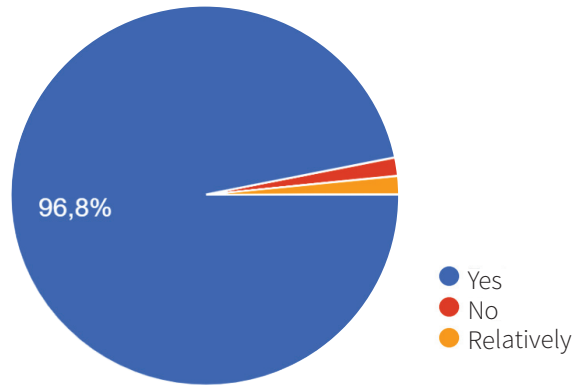
xviii. Wages are Eroding due to Inflation

Unfortunately, the erosion of incomes caused by inflation in the country cannot be fully revealed due to the shady calculation methods of official institutions. On the other hand, the responses of our members working in both authorized and unauthorized workplaces show that the loss is significant.

1-Results of the Authorized Workplaces Survey:

96.8% of the respondents (61 people) think that their income has decreased compared to the previous year due to inflation. Only 1.6% (1 person) answered "no" and "partially" to the question.

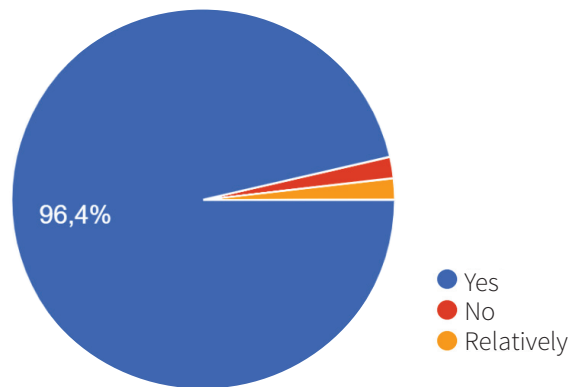
Do you think your income has decreased compared to the previous year due to inflation in the country?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

96.4% of the respondents (162 people) stated that their income decreased compared to the previous year due to inflation. The rate of those who answered "no" and "partially" to the question is 1.8% (3 people).

Do you think your income has decreased compared to the previous year due to inflation in the country?



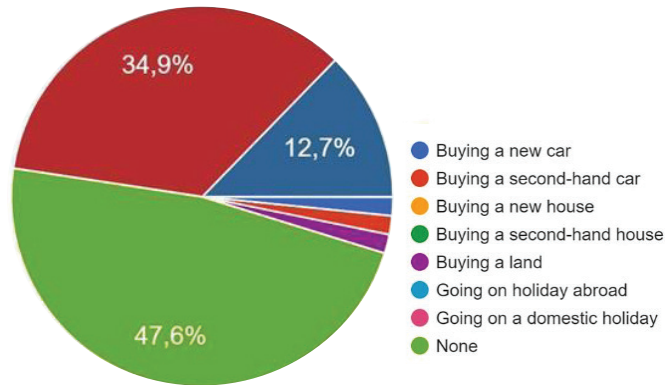
xix. Buying A House or A Car Has Become A Dream

We also asked the respondents what they see themselves close to in the next year. The results of both groups revealed that buying a new or second-hand house or car is not possible for journalists in the near term. In both groups, going on a domestic vacation is the most likely possibility.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 47.6% (30 people) of the respondents do not consider themselves close to anything, 34.9% (22 people) consider themselves close to taking a vacation in Turkey. The rate of those who think that they can take a vacation abroad is 12.7% (8 people). The rate of those who consider themselves close to buying a new car, second-hand car or land is 1.6% (1 person). Buying a new or second-hand house does not seem likely for any respondent.

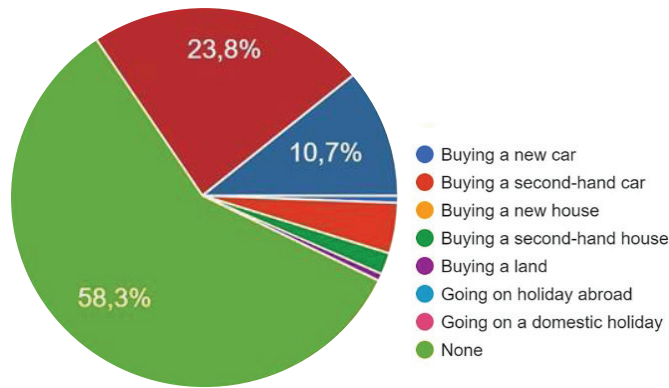
Which of the following do you see yourself closest to in the next year?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 58.3% (98 people) of the respondents do not consider themselves close to anything, 23.8% (40 people) think they can go on a vacation in Turkey. The rate of those who consider themselves close to taking a vacation abroad within a year is 10.7% (18 people). While 4.2% (7 people) think they will be able to buy a second-hand automobile, 1.8% (3 people) feel close to buying a second-hand house. The rate of those who think they can buy a new car or land is 0.6% (1 person)..

