**April 16th 2017 Constitutional Referendum Interim Report**

**Independent Election Monitoring Platform**

The **Association for Monitoring Equal Rights (AMER)** was established in İstanbul, Turkey to monitor and combat discrimination in society to enable equal rights for each person belonging to disadvantaged groups. AMER carries out all its monitoring and reporting activities in consultation and partnership with national and grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs) which work with various disadvantaged groups including women, persons with disabilities, different ethnic and religious minority groups etc. in different parts of Turkey. Since its foundation in October 2010, AMER has been carrying out projects that monitor and report discrimination with regard to enjoyment of human rights by disadvantaged groups living in the society.

AMER carries out independent election observation activities using the methodology and framework of assessment established by the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). AMER’s methodology also includes the participation of rights-based local CSOs working in the field of human rights, women’s rights, LGBT rights, and economic and cultural rights from seven different regions in Turkey. Observation activities are aimed at monitoring and reporting on election processes to determine whether international standards are met, with a focus on whether electoral rights are freely exercised by disadvantaged groups (including people with disabilities, people who do not know how to read and write, citizens who have different mother tongue, women in shelters, LGBT persons, seasonal workers, other minority groups, etc.). The election observation process follows a long-term methodology and covers creation of voters’ registration, selection of candidates, election campaigns, voter training and awareness, election day and complaints and appeal processes.

AMER, together with 46 local CSOs (Independent Election Observation Platform) has observed every election held in Turkey since the June 2011 General Elections. The June 2011 elections were observed in 10 different provinces, 15 provinces were observed in March 2015 local elections, 14 provinces in August 2014 elections, 21 provinces in June 7th elections, and 20 provinces in the November 1st elections. The referendum to be held on April 16th for the new constitutional amendment will also be monitored by the Platform.

**Overall Situation**

The State of Emergency in Turkey, first declared on July 21st 2016 following the failed coup attempt, was extended for another 3-month period on January 19th. During the State of Emergency, 21 executive orders went into effect, 5 of which were approved by the Parliament. The executive orders have ordered the dismissal of around 150.000 civil servants, prosecution of 100.000 individuals, and detainment of 40.000 people. Additionally, 1583 civil society organizations (CSOs) were dissolved without due process, and 158 media outlets have been closed. Members of the judiciary, police, military, local governments, academia, and the business community were affected by the executive orders. The reasoning and justification for dismissals and closures were not offered, and an effective appeal opportunity was not offered. A decision by the Constitutional Court has placed executive orders beyond the scope of its powers, and deemed the actions of the executive orders beyond opportunity to appeal.

Following the coup attempt, a rhetoric of terror and terrorism spread in the political discourse. Not only the coup plotters, but members of the Fethullah Gülen movement, Kurdish politicians, academics demanding peace, and increasingly all other dissenting factions of the society were equated with the coup plotters and labelled as terrorists. As bombings and other security threats increased, more drastic action towards civilians that oppose government actions were justified. Increasingly, the words ‘terrorism’ and ‘terrorist’ lost its meaning, coming to mean anyone opposing the government, the President, and their actions. Informants feeding unsubstantiated information to authorities were encouraged, and an atmosphere of fear and distrust took hold of all factions of society.

This rhetoric was also used towards pro-Kurdish members of the parliament and local governments. Currently, 13 HDP Members of the Parliament, including its two co-chairs, are under arrest with a myriad of charges, mostly focusing on affiliation with terrorist organizations. Over 80 mayors and several hundred local government authorities belonging to BDP, another pro-Kurdish party, were pushed out with similar accusations. Other authorities assigned by the government replaced the positions. President Erdoğan said that there is no difference between a ‘terrorist with weapons and a terrorist holding onto his dollars’ when the Turkish currency hit a new low against US Dollars following the crackdown on alleged coup plotters.[[1]](#footnote-1) On March 16th, 2016, before the coup attempt, President Erdoğan asked for the legal definition of terror to be broadened, stating that “there is no difference between a terrorist with a gun and a bomb in his hand and those who use their work and pen to support terror. Whether the status of the person is an MP, academic, author, journalist does not change the fact that the person is a terrorist’.[[2]](#footnote-2) As the State of Emergency gave new, unchecked powers to the President and the government, this redefinition was realized through the legal, political, and rhetorical targeting of thousands of people maintaining oppositional positions to the government and the president.

