



Cumhuriyet

Cumhuriyet is the most important independent public interest newspaper in contemporary Turkey. Since 1924, it has been committed to upholding the principle of freedom of the press against all odds; its staff have taken immense personal risks and have suffered assassinations and imprisonment to remain outspoken in reporting on issues of human rights, gender equality, secularism and protection of the environment. Cumhuriyet's stellar investigative journalism has brought several truths to public scrutiny. At a time when the freedom of expression in Turkey is under increasing threat, Cumhuriyet proves that the voice of democracy will not be silenced.

An institution dedicated to advancing public interest journalism

For close to a century since its founding by Yunus Nadi, Cumhuriyet (meaning 'republic' in Turkish), has been considered to be one of the most important symbols of the Turkish republic. It draws its inspiration from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has struggled for human rights and a more democratic Turkey. As independence is paramount for Cumhuriyet, the newspaper has been registered as a foundation since 1993, and is mostly supported through its readership. A veritable Turkish institution, being a Cumhuriyet reader has become synonymous with embracing democratic values and a pluralistic society. Today, the newspaper has a daily circulation of 53,000.

Defending free speech against all odds

Cumhuriyet employees – journalists, cartoonists, photographers and columnists – have always put their principles and the public interest first, and many have suffered as a consequence. During the military coup, many columnists were imprisoned for fighting/advocating/standing up for human rights and the freedom of opinion. Five staff have been assassinated over the years, and, more recently, several Cumhuriyet employees and leaders have been charged in court and imprisoned. Additionally, many others have received death threats for simply carrying out their professional duty as journalists. Pressure has also been exerted on companies that buy the newspaper's advertising space in order to hurt the newspaper financially.

Today, there is a prevailing climate of fear and intimidation against Turkish journalists, and Turkey ranks 151st among 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. Prominent Cumhuriyet journalist and then Editor in Chief Can Dündar is a case in point. In May 2015, the newspaper courageously published footage that purported to show Turkey's state



intelligence agency transporting weapons into Syria in 2014 for the purpose of arming combatants in the Syrian Civil War. In response, President Erdoğan filed a criminal complaint against Dündar and Cumhuriyet Ankara bureau chief Erdem Gül, whom he accused of undermining Turkey's global standing. On the day of the verdict, a gunman tried and failed to assassinate Dündar outside the courtroom. The court, which acquitted Dündar and Gül of attempting to overthrow the government, nevertheless found them guilty of publishing secret state documents and sentenced them to five years' imprisonment. Dündar, who was freed after appealing the verdict, described it as a "verdict against journalism." Following the imposition of a state of emergency in Turkey, Dündar announced his resignation as Editor in Chief in August 2016, as he no longer believes that the judiciary can function independently. He continues to write for Cumhuriyet as a columnist.

Honours

In July 2016, Can Dündar was named by the Committee to Protect Journalists as one of the recipients of the 2016 International Press Freedom Awards.