Which of the following do you see yourself closest to in the next year?



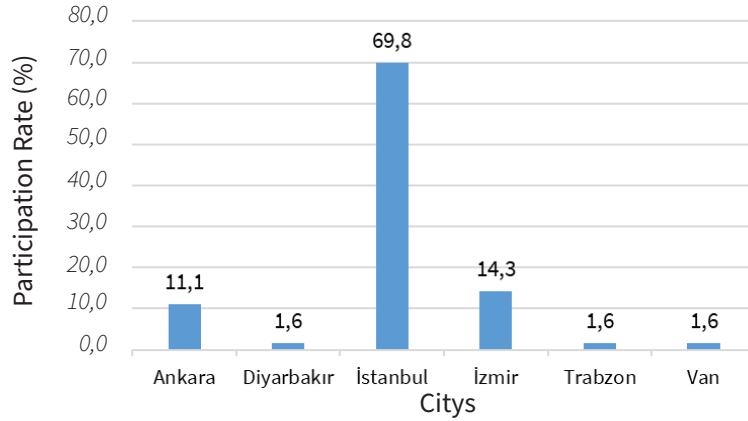
xx. Istanbul Stands Out

According to the union's current list, 61.7% (1262 members) are registered in Istanbul, 6.9% (141 members) in Ankara, 5.1% (105 members) in Izmir, 2.7% (56 members) in Diyarbakır and 1.4% (29 members) in Adana. The prominence of Istanbul in both survey groups is consistent with the distribution of members across provinces.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 69.8% (44 people) of the respondents stated that they live in Istanbul, Izmir ranks second with 14.3% (9 people). The rate of those living in Ankara is 11.1% (7 people), while the rate of those living in Diyarbakır, Trabzon, and Van is 1.6% (1 person).

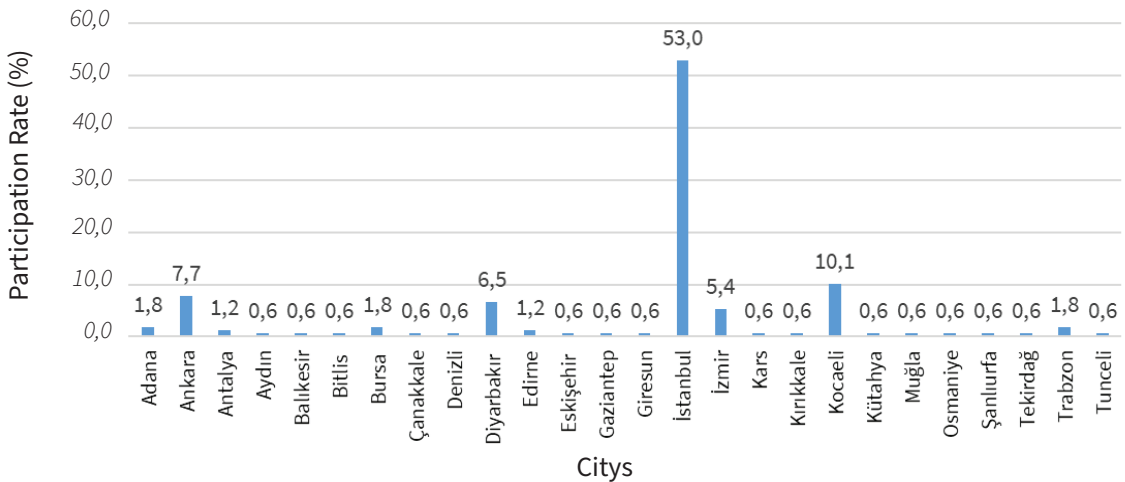
Which city do you live in?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 53% of the respondents (89 people) said they live in İstanbul, the closest proportion is Kocaeli with 10.1% (17 people). This is followed by Ankara with 7.7% (13 people), Diyarbakır with 6.5% (11 people) and İzmir with 5.4% (9 people). Adana, Bursa, and Trabzon have 1.8% (3 people), while Antalya and Edirne have 1.2% (2 people). There is one respondent each from Aydın, Balıkesir, Bitlis, Çanakkale, Denizli, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Giresun, Kars, Kırıkkale, Kütahya, Muğla, Osmaniye, Şanlıurfa, Tekirdağ and Tunceli.

Which city do you live in?