These developments have brought significant unease to the electorate of the Turkey. In many instances leading up to the referendum vote on April 16th, President Erdoğan and other public authorities have implied that those voting for No would be siding with terrorists and coup plotters.[[3]](#footnote-3) Given that the State of Emergency will still be in effect during the referendum and could be subject to extension has placed voters and observers in fear that they would be targeted with further executive actions if a No vote wins. The current political climate and the atmosphere of fear makes the timing of the referendum a worrisome one, if merely from a psychological perspective.

**Fairness**

An important factor to consider when assessing the fairness of the vote is that the government, or the majority party AKP, and the President are sides in the referendum. This means that the Yes vote, which they support, has a lot more resources and platforms than the No vote. Although the use of public resources is strictly forbidden by law, and the fairness of the election is ensured with laws on the amount of air time each side gets, visibility in the media, ability to campaign and have observers in the election committees, the campaign period of the April 16th referendum has seen many important attacks to the checks and balances ensuring a fair election campaign.

* Use of Public Resources: The use of public resources is expressly forbidden in the Law on Basic Provisions, and prohibits holding state events or making statements on public works in the 8 days before the vote. Public personnel are banned from making statements or campaigning for either side. However, monitoring activities have revealed that public platforms, personnel, and institutions have been channelled to support the Yes vote in the lead up to the referendum.

A variety of public resources and institutions, as well as status as public authority, were used to support the Yes vote in the referendum campaign. The rule on the non-partisanship of public personnel was widely violated. A higher level public prosecutor in Antalya stated on his twitter account, “PKK has made a call for a No vote in the referendum. This means that those who vote No on the ballot are risking being treated the same as towards the PKK. No hard feelings later on”.[[4]](#footnote-4) Mayors of Havza of Ankara, Düzce, Ereğli, Altındağ, İstanbul, Rize, Antalya and many other members of local governments actively participated in campaigning efforts for the Yes campaign.[[5]](#footnote-5) Posters for a Yes vote were hung on the walls of public schools, governmental buildings, public buses, metro stations, public dorms and universities, and even the historic walls of İstanbul, protected as a world heritage by UNESCO. High school students were forced to attend Yes campaign events, schools were cancelled for a half day for rallies organized by President Erdoğan. AKP meetings were held in public schools, public personnel were forced to attend Yes meetings or work for the Yes campaign. Public buses were run for free to bring participants to Yes campaign rallies. In Ağrı, Tutak, the district governor put a hold on the farming incentives of 17 villages, and stated that the funds would not be given if a Yes vote did not come from the district.[[6]](#footnote-6) There was a similar instance of the taking hostage of public resources for a Yes vote in Adilceviz of Bitlis.[[7]](#footnote-7) The Media and Information Directorate in İstanbul is covered with Yes posters, and the sheer ubiquity of the Yes posters has led to a pronounced need for the disclosure of campaign resources, especially by the Yes campaign. There was also support for the No campaign from public personnel. The mayor of Eskişehir Municipality made a call for a No vote.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Similarly, public resources were used to harm the No campaign. No posters were taken down by local government personnel, Republican People’s Party (CHP) campaign tents were taken down by municipal police, CHP buses were not allowed through districts, and private events in universities were prevented. According to monitoring data, public resources were used for a Yes vote in 38 instances, for a No vote in one instance, and the No campaign was prevented through public resources in 6 instances. However, without more transparency on campaign financing, it is difficult to measure the extent of the abuse of public resources for the referendum campaigns.

