

The Turkish LGBTI+ community resists bans on Pride events again this year, amid increased repression from the Turkish government

[Blog](#), [Civil Rights and Freedom](#), [Safety](#), [Freedom of Assembly](#), [Pride](#), [Turkey](#)

Amid increased repression from the government, the Turkish LGBTI+ community courageously and creatively resists bans on Pride events again this year

This year's Pride season in Turkey saw continued bans on LGBTI+ themed events, as well as police repression, as the government continues to disregard the fundamental right to freedom of assembly and expression for LGBTI+ people. LGBTI+ activists across the country stepped up their tactics to avoid police repression, bans and arrests as much as possible.

METU, 31 May

On the METU student campus, Pride [took place](#) without intervention, as organisers moved the start time from 18:00 to noon.



METU Pride, photo by Ünükuir

Eskişehir, 9 June

Ten LGBTI+ activists were detained and [subjected to torture](#). For the first time since 2015, four of the detained activists were referred to court with a demand for arrest. Later, all four of them were released.



Eskişehir Pride, photo by Nalin Öztekin

Ankara, 12 June

The Ankara Pride committee, in response to police barricades and water cannons set up in many parts of the city, organised the march on another route. The police were therefore unable to intervene and [no one was detained](#).



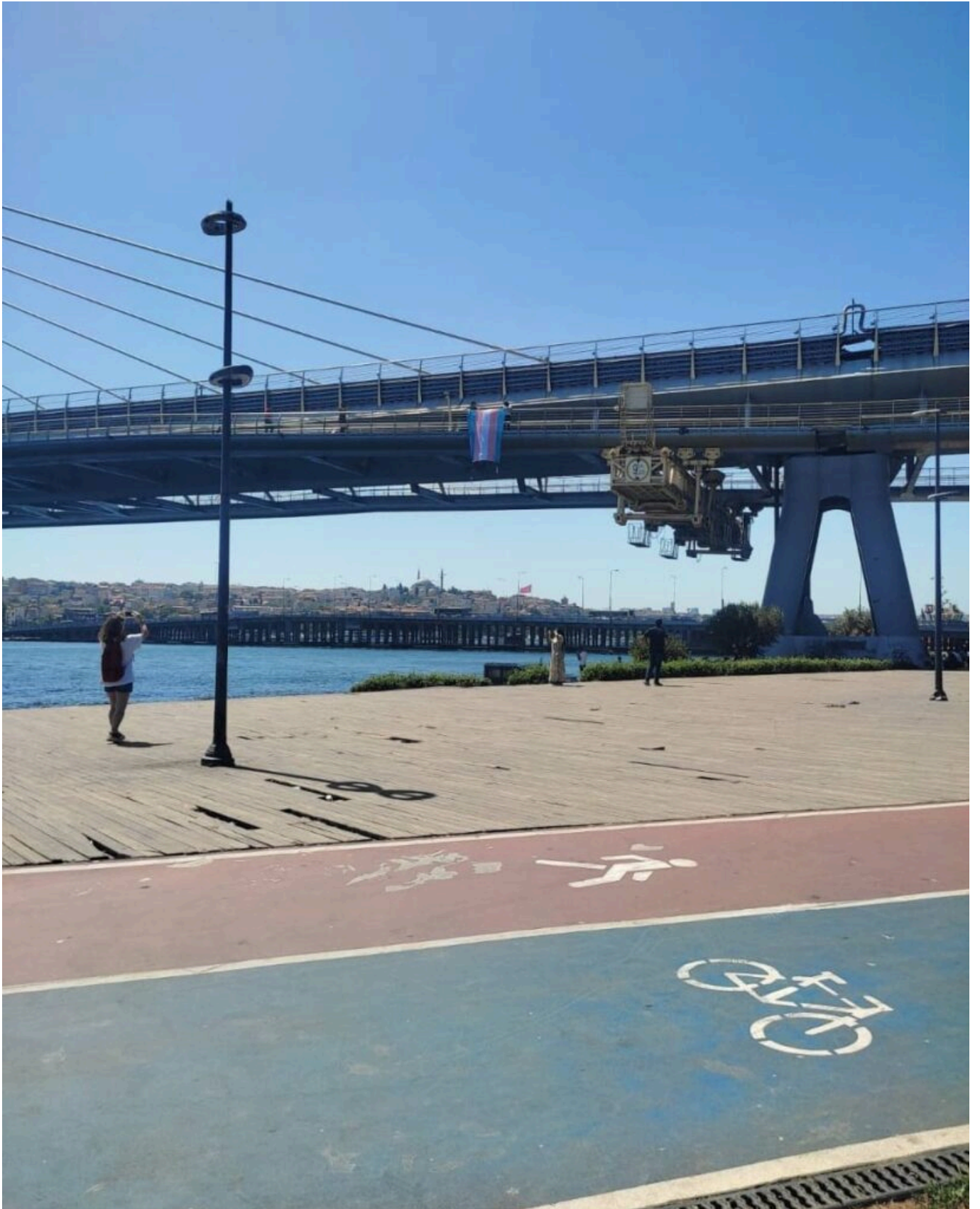
Ankara Pride, photo by Kaos GL

Trans Pride Istanbul, 23 June

The Istanbul governor's office [blocked](#) metro stations in anticipation of Trans Pride, and hundreds of police officers were sent to the Beyoğlu, Şişli, and Beşiktaş districts, setting up checkpoints, barricades, and water cannons to blockade many roads. As a result, organisers decided not to hold a mass march; instead, they hung trans flags in different public locations. Two people were detained while sitting inside a café.