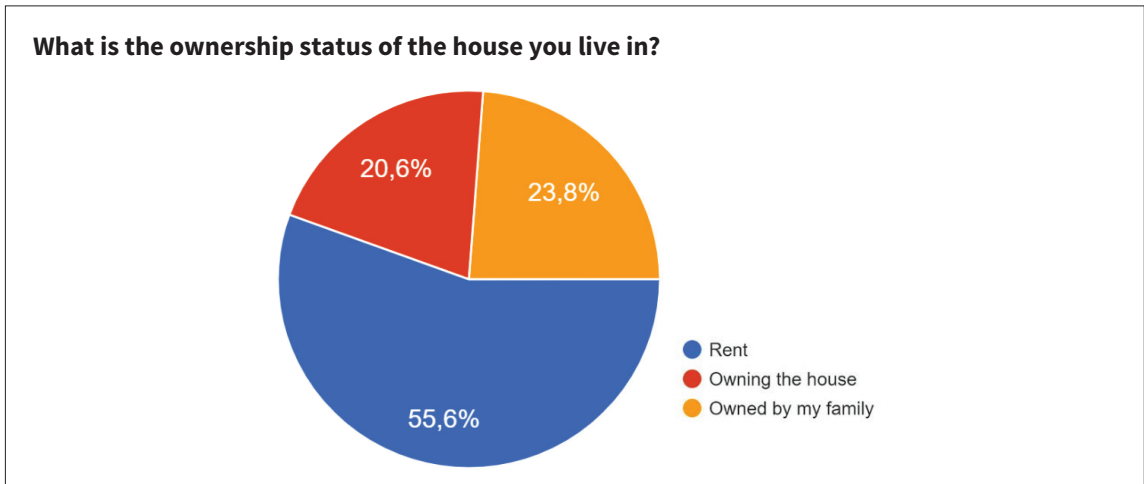


xxi. Half of Journalists Live in Rent

While 55.6% (35 people) live in rented accommodation in the authorized workplaces survey, this rate drops to 49.4% (83 people) in the unauthorized workplaces survey. The main reason for the difference against the survey of authorized workplaces is that the contracts were concluded in İstanbul, İzmir, and Ankara. The high housing prices in these three cities compared to other cities also make it difficult for members of authorized workplaces to own a house. .

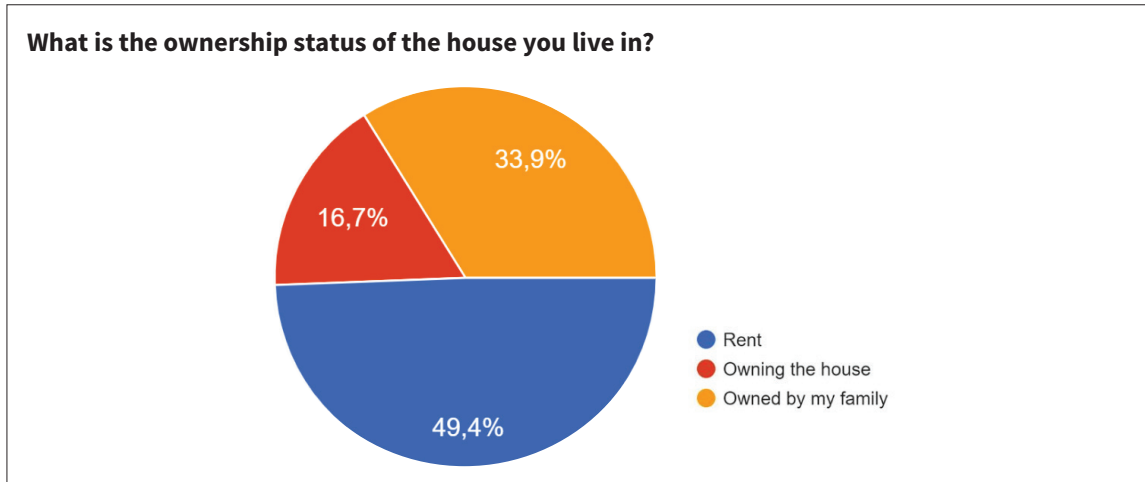
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

55.6% (35 people) of the respondents said that the house they live in is rented. While 23.8% (15 people) said that the house belonged to their family, 20.6% (13 people) said that it was owned.



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 49.4% (83 people) of the respondents say that the house they live in is rented, 33.9% (57 people) say that it belongs to their family. The rate of homeowners ranks last with 16.7% (28 people).



