

6th August 2025

2025 Istanbul Trans and LGBTI+ Pride Weeks Monitoring Report



**“You should
have behaved
yourself!”**

Monitoring Organisations

17 May Association

Truth Justice Memory Center

Human Rights Association Istanbul Branch
(IHD)

Kaos GL Association

Social Policy Gender Identity and Sexual
Orientation Studies Association (SPoD)

Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)

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“You should have behaved yourself!”

***2025 Istanbul Trans and LGBTI+ Pride Weeks
Monitoring Report***

Executive Summary



This report is based on the findings of monitoring activities carried out by **17 May Association, Truth Justice Memory Center, Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul Branch, Kaos GL Association, Social Policy, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association (SPoD), Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), and Amnesty International Türkiye** regarding the 11th Trans Pride March (22 June, Kadıköy) and the 23rd Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride March (29 June, Beşiktaş) organized as part of the 2025 Istanbul Pride Month.

Monitoring and documentation activities were carried out in accordance with international standards such as the OSCE's Guidelines on Monitoring Peaceful Assemblies and the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The monitoring organizations documented that both marches were obstructed

by discriminatory and unlawful bans, as well as by human rights violations that could amount to torture and other forms of ill-treatment committed by law enforcement officials. The monitoring and documentation activities establish the violations of prohibition of torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and non-discrimination protected under Articles 3, 10, 11, and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Articles 7, 19, 21, and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

The 24-hour blanket bans issued by the governorates and district governorates are neither based on a clear security threat nor meet the principle of proportionality. On the day of the marches, Istanbul's central districts such as Kadıköy, Şişli, Beyoğlu, and Beşiktaş were placed under heavy police blockade, and public

services such as mass transportation were disrupted. Many people -at least 95 in total, as documented by the monitoring organizations- were detained solely for being present in public spaces or for clothing, symbols, and slogans associated with LGBTI+s.

Findings based on direct assembly observations and lawyer interviews reveal that many of those detained were subjected to practices that may amount to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, including prolonged reverse handcuffing, unlawful physical violence and verbal harassment, and deprivation of access to basic needs. Furthermore, the findings indicate that some individuals were subjected to strip searches which amounts to sexual violence. Access to legal assistance was obstructed from the moment of apprehension until questioning began at the security directorate; three lawyers were violently detained, and some were arbitrarily denied entry to the security directorate despite having provided their IDs issued by the bar association.

Since 2015, Pride Marches have been unlawfully and systematically hindered by the authorities. However, for the first time, three individuals detained after the Pride Marches were placed in pre-trial detention. The monitoring organizations examined the indictments and interrogation records prepared and submitted to courts in July as part of the investigations launched against both marches. The reference to

LGBTI+ identities and peaceful slogans as evidence of crime in these documents constitutes a violation of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

The conduct of the law enforcement officials documented in the report reveal that, in violation of international human rights law and standards, LGBTI+s were subjected to discrimination, in some cases to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as well as to administrative and judicial harassment during Pride Weeks.

Methodology

Article 6(c) of the “UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”¹ guarantees that human rights defenders and organizations have the right “to study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters.” This provision ensures their ability to work on human rights violations and to share these

efforts with the public in order to raise awareness about such violations.

As per this right, guaranteed in the above-mentioned article² the monitoring organizations observed the 11th Trans Pride March on 22 June 2025 in Kadıköy, Istanbul with six observers, and the 23rd Istanbul Pride March on 29 June 2025 in Beşiktaş, Istanbul with nine observers. The monitoring organizations based their monitoring activities on the methods outlined in the OSCE’s “Guidelines on Monitoring Freedom of Peaceful

1 - UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/770/89/PDF/N9977089.pdf?OpenElement>.

2 - This right is also provided for in international conventions to which Turkey is a party. For example, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reads as follows: “Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.” Also see, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 10(1): “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.”

Assembly”.³

Between 14 June and 4 July, the monitoring organizations supported their monitoring and documentation activities with various methods as indicated in the guidelines⁴ to identify and document human rights violations resulting from interventions into the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly, and to carry out advocacy activities to prevent such violations. In this context, monitoring of social and mainstream media was carried out, and documents such as decisions and announcements by administrative authorities, as well as correspondence and reports by law enforcement officials, were examined. Interviews conducted by lawyers with individuals who had been subjected to human rights violations during questioning were also considered, as were statement records.