* Impartiality of the President: The Constitution declares the President of the Republic to be an impartial position. The President cannot have an affiliation to a political party, and is meant to be a check to the powers of the government and all other branches of the state. Therefore, the ban on campaigning, which started on April 9th, does not affect the President’s ability to campaign for the Yes vote. Additionally, the lack of impartiality of the President, whose position is enshrined in the Constitution to be impartial, gives the Yes vote an upper hand in campaign financing. Usually, political parties receive their campaign financing from the Treasury. However, since the President is not affiliated with a political party, there are no limits to his campaigning through public visits and public works openings. He can also use his official Presidential plane, car, and bus on his campaigning, generally banned for other public authorities. In short, none of the campaign limitations that ensure fair elections apply to the President, which in this referendum grants a significant advantage to the Yes campaign. Additionally, the Supreme Board of Elections (SBE), the highest authority ensuring fair and orderly election and campaigns, does not have authority over the President. This removes all checks and balances on the actions of the President in his campaign for the Yes vote.
* Visibility on News Media: The legislation on rules for referendum campaigns ensures equal access of eligible parties to the media, and obliges media to conduct impartial coverage of the campaign. There is, however, significant discrepancy in the visibility of the Yes and No campaigns in the news media. According to a report by Demokrasi için Birlik İnisiyatifi, which monitored 17 television channels throughout March, the Yes campaign got 485 hours of air time, whereas the No campaign received 45 hours. The President alone was on air for 3210 minutes, whereas the third largest party in the Parliament, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) received merely 33 minutes. An executive order published on February 9th 2017 removed the authority of the SBE to fine private TV and radio channels that do not feature both parties equitably. Bearing in mind that the campaign period started on February 16th, the timing of this change has brought the fairness of the order into question. Additionally, under normal circumstances, any changes to laws affecting elections and campaigns do not affect elections that are held within the year of the amendment. Since this change was made with an executive order, however, it also applies to the April 16th referendum. In public media, the inequality of air time persists as well. Both HDP and CHP, the political parties represented in the Parliament and campaigning for a No vote, have made complaints about the disproportionate air time given to their campaigns on the state-owned television network TRT. The crackdown on opposition news sources over the past two years, explained more elaborately below, adds to the lack of fairness in news coverage of the Yes and No campaigns.
* Members of Ballot Box Committees: In the legal framework for the Ballot Box Committees, the lowest administrative board in elections, it is a requirement for the Ballot Box Committee members to be of ‘good reputation’. This concept is vague and open to interpretation, but has never been used as an explicit criterion in other elections in Turkey. It came into consideration in the referendum preparation process, when the Dicle District Election Board in Diyarbakır made an inquiry to the SBE regarding how the criteria should be used. The inquiry included whether the Boards could ask to learn about any investigations are being made on the suggested political party Committee members and whether the membership of those who have ongoing investigations could be denied. As a response, the SBE made decision number 359, and referenced Article 22 of Law number 298, where the term ‘good reputation’ takes place, and left the determination of ‘good reputation’ up to the discretion of the District Election Boards. In practice, the vagueness of the criteria is observed to have been used to deny the membership of CHP and HDP members on the Ballot Box Committees.

Based on monitoring data, the number of terminated members of Ballot Box Committees and their cities are as follows: 24 in Nusaybin (Mardin)[[9]](#footnote-9), 30 HDP and CHP members in Çınar (Diyarbakır)[[10]](#footnote-10), 51 in Batman[[11]](#footnote-11), 100 in Siirt[[12]](#footnote-12), 151 in Hakkari[[13]](#footnote-13), 22 in Fatih (İstanbul)[[14]](#footnote-14), 27 in İpekyolu (Van)[[15]](#footnote-15), 23 in Iğdır[[16]](#footnote-16), 18 HDP members in Varto (Muş)[[17]](#footnote-17), 10 in Mezitli (Mersin),[[18]](#footnote-18) and 60 in Yalova[[19]](#footnote-19). In total, 526 members of Ballot Box Committees were identified as being denied due to the undefined ‘good reputation’ criteria.