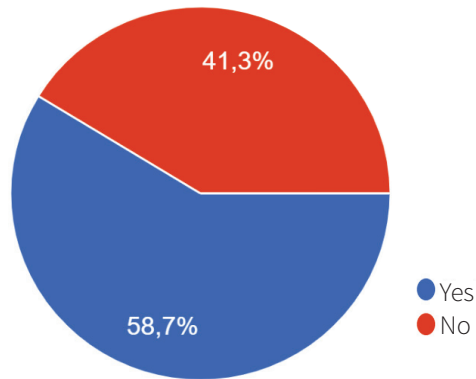
xxii. Not the Only One With an Income at Household

Looking at the survey in unauthorized workplaces, it is noticeable that there are others in the household with a regular income. Although subjective circumstances and preferences abound, it may be that the higher the economic benefit in contracted workplaces, the less need there is for other members of the household to engage in income-generating work.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 58.7% (37 people) of the participants said that they had other regular income earners at home, 41.3% (26 people) answered "no" to this question.

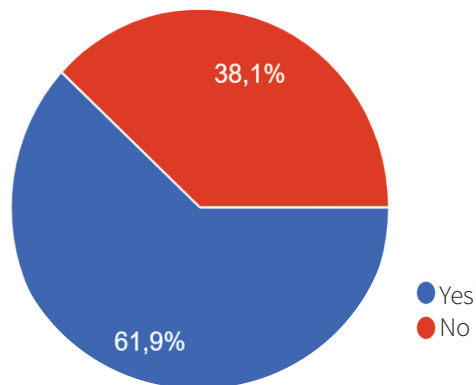
Is there anyone else in your household who has a regular income?



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

While 61.9% (104 people) of the participants said that they had other regular income earners at home, 38.1% (64 people) answered "no" to this question.

Is there anyone else in your household who has a regular income?



XXiii. Majority Ready to Quit Journalism

We asked this question to measure the impact of the possibility of better wages outside the sector on the profession. 56.4% of our members in authorized workplaces answered "yes" to this question, while this rate was 56.8% in the survey of unauthorized workplaces.

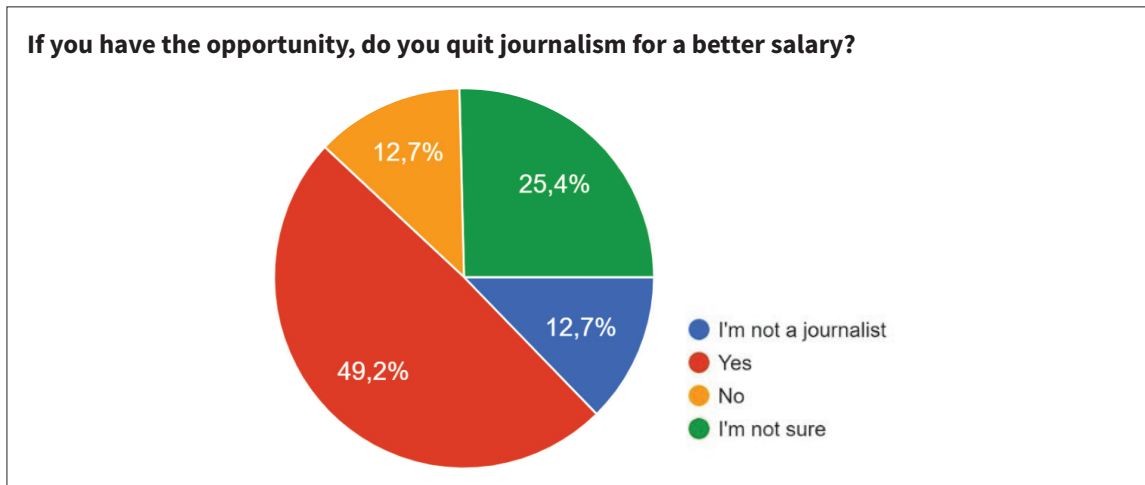
While interpreting the rates that are very close to each other in both groups, we can of course list low wages, long working hours, and poverty as important reasons. Based on our observations and interviews in the field, we can easily say that the job of press consultant for municipalities or political parties is very popular among journalists and is used as an escape route from poverty not only locally but also in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. On the other hand, when interpreting the data, it is necessary to take into account many factors such as restrictions on freedom of the press, professional dissatisfaction, journalists being subjected to detentions, arrests, and investigations due to the news they report, loss of reputation of the profession, mobbing, etc.

1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

While 49.2% (31 people) of the participants said that they would leave journalism for a better salary if they had the opportunity, 12.7% (8 people) answered "no" to this question. The rate of those who answered "not sure" to the question is 25.4% (16 people).

When we subtract the option "I am not a journalist" from the responses and make a new ratio, the result is as follows:

Among the 55 respondents, 56.4% said "yes", 14.5% said "no" and 29.1% said, "not sure".