This report records the observation conditions and human rights violations identified by the organizations on the streets, in hospitals, and at security directorates. The report only covers cases to which the observers had access and violations that could be documented.

3 - OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *Handbook on Monitoring Freedom of Peaceful Assembly*, https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/1/473439_0.pdf.

4 - Ibid. p. 14

Background

The history of Pride Marches in Turkey, which spans more than 30 years, is also a history of interventions and bans aimed at preventing the free exercise of the right to peaceful assembly and association.

In 1993, a march planned to be held on Istiklal Avenue as part of the “Sexual Freedom Week” organized by a group of LGBTI+ activists was prevented when activists were detained from their homes the day before. Representatives from international organizations who had been invited to the week’s events, including the march, were swiftly deported.

In 2013, a group of activists managed to march on Istiklal Avenue for the first time, thus holding the first Istanbul Pride March. Until 2015, LGBTI+ Pride Marches were held in various cities in Turkey such as Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Antalya, and Samsun, as well as on many university campuses, without any intervention from law enforcement or banning decisions by the authorities. Tens of thousands of people attended the Istanbul Pride March in 2013, which saw the highest

participation.

Since 2010, the Trans Pride Week has been held a week before Istanbul Pride Week, concluding with the Trans Pride March after a week of related events. In 2015, a week before the LGBTI+ Pride March was banned, the 6th Trans Pride March on 21 June was held on Istiklal Avenue, with no bans or interventions. This was the last Pride March to be held on Istiklal Avenue without intervention.

Since 2015, the authorities in Turkey have unlawfully and systematically restricted Pride Marches, thereby violating the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, and non-discrimination. Based on the findings of the human rights organizations, these restrictions have at times been accompanied by police intervention amounting to torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

11. TRANS PRIDE TIPRO S

22th June 2025

Media

Monitoring

Between 14–24 June 2025, in the context of the 2025 Istanbul Trans Pride Week and March, discriminatory language against LGBTI+s was monitored across print and digital press, television, radio, and social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram). As part of media monitoring, news articles and opinion pieces in print and digital press, TV and radio programs, as well as posts on social media (Facebook, X, Instagram) by government officials, journalists, institutions and organizations and their representatives, public figures, and various social media users were examined.

Between 14–24 June 2025, a total of 12 posts⁵ including one from an online

newspaper⁶ and one from a printed newspaper article⁷ with discriminatory statements either directly targeting the Trans Pride March or generally targeting LGBTI+s were identified.⁸ One of the social media posts contained the speech of Ali Yıldız, President of the Religious Affairs and Foundations Union (Diyanet-Sen), delivered at the “Workshop on the Future of the Family: Global Policies, Media, Law” organized by Diyanet-Sen on 17 June 2025. In his speech, Yıldız characterized LGBTI+ activism as a global attack and used discriminatory and targeting expressions such as “perverse,” “with no identity,” and [engaging in acts of] “de-gendering”. Additionally, in a statement published on the Diyanet-Sen website on 14 June 2025, Yıldız described LGBTI+s as a “threat to humanity.”⁹

5 - As of the date the report was written, the social media posts that have not yet been deleted and/or are still accessible are as follows: <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1933932450620531023>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1934905859592561035>; <https://x.com/haciykk/status/1935087987898896671>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937556328920080786>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937252842634379441>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937193938861072417>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937128202897608847>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937109469206355972>; <https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1936799161049125192>

6 - <https://x.com/Dogruhaber/status/1934564294982877373>

7 - *Yeni Akit*, “Perverts Are Rioting Again”, 14 June 2025.

8 - One of the twelve posts has been deleted and/or blocked as of the date the report was written, see: <https://x.com/ozlemdogan/status/1937256730620317873>.

9 - <https://www.diyanetsen.org.tr/mobile/yeni-yildiz-lgbt-insanligi-tehdit-eden-bir-projesidir>

Assembly

Observation

Monitoring organizations observed the 11th Trans Pride March, held on 22 June 2025 in Kadıköy district of Istanbul, with six observers. As part of the assembly observation work, law enforcement and hospital procedures before, during and after the march were observed.