* Permission for Non-partisan Campaigning: Political parties fulfilling election eligibility criteria are chosen each election season by the SBE, and are officially sanctioned to conduct formal campaigning. There is generally a ban on non-partisan campaigning in Turkey. However, in the previous constitutional referendum, certain groups (Yetmez ama Evet) conducted effective campaigning across Turkey. Samsun Provincial Election Board made an inquiry about non-party affiliated campaigning to the SBE before the referendum campaign. The SBE made the decision that not the authority to decide which groups would be allowed to campaign, other than the eligible political parties, would not be left up to the election boards, but to state appointed local authorities, including the Governorates.[[20]](#footnote-20) This decision created a potential conflict of interest for the appointed authorities, since the government is a side in this referendum. The identified impact of this development and other effects of Governorates on freedom of peaceful assembly are offered below (Fundamental Rights).

**Access**

* Homeless Population and Women’s Shelters: The voter registration system in Turkey is passive and address-based, as voting in Turkey is coded as a responsibility of all citizens. The address-based registration system, however, excludes homeless voters from the voting system. This situation was acknowledged in a decision made by the SBE on 10.06.2011, when they listed the homeless population as not included in voter registration. In a Freedom of Information request to the Ministry of Family and Social Policy conducted by AMER regarding the number, gender distribution and other segregated data on the homeless population, the response declared that such data is not being collected in Turkey. A similar problem occurs with women in women’s shelters. The women’s shelters in Turkey are for the most part operated by the state or by local governments. According to 2016 data, over 20.000 women are staying at women’s shelters. In a FoI request to the SBE, AMER inquired whether special precautions are being taken to ensure these women’s rights to vote safely. The response declared that if the manager of the shelter takes the necessary steps, the women can vote near their shelters. However, this is left to the discretion and responsibility of the managers, and no systematic precaution is being taken.
* Prison Population: Given the amount of people taken into custody following the coup attempt, the access of suspects under custody to voting rights has become of special importance. According to Turkish legislation, those under custody are able to vote. However, in some ballot boxes in prisons with limited number of voters, voter anonymity could come into question. AMER conducted a FoI request on this issue, and the response stated that for instance in Aydın prison, where only 4 inmates are allowed to vote, the ballot box would not be set up. Instead, the inmates could vote at their request and at the initiative of the warden in a different ballot box, if all necessary security precautions are taken. Additionally, those serving prison sentences for ‘intentional crimes’ are not allowed to vote. However, there is no differentiation based on the crime or the sentence. In a positive step, an SBE decision addressed two European Court of Human Rights decisions on the voting rights of convicts, and decided that those with convictions who are currently not in prison can vote even if their sentence is not completed. The number of convicts that do not have access to vote is around 100.000. In total, around 570.000 citizens are not allowed suffrage rights.
* Internally Displaced Persons: The reescalation of the conflict in the Southeast of Turkey between the state security forces and Kurdish insurgents led to the displacement of close to half a million people. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) assessment, many of the displaced persons do not have a house to go back to, as towns where the security operations were conducted were obliterated, due to Government plans of demolition and/or expropriation. In the Sur region of Diyarbakir, for instance, 95% of the population was displaced as a result of the security operations.[[21]](#footnote-21) If the displaced persons take the initiative to report a change of address, their voter registration can be completed. However, reports suggest that many of the displaced persons live in tents or makeshift housing, preventing address change and therefore access to voting. It is not known how many of the displaced persons have registered a change of address, and how many will not be able to vote in the referendum. According to SBE voter registration data, there were decreases in the voter numbers Nusaybin, Şırnak and Sur. However, the voter registration numbers in areas known to be impacted by internal displacement offer a curious picture. In Cizre, there was a 5.8% increase in the number of voters. In Silopi, the increase in numbers was since the November 1st elections was 8.5%. Hakkari’s Yüksekova and Mardin’s Derik also gained new voters. The reason for these increases are not known.
* Combination and Relocation of Ballot Boxes: The gendarmerie and security directorates of the East and Southeast regions of Turkey have requested to relocate polling stations, citing security reasons, since March 2017. According to a report published in the newspaper *Birgün,* aside from security reasons, it was demanded that polling stations to be located “in gendarmerie stations, belonging to gendarmerie units, where helicopters have a landing site“.[[22]](#footnote-22) The District Election Boards requested the opinion of the SBE following these requests. The SBE stressed that in polling stations with less than 9 registered voters, the ballot box could not be used, and the voters could use the closest available polling station but left the remaining decisions up to the District Election Boards.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The results of our monitoring activities regarding the relocation and combination of polling stations are as follows: the district election board of Tatvan, Bitlis rejected a district police department’s request to combine 28 polling stations (according to some sources the number is 38). This decision was reversed by the provincial election board.[[24]](#footnote-24) The decision was appealed to the SBE, which determined that polling stations in 11 villages could be combined. Similarly, the SBE confirmed the recombination of the ballot boxes of five villages in Midyat, Mardin, a partial number of the suggested ballot boxes. The SBE rejected the recombination of ballot boxes the districts of Artuklu and Derik, Mardin, in Beytüşşebap, Şırnak, in Kocaköy, Diyarbakır.[[25]](#footnote-25) Two ballot boxes in the villages of Batman were relocated due to security reasons.[[26]](#footnote-26) The combination of 2 village polling stations Mazıdağ, Mardin and 8 in Ömerli was approved.[[27]](#footnote-27)