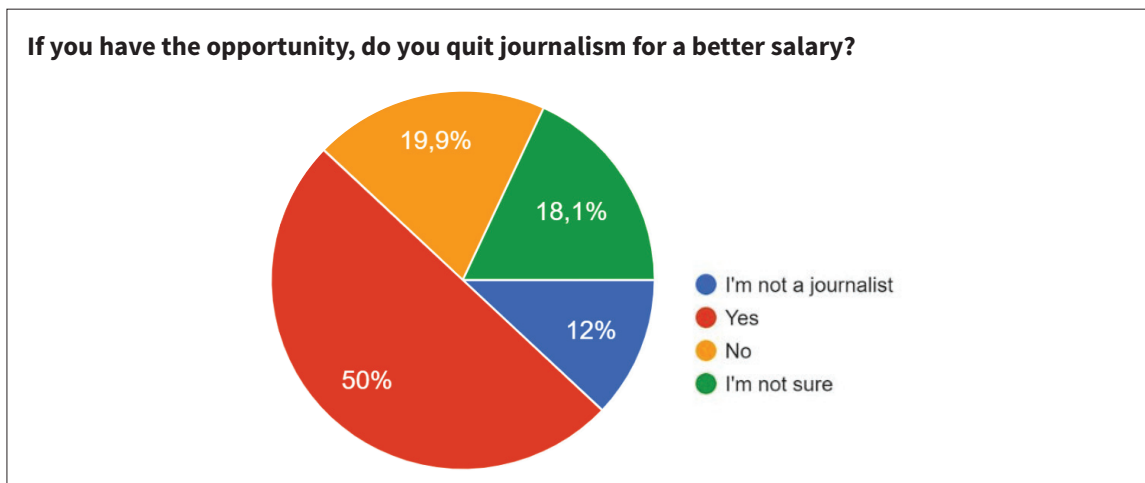


2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

Exactly half of the respondents (83 people) are ready to leave journalism for a better salary. While 19.9% (33 people) answered "no" to this question, 18.1% (30 people) answered "not sure". The rate of those who answered "I am not a journalist" is 12% (20 people).

When we remove the option "I am not a journalist" from the responses and re-proportion the result is as follows:

Among the 146 respondents, 56.8% said "yes", 22.6% said "no" and 20.5% said "not sure".

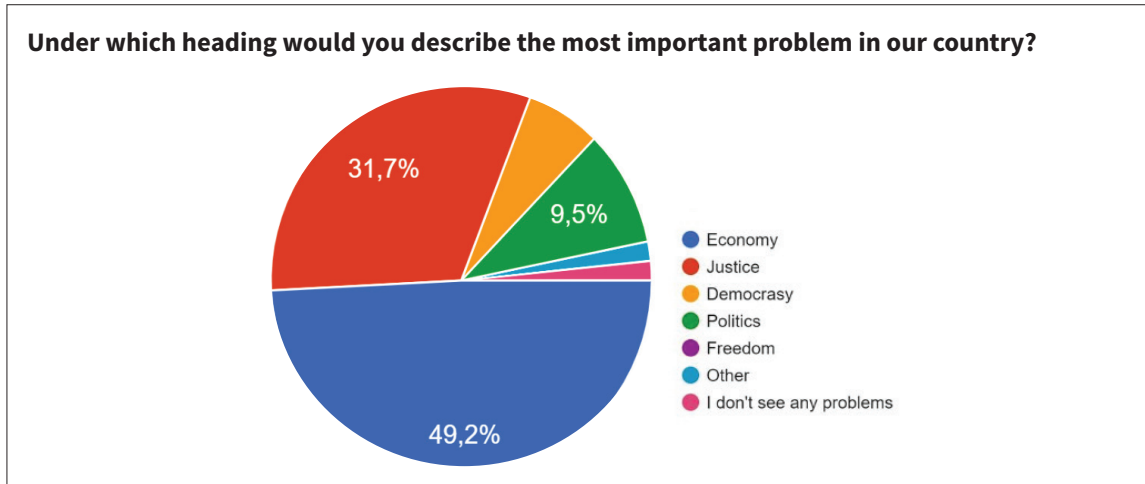


xxiv. The Economy is the Most Important Problem in the Country

The answers to the question about the most important problem in the country are not surprising. High inflation and income inequality lead the respondents to choose "economy" as the most important problem. The fact that justice came second indicates the discomfort with the frequent prosecution of journalism.