Measures Taken by the Administrative Authorities and Law Enforcement to Prevent the March

The pre-emptive bans by the administrative authorities

Through monitoring the official websites and social media accounts of relevant administrative authorities, and by reviewing related documents, monitoring organizations found that various administrative authorities had issued pre-emptive bans against the 11th Trans Pride March.

On 21 June 2025, in an announcement

titled “Press Release No.2025-44”, the Istanbul Governorate cited *“calls made via certain social media accounts”* as justification and declared that *“as of 00:01 on 22.06.2025, for a period of 24 hours, all activities such as meetings and demonstration marches, press statements, leaflet distribution, sit-ins”* were banned. The ban was stated to be taken under *“Article 17 of the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations and Article 32/ç of the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442.”* Based on the ban, it was decided to *“close off the Taksim Square Republic Monument with barriers; to block access to Taksim Square, Gezi Park, Siraselviler Street, and Istiklal Street up to Tunnel Square, including the connected side streets, to vehicle and pedestrian traffic by barrier, allowing controlled passage if necessary; and, in consideration of possible public incidents in the district that day, to close pedestrian and vehicle traffic at different points within the district as needed.”* Monitoring organizations were unable to establish the exact time when the governorate’s ban decision was published.¹⁰

Metro Istanbul, operated by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, announced on its official social media account that, in line with the Istanbul Governorate’s decision, the entrances of the Taksim and Şişhane stations (Istiklal Street and Refik

10 - Istanbul Governorate, “Press Release No.2025-44”, 21 June 2025.

<http://www.istanbul.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi-2025-44>.

Saydam Avenue entrances) on the M2 Yenikapı–Hacıosman Metro Line, as well as the F1 Taksim–Kabataş Funicular Line, would be closed *“until further notice.”* The announcement regarding the closures was made on 22 June 2025 at 10:52, and the reopening announcement was made on 23 June at 06:02. Based on the announcement times, monitoring organizations calculated that the metro lines in question were closed to the public for exactly 1 day, 7 hours, and 10 minutes.¹¹

On June 21, 2025, the Şişli District Governorate, through an announcement titled *“Press Release Regarding the Ban on All Meetings, Marches, Demonstrations, Press Statements, and Protest Actions on June 22, 2025,”* published on the district governorate’s website, stated that *“it has been determined that some groups have made calls on social media platforms to organize various protests and events within the borders of our district”* and, *“for the purpose of preventing the commission of crimes, protecting public health and public morality or the rights and freedoms of others, and ensuring public order and security,”* banned *“all indoor and outdoor*

events to be held within the borders of Şişli district on this matter (meetings, marches, press statements, sit-ins, setting up stands, setting up tents, distributing leaflets, protest actions, etc.)” for a period of one day.¹² The legal basis for the decision was not included in the statement. The announcement was posted on the Şişli District Governorate’s official social media account on 21 June 2025 at 22:21.¹³ It was noted that the Istanbul Governorate expanded the reach of the Şişli District Governorate’s social media post by retweeting it.

It was learned from the indictment prepared by the **Istanbul Anatolian Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office** on 7 July 2025 that the **Kadıköy District Governorate** had also issued a ban on 21 June 2025. The indictment cited the governorate’s decision under Article 17 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations and Article 32/ç of the Provincial Administration Law No. 5442 to impose a one-day ban *“on all acts such as cortege, marches, sit-ins, forming human chains, etc. containing movements, slogans, and flags evoking LGBTI+ colours in all open areas within our jurisdiction”* due to the information received that “LGBTI+

11 - Metro Istanbul, X post, 22 June 2025,

<https://x.com/metroistanbul/status/1936693818226524519?t=44AXtOupRB-ryd-fNp4o3O&s=08>.

12 - Şişli District Governorate, “Press Release Regarding the Ban on All Meetings, Marches, Demonstrations, Press Statements, and Protest Actions on June 22, 2025,” 21 June 2025, <http://www.sisli.gov.tr/22-haziran-2025-tarihinde-her-turlu-toplantı-yuruyus-gosteri-basin-aciklamasi-ve-protesto-eylemlerinin-yasaklanması-ile-ilgili-basin-aciklamasi#>.