Trans Pride Istanbul, photo by Trans Pride Committee



Trans Pride Istanbul, photo by Trans Pride Committee

Izmir, 29 June

In Izmir the Pride march [was held in Bornova](#) one day before the official march was called to go ahead. This change in timing prevented any interventions.



Izmir Pride, photo by ESP

Istanbul, 30 June

During Pride week in Istanbul, two events, one in Beşiktaş and one in Kadıköy, were banned by district governors. The Istanbul Governorship issued a ban on Taksim and Istiklal Street in the early hours of the day of the [Istanbul Pride march](#) and described the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride Week Committee as “various illegal groups”. The police were waiting at Taksim, Beyoğlu but the activists held the march instead at Bağdat Street of Kadıköy (on the Anatolian side) which was the first Istanbul Pride march on the Anatolian side of the city. Activists made a press statement and marched for approximately ten minutes before the police caught up and dispersed the crowd. Eleven people were arrested after the march ended, three of which were minors, who were [handcuffed behind their backs](#) in violation of the Child Protection Law. All were released after approximately eight hours.



Istanbul Pride, photo by Istanbul Pride Committee



Istanbul Pride, photo by Erdogan Alayumat



Istanbul Pride, photo by Erdogan Alayumat



Istanbul Pride, photo by Istanbul Pride Committee



Istanbul Pride, photo by Istanbul Pride Committee



Istanbul Pride, photo by Istanbul Pride Committee



Istanbul Pride, photo by Istanbul Pride Committee

Antalya, 1-15 July

All protests and events were banned by the governorship for 15 days, from 1-15 July, when Pride events were due to take place. The Pride march went ahead on July 14 and it was [attacked by police](#), who arrested four participants.



Antalya, photo by Kaos GL

Resilience and Creativity of Pride Organisers

It is clear that following the national elections of May 2023, and the municipal elections of March 2024, both marred by significant anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric, smear campaigns, and misinformation, institutionalisation of anti-LGBTI+ actions is on the rise. The international community must not be fooled by the reduction in arrests and violence during this year's Pride season – much of this was avoided by the creativity and resilience of Pride organisers. Meanwhile hatred against LGBTI+ people from government and institutions is still coordinated and becoming more entrenched in policy.

Alarming developments in 2024

While Turkey continues to disregard its obligations under its own constitution and international treaties to which it is party to ensure the right of freedom of assembly and expression for all, it is also stepping up institutional targeting of the LGBTI+ community. Anti-LGBTI+ rhetoric by key political figures continues, related to more institutional contexts.

In June, the Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Gökta? presented the new 2024-2028 Action Plan for

the Protection and Strengthening of the Family. This Action Plan contains measures to combat “deviant harmful ideology” of LGBTI+ people. The Minister stated that “Family structure is being destroyed by impositions carried out on a global scale” and President Erdogan [added](#) that “the imposition of LGBT has become a tool of tyranny, oppression and the corruption of society that even surpasses fascism”.

Misinformation is being institutionally [supported](#), as one of the actions of the plan is that “documentary/program studies will be carried out on the negative effects of harmful trends and habits that threaten families on human nature and rights, family structure and society, especially on children, and existing broadcasts will be translated into Turkish.”

As has been seen with the government’s support to the Big Family Platform, LGBTI+ people are wrongfully framed as a “threat to the family”. The Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Numan Kurtulmu?, during his meeting with the Big Family Platform, an organisation organising anti-LGBTI+ hate rallies and calling for the closure of LGBTI+ organisations, [targeted](#) LGBTI+ individuals by referring to them as “deviant movements.”

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tasked under the Action Plan with creating connections with actors with similar agendas abroad, which implies further institutionalisation of the anti-gender movement.

The Presidency of Religious Affairs has also released its [2024-2028 Action Plan](#), which pledges over two million lira to fight against the LGBTI+ movement. The plan’s states that “homosexuality and its derivatives” are deviant and socio-cultural threats at the individual, family and societal level. Included in the actions, the General Directorate of Religious Publications is expected to prepare 40 publications similar to the “Family Magazine” until the end of 2028 “to protect the family against deviant ideologies that threaten the family”. “Family Magazine” is published by the Directorate General of Religious Publications and targets LGBTI+ people.

As we raise these alarming developments, we continue to call on international institutions to raise these issues in all relevant meetings with Turkish authorities, and for donors to further support Turkish LGBTI+ civil society in the face of the increased state-led repression.