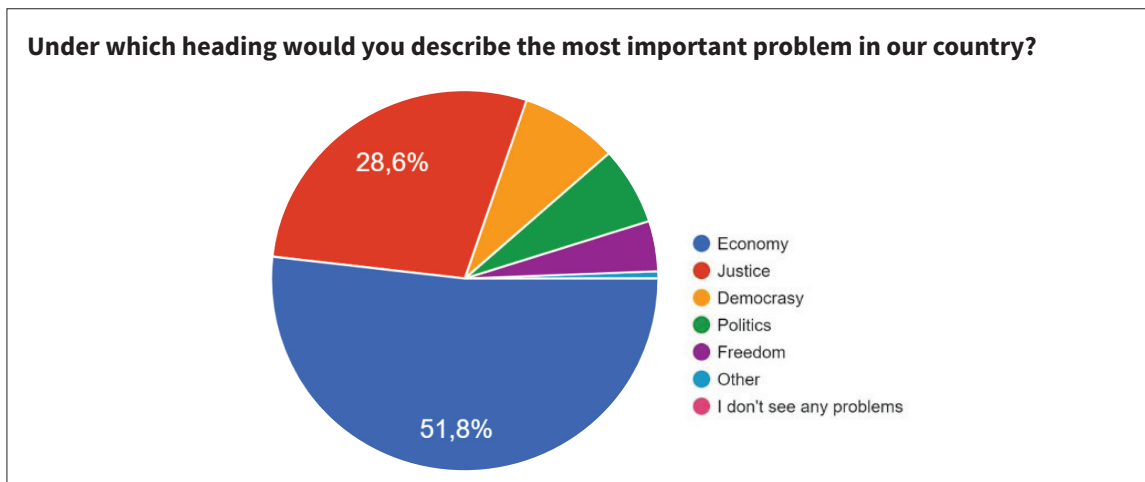
1- Results of the Survey of Authorized Workplaces:

49.2% (31 respondents) think that the most important problem in the country is the economy. Justice ranks second with 31.7% (20 respondents). The rate of those who think that politics is a problem is 9.5% (6 people). 6.3% of the respondents (4 people) preferred the option "democracy". The rate of those who chose "other" and "do not see a problem" is the same with 1.6% (1 person).



2- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

51.8% (87 respondents) said that the most important problem in the country is the economy. Justice ranked second with 28.6% (48 people). "Democracy" came third with 8.3% (14 people). The rate of those who said that politics was a problem was 6.5% (11 people). The rate of those who said "freedom" remained at 4.2% (7 people).

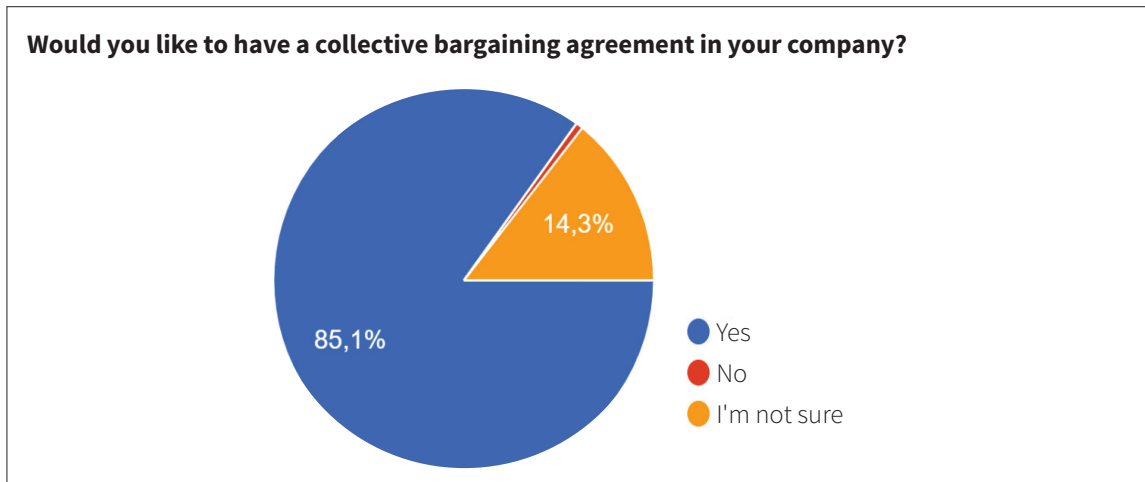


xxv. Members Demand Collective Bargaining and Better Rights

The overwhelming majority of members in unauthorized workplaces declared that they would like to have a collective bargaining agreement in their workplace.