Combination and relocation of ballot boxes also occurred in Nusaybin, Mardin and Sur, Diyarbakır, where long curfews were declared in the past two years. The ballot boxes in Abdülkadir Paşa and Fırat neighborhoods of Nusaybin were relocated to other neighborhoods based on the decision of district election board.[[28]](#footnote-28) In six neighborhoods of Sur, Diyarbakır 45 ballot boxes were relocated to other regions.[[29]](#footnote-29) According to the informational memo from HDP, polling stations were also relocated in Şemdinli (Hakkari), İdil (Şırnak), Kızıltepe and Mazıdağ (Mardin) and Bulanık (Muş).[[30]](#footnote-30)

Although it is against the law to change ballot boxes starting from seven days ahead of the vote, the ballot boxes in 12 neighbourhoods in Batman[[31]](#footnote-31) and ballot boxes in two villages in Ağrı were carried to the city center while in the center ballot boxes of 21 neighbourhoods were combined with 10 ballot boxes of other neighbourhoods five days before the referendum.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**Fundamental Rights**

For the realization of democratic elections, fundamental rights need to be ensured. The right to give and receive information without impediment is necessary for voters to make informed decisions in the referendum. The rights to assembly, speech, association and a free media, however, are significantly restricted in Turkey. Especially for the No campaign, campaign events were cancelled by authorities, there were attacks on events by security forces and other groups, free speech was retaliated with legal action, and journalists were fired or targeted.

* Freedom of Assembly: Right to peaceful assembly is protected by the Constitution, but significantly limited by relevant legislation. Within certain limits on time and place, public assemblies can be held with a 48-hour notice. Due to the State of Emergency, however, province governors have enhanced powers to regulate peaceful assemblies. There are indiscriminate bans on the right to peaceful assembly in effect for the duration of the State of Emergency, declared by governors with reference to the Law on State of Emergency. These bans and restrictions directly affect citizens’ ability to campaign effectively.

