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PUBLIC STATEMENT

LATEST DEVELOPMENT
March 13, 2026

Türkiye should end repeated prosecutions of Ahmet Altan over his journalism

A new prison sentence for Ahmet Altan underscores the need for Türkiye to stop using broadly framed terrorism charges against peaceful journalism.

What we know

Ahmet Altan was prosecuted after the failed 2016 coup and released from prison in 2021. The European Court of Human Rights found violations related to his detention and freedom of expression. On March 13, 2026, an Istanbul court sentenced him to four years and six months for aiding a terrorist organization without membership. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that he remained free pending appeal. [1–6]

Our position

Commentary and journalism are not terrorism. Repeated prosecution of a writer for the same body of work undermines the effect of a European Court judgment. Türkiye is a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [1, 5, 7]

Our calls

Amnesty Freedom calls on the authorities to:

1. Give full effect to the European Court's judgment.
2. End efforts to imprison Altan for protected journalism.
3. Review similar prosecutions.
4. Ensure courts distinguish expression and commentary from conduct that meets narrowly defined criminal standards.

Supporting information

1. European Court of Human Rights, Ahmet Hüsrev Altan v. Turkey
2. CPJ welcomes release of Turkish journalist Ahmet Altan - Committee to Protect Journalists
3. Turkey: Writer Ahmet Altan released from prison — PEN International | Promoting Literature & Defending Freedom of Expression Worldwide
4. Nazlı Ilıcak ve Ahmet Altan'ın yeniden yargılandığı FETÖ davasında karar - Son Dakika Gündem Haberleri
5. Veteran Turkish journalists Ahmet Altan and Nazlı Ilıcak sentenced to prison - Committee to Protect Journalists
6. Ahmet Altan - PEN America
7. Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights

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Note to editors: *This statement is based on the public sources listed above. The date shown is that of the most recent development recorded in those sources; later developments may not be reflected.*

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