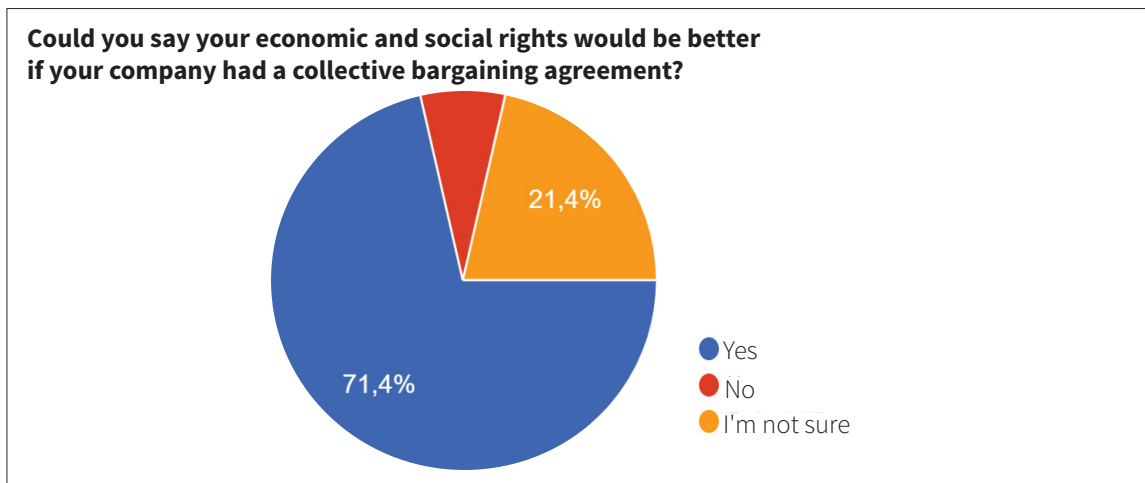
1- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

A significant proportion of respondents, 85.1% (143 people), said that they would like to have a collective bargaining agreement at their workplace. The rate of those who were not sure was 14.3% (24 people), while the rate of those who did not want a contract remained at 0.6% (1 person).



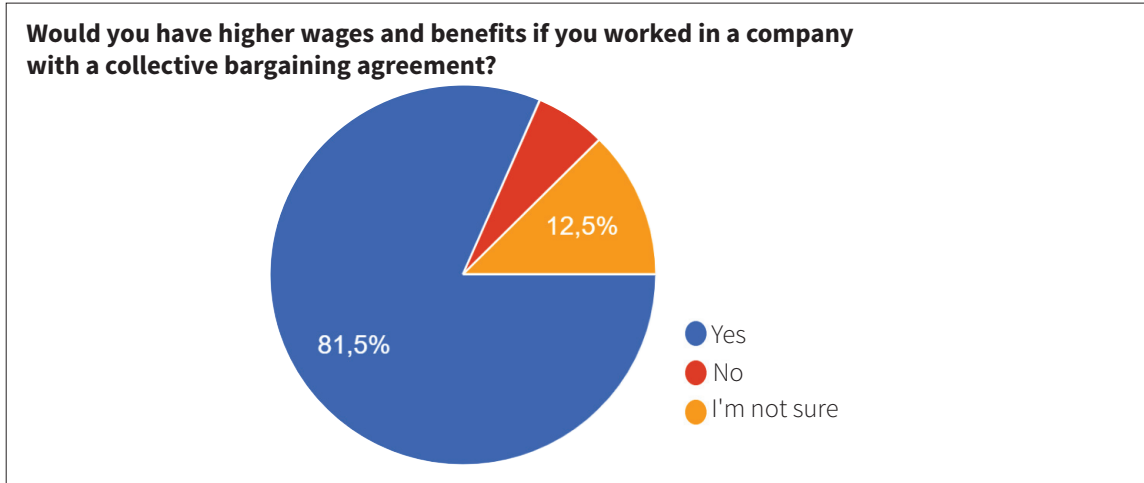
1- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

71.4% of the participants think that their economic and social rights would be better if there was a collective bargaining agreement at the workplace. The rate of those who answered "no" to this question is 7.1% (12 people), while the rate of those who answered "not sure" is 21.4% (36 people).



1- Results of the Unauthorized Workplaces Survey:

81.5% of the participants think that they would have higher wages and benefits if they were working in a contracted workplace. The rate of those who answered "not sure" to this question is 12.5% (21 people), while the rate of those who answered "no" is 6% (10 people).