In 12 provinces, assemblies are subject to permission by the governorates for the duration of the State of Emergency. In Tunceli and Afyonkarahisar, all assemblies are banned. Taken together with the authority of the governors to determine which non-partisan groups are allowed to campaign given by the SBE, it is nearly impossible for a campaign activity to be conducted without the permission of the governors, who are appointed by the government. During the monitoring period, 9 events were identified by the No campaign that were banned in 5 cities. However, these numbers are only those that appeared in the media. It is safe to assume that the real number is much higher, including the events that were not banned but cancelled by the organizers due to the obstacles to holding assemblies.

The general bans announced by the governors of 10 provinces range between 10 days and one month. The bans were reimposed in Adana three, in Şanlıurfa two and in Artvin three times. These periods include the campaign process, but no exception for the campaign activities were specified. Only the Governorate of Hakkari has expressed that the activities and propaganda regarding the referendum on April 16th are excluded from the ban.[[33]](#footnote-33)

* Interventions on Campaign Events:[[34]](#footnote-34) Within the purview of the right to peaceful assembly is the obligation of the state to protect the participants. The campaign related events of the referendum saw many attacks and interventions on campaigners, predominantly towards the No campaign. From February 16th, the starting date of the official campaign period, to April 13th, monitoring data has revealed 50 interventions and attacks on campaign assemblies, in 23 different provinces. The interventions and attacks are seen more often in metropolitan cities. 24 out of 50 cases occurred in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir and Kocaeli. The distribution of the attacks according to province is as follows:

Out of the 50 incidents on campaign events that were documented, 17 were interventions conducted by security authorities, and the remaining 33 were attacks involving violence. Firearms were used in two incidents of assault, knives, machetes and rocks were used in 6 incidents. In the attacks a total of 19 people were injured.

Of the 50 incidents, 42 were directed towards No campaign events, and 8 were directed towards Yes campaign events. All incidents that targeted Yes events were conducted by civilians. The incidents involving public authorities were conducted by security personnel, municipality investigators and private security. All the interventions conducted by public authorities were directed at the No campaign. Those responsible for two incidents are not known.

Relevant authorities were informed on 6 incidents out of 8 directed at the Yes campaign, and 39 incidents out of the 42 towards No campaign. The status of the investigation regarding these incidents are not known. The timing of the incidents demonstrates an increasing level of tension related to the referendum. In the last 13 days of February, 5 incidents were recorded. 20 indents were recorded throughout the month of March, and in the first 13 days of April alone, 25 incidents occurred.

The rising level of tension can also be seen in the following graph, where the type of intervention is given with the timing of the intervention. The incidents with violence, conducted by civilians doubled in the first 13 days of April compared with the entirety of March.

* Freedom of Expression: The right to free speech is significantly limited through legal action in Turkey. The Anti-Terrorism Law and the Criminal Code have restrictive codes on insulting the president, insulting state institutions and personnel, and endangering the unity of the state. Additionally, 9 executive decrees have limiting provisions related to the exercise of freedom of expression. These laws are not only used on journalists, but frequently on speech exercised by citizens on the Internet and other platforms. The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe has criticized this situation on February 15th, 2017 with a statement; “regrets to observe a significant decrease in the commitment of the Turkish authorities [under the State of Emergency] to improve freedom of expression and compliance with the ECHR over the last few years and urges the Turkish political leaders in the strongest possible terms to change course and start separating what is a terrorist action from criticism and dissent, and to display the responsibility and tolerance expected in a democratic society.” These laws have been heavily enacted on citizen campaigners in the referendum campaign period. For instance, a citizen was taken into custody under the charges of insulting the president after publishing a video promoting a No vote. The complaint that led to the arrest came from President Erdoğan’s attorney.[[35]](#footnote-35) A Kurdish No campaign song prepared by the HDP was banned by a court decision, citing the article in the Constitution establishing the language of the Turkish state to be Turkish, and claiming that it violates laws against racism, protection of the democratic order of the state and the unity of the country.[[36]](#footnote-36)
* Freedom of the Press: Free media is one of the most important sources of information on the content of the decisions made by voters. The crackdown following the coup attempt has affected the independent media significantly. 158 media outlets have been closed, not including the websites that are frequently shut down through court decisions. This has put opposition media in a difficult position, and self-censorship practices are common. The diversity in the media has collapsed, with Alevi, Kurdish, socialist and other outlets becoming a target in the purge. 150 journalists are currently under custody, and over 10.000 journalists have lost their jobs since the coup attempt. Journalists have also come under attack for expressing opinions regarding the referendum. İrfan Değirmenci, a veteran anchor on a mainstream television network Kanal D, lost his job after expressing on Twitter that he would vote No in the elections.