The responses to the above three questions in the survey of unauthorized workplaces show a positive perception of the agreements among journalists. Journalists want to unionize and work in a system with collective bargaining agreements. They think that their wages and benefits will improve if they work in a contracted workplace. On the other hand, when it comes to their current workplaces, they are somewhat skeptical that a possible contract will improve their economic and social rights. There are many reasons for this view. These include mistrust, the belief that the union will not be successful in the workplace, fear of the employer, the idea that the financial capacity and capability of the enterprise are insufficient, etc. On the other hand, the majority of members who both want a contract and think that their rights will be better at the workplace are promising for those who are concerned about organizing.

xxvi. General Evaluation of Survey Data

When we evaluate the survey results in general, which have been discussed above in a comprehensive manner, the following headings stand out :

1. The professional seniority of the participants shows a balanced distribution.
2. In both groups, at least 2/3 of the participants defined their work as journalistic activity.
3. There is no significant difference between the distribution of union members according to the scale of the enterprises and the scale distribution of the enterprises where the participants work.
4. Wages remain below the poverty line, especially in unauthorized workplaces. While 25.4% of authorized workplaces have net earnings above the poverty line, this rate is only 4.2% in unauthorized workplaces.
5. Participants mostly have no additional income other than their wages.
6. About half of the members, especially in unauthorized workplaces, rely on financial support from their families to make ends meet.
7. More than half of members, especially in unauthorized workplaces, struggle to meet all their needs with their monthly income.
8. In both groups, more than 1/4 of the respondents need at least 30,000 TL per month to meet their basic needs.

9. 3/4 of the respondents do not do additional work for a living but would do so if the opportunity arose.
10. Most of their income is spent on housing/rent, transportation, and food.
11. While a significant portion of the participants feel poor, the majority of them see themselves in the low-income group.
12. The monthly budget allocated by participants for social and cultural development has decreased significantly compared to last year.
13. The economic situation in the country suppresses not only contracts in authorized workplaces but also economic and social rights in unauthorized workplaces.
14. The majority of respondents stated that their purchasing power has decreased compared to last year. Almost all respondents in both groups said that their income has decreased compared to last year due to inflation.
15. For those surveyed, buying a new or second-hand house or car is not feasible in the near term.
16. Half of the respondents live in rented accommodation. The majority of them state that they are not the sole income earner in their households.
17. More than half of journalists surveyed in both authorized and unauthorized workplaces would leave journalism for better pay if they had the opportunity.
18. For respondents, the most important problem in the country is the economy. Justice comes second.
19. Members who participated in the survey of unauthorized workplaces demanded collective bargaining and better rights.

As can be seen from the survey results, we are not yet at a satisfactory point. The last few years have left us, journalists, economically and socially vulnerable, like sailors caught unprepared for a storm. Unless we make a move to turn the tables, the difficulties will increase rather than decrease. On the other hand, the fact that members in authorized workplaces do better than members in unauthorized workplaces in many survey questions shows the way forward.

CONCLUSION

Journalists spent this year in prisons, courthouses, and police stations. There was no positive development in the situation of the press between the two election periods. On the contrary, the pressure on the press, arrests, and detentions continued to increase following the Censorship Law.

In this year's press freedom report, we focused on journalist poverty because the impoverishment of journalists is directly related to press freedom. Where there is poverty, the pressure on the press also deepens. In our report, we tried to reveal the economic and social status of journalists through a survey. In this respect, the report contains important data on why poverty is an important and burning problem for journalists.

As the survey results show, journalists feel poor. This is the case in both authorized and unauthorized workplaces. The relatively better situation in authorized workplaces can be explained by the economic and social benefits of the contracts. On the other hand, it is also clear from the survey data that the economic situation in the country puts pressure on contracts in authorized workplaces. According to the survey results, the most important problem in the country according to journalists is the economy, followed by justice. This is an expected result for both poor journalists and those who have made courtrooms their home. Journalists, who work in a profession that requires continuous learning and the development of skills, knowledge, and abilities, cannot allocate enough budget for their social and cultural development due to poverty. This leaves journalists both poor and deprived.

In our country, the only way out is still to struggle to change this unjust order that makes journalists accept death (unemployment) but not malaria (poverty). And the way to struggle is to organize and unionize. We still have a long way to go before the benefits of contracts increase, become more visible, and become the norm in the sector. Before the September 12 coup d'état, the TGS was able to sign and maintain contracts in five newspapers that accounted for more than 80% of average newspaper sales. We know from the contracts of the period and from the accounts of journalists who lived through this period that the economic and social prosperity this provided lasted until the end of the 90s. We need an organized, unionized, and combative journalism profession again for something better. If we realize this, poverty will cease to be an agenda for our profession. As can be seen in the responses to the survey, journalists want to be unionized and work under a system with collective bargaining agreements. The majority of members who both want a contract and think that their rights will be better in their workplaces are promising for those of us who are concerned about organizing.

The structural problems stemming from the country's economy have reached a level that cannot be curbed by unions and their contracts alone. Journalists, like millions of citizens, are deeply affected by income inequality, high inflation, falling purchasing power, and poverty caused by structural problems. This reality points out the need for stronger and more sustainable unions and professional organizations concerned with economic and social rights of journalists.



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