**Transparency**

* Campaign Finance: Transparency regarding political finance is a crucial requirement of fair elections and functioning democracies. Turkish legislation lacks a comprehensive framework on the auditing of political party and campaign finance. The incomes of political parties generally come from donations, public funding from the Treasury, and membership fees. The annual auditing of political parties are conducted by the Constitutional Court. The reports are overarching analyses on total spending and revenue, but lack a detailed and standardized format. In-kind contributions are inconsistently included in the reports, and specific information on donors and types of donations are lacking. Campaign finance information is similarly not available to the public. The reports submitted to the Constitutional Court are made publically available several years later, when it is no longer relevant for consideration. This fact applies to all political parties and both campaigns.
* SBE Decisions: The SBE is the final authority on all decisions pertaining to the management of the elections and election campaigns. However, not all decisions made by the SBE are announced to the public. This creates a problem in transparency. Additionally, SBE decisions are not subject to judicial review, which removes the reasoning and due process of the complaints system.

**Monitoring and Observation**

The legal framework on election observation does not allow for independent non-partisan international and citizen observation. The presence of observers in the polling rooms are up to the discretion of the Ballot Box Committee presidents. The counting of the votes are open to the public. The OSCE was invited by the state to conduct formal observation of the referendum, and has deployed a Limited Election Observation Mission on March 17th. Accreditation by the SBE is not given to other organizations or networks.

The civil society in Turkey was heavily impacted by the State of Emergency and the ensuing crackdown. 1583 CSOs were dissolved through executive actions without due process, and no opportunity to appeal was given. This has created an atmosphere of fear in the civil society, and led to self-censorship and a reluctance to participate in controversial or politically tense activities. Three members of the Independent Election Monitoring Platform were dissolved through executive orders.

The Independent Monitoring Platform has applied to the SBE for permission to observe the past five elections held in Turkey. The application for the observation of the April 16th referendum was the seventh time its applications were rejected by the SBE. The SBE has cited the law on elections in rejecting the Platform’s application, although it is the stance of the Platform that although the legislation does not regulate citizen observation, it also does not ban it. Despite of the rejections, the Independent Election Monitoring Platform informally monitors the elections and the upcoming referendum, and presents the names of the participating observers to the Municipal Election Committees in different provinces. Due to the fear of backlash and the ongoing State of Emergency, the participation of CSOs in the monitoring has decreased more than 50% for the referendum. Additionally, observers who are public employees have expressed concerns that they could be targeted for becoming an observer and their jobs could come under risk. The safety and security of the referendum day observers are also a point of grave concern. In previous elections, the observers have worn nametags identifying them with the Platform and stating their observer status. However, due to fear of attacks by citizens and security forces, observers have stated a disinclination to wear the nametags during the referendum observation.

1. January 12 2017 http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-silahli-teroristle-dolari-olan-terorist-arasinda-fark-yok,4A5\_nDYqD0SbNAuWUn2v-A [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-onemli-aciklamalar-40068820 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/erdogan-hayircilar-ve-teror-ayni-safta-150734.html>

   President Erdoğan denied having equated No supporters with terrorists on 10.04.2017 http://www.diken.com.tr/erdogan-kendini-yalanladi-hayir-diyenler-terorist-demedim/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/678835/Bassavci_vekilinin__hayir__oyu_kullanacaklari_tehdit_tweetine_Bassavci_dan_aciklama.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.gercekbizde.com/yerel/evet-kampanyasi-tanitimina-birlikte-katildilar-h92626.html>

   <http://akcakocahavadis.com/kelesten-akcakoca-ak-partiye-evet-destegi/>

   <http://medya67.com.tr/uysal-evet-icin-koselerde-n-1328.aspx>

   http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/devlet-olanaklariyla-evet-propagandasi-151296.html [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://biliyomuydun.com/109090> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/hakverdi-ve-suslu-den-evet-tehdidinde-bulunan-kaymakama-protesto-153016.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.sakaryagazetesi.com.tr/eskisehirde--hayir-cikacak--n157177/ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://sendika17.org/2017/03/ysk-emre-amade-akp-istegiyle-24-chp-ve-hdplinin-sandik-baskanligina-iptal/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/717460/Secim_Kurulu_ndan_CHP_ve_HDP_ye_ret___iyi_un_sahibi_degiller_.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://sendika17.org/2017/03/akp-basvurdu-uc-kentte-chp-ve-hdpnin-sandik-uyelikleri-iptal-edildi/>; https://www.evrensel.net/haber/314975/sandik-baskanlarina-iyi-un-sahibi-degilsiniz-vetosu [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://dihaber.net/search/content/view/14827?page=1&key=95df65203f64959a05e6b6acdd41e061> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <http://dihaber.net/search/content/view/14827?page=1&key=95df65203f64959a05e6b6acdd41e061> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. HDP Special Informational Memo, 31.03.2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.gercekgundem.com/siyaset/265798/saglardan-iyi-un-sahibi-sorusu> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/sandik-gorevlilerine-gerekcesiz-el-cektirme-154978.html [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/688611/YSK\_den\_skandal\_propaganda\_karari.html [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR\_South-East\_TurkeyReport\_10March2017.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/talep-emniyetten-reddedilince-itiraz-akp-den-hayir-a-karsi-sandik-birlestirme-devrede-152003.html [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/talep-emniyetten-reddedilince-itiraz-akp-den-hayir-a-karsi-sandik-birlestirme-devrede-152003.html [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. https://www.artigercek.com/sandik-koruculara-emanet/ [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. <http://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2017/03/23/ysk-iki-ilcede-sandik-birlestirme-kararini-kaldirdi/>, [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/batmanda-2-koy-sandigi-guvenlik-gerekcesiyle-t-40404627 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
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28. <https://www.artigercek.com/nusaybinde-sandiklar-tasindi/> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. <http://www.haber7.com/siyaset/haber/2265786-surda-6-mahalledeki-sandiklar-tasindi> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. HDP Memo, 31.03.2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. http://gazetekarinca.com/2017/04/hdpnin-yuzde-80-oy-aldigi-bolgeydi-batmanda-12-mahalledeki-sandiklar-tasindi/ [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. <http://gazetekarinca.com/2017/04/referanduma-5-gun-kala-agrida-sandiklar-merkeze-tasindi/> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Bkz. http://www.hakkari.gov.tr/umuma-acik-alanlarda-yapilacak-toplanti-ve-gosteri-yuruyuslerinin-gecici-olarak-yasaklanmasina-iliskin-basin-duyurusu. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. There are many claims on the interventions and attacks on campaign events. The incidents used in this report are only those we could confirm through multiple sources. With regards to incidents such as ripping off posters and verbal altercations, only those that were informed to the authorities were included. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/hayir-videosu-cekti-cumhurbaskaninin-sikayetiyle-tutuklandi-151933.html [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/hdpnin-referandum-sarkisi-yasaklandi-40417439 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)