13 - Şişli District Governorate, X post, 21 June 2025,

<https://x.com/SisliKaymakam/status/1936504841268048023?t=YYUQ7BgsIEP4IXqSbllBaw&s=08>.

individuals would participate in the ‘11th Istanbul Trans Pride Week’ event in a manner that would affect public morals”. It is observed that this ban was not published in any publicly accessible medium.

Measures Taken by General and District Security Directorates

In line with the decisions taken by administrative authorities to prevent the 11th Trans Pride March, monitoring organizations conducted on-site inspections in the districts of Beyoğlu, Şişli, Beşiktaş, and Kadıköy to monitor the measures implemented by the general and district police departments.

Şişli

As of 10:16, it was observed that a riot police bus was positioned in front of a hotel located on the opposite corner of the exit of Pangaltı Station on the M2 Metro line.

At 10:30, the Şişhane Metro exit was closed off with barriers, with many riot police officers and officers in yellow vests being present in the area. In addition, a riot police bus was deployed in front of a bookstore located along the route from Şişhane Square towards Tünel. Subsequently,

As of 10:31, it was noted that the sections of Kumbaracı Yokuşu and Asmalı Mescit streets leading to İstiklal Avenue were closed off with barriers.

Beyoğlu

Between 10:32 and 10:34, it was observed that many streets opening to İstiklal Avenue, such as Gönül, Baro Giriş, Postacılar, and Balyoz streets, and Terkoz and Korsan impasses, were closed off with barriers.

As of 10:35, it was observed that entrances to İstiklal Avenue were restricted with barriers in front of the the Odakule building, that entry was allowed in a controlled manner, and that there were also two riot police buses and a group of approximately 30–40 police officers in yellow vests near Odakule.

As of 10:38, it was observed that a riot police bus was deployed in front of the hotel located at the corner where Karayel Street and Meşrutiyet Avenue intersect, and that vehicle traffic was also closed off from this point onward.

As of 10:40, it was determined that İstiklal Avenue and Meşrutiyet Avenue were closed off with barriers at the Galatasaray Square.

And as of 10:41, pedestrian access to this area was also interrupted. Meanwhile, it was noted that the exits to Istiklal Avenue from connection points such as Sahne, Solakzade, and Balo streets were closed.

At 10:43, it was observed that several senior law enforcement chiefs, including the Head of the Security Branch of the Istanbul General Directorate of Security, were carrying out inspections on Istiklal Avenue.

As of 10:45, it was observed that entrances to Istiklal Avenue were restricted with barriers near Ağa Mosque, that entry was allowed in a controlled manner, and that seven riot police buses and two police buses were deployed in front of the mosque.

At 10:48, it was seen that the exits of Büyük Parmakkapı and Mis streets were closed off with barriers, and that an announcement vehicle was present at this point.

At 10:52, the entrance to Çukurluçeşme Street was closed with two riot police buses.

And as of 10:53, it was observed that Sıraselviler Avenue was closed along its entire length with barriers and that a

water cannon vehicle (TOMA T-69) was kept on standby.

At 10:54, an ambulance was deployed at a point close to Taksim Square.

As of 10:56, it was determined that the entirety of Istiklal Avenue was closed to both pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Beşiktaş

At 11:11, it was observed that a water cannon vehicle (TOMAT-60) was deployed across the Tüpraş Stadium.

As of 11:14, two riot police buses were seen stationed in Beşiktaş Ferry Terminal Square.

Kadıköy

As of 11:55, police officers wearing red vests and in civilian clothing were noticed waiting inside the Kadıköy Market area.

As of 12:00, around the Kadıköy Bull Statue, a light commercial police car, a police bus, and a group of approximately 15–20 police officers wearing blue t-shirts were seen positioned in the area.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During On-Site Observation

First, at 13:45, the observation teams arrived at Acıbadem Avenue and did not notice any police officer on Acıbadem Bridge, or in Zeamet and Boyacı Mehmet streets.

As of 14:30, the observation team began scanning a wide area from Zeamet Street towards Uzunçayır Avenue. During this, they identified a detention vehicle and riot police parked in front of a market located at the intersection with Denizyıldızı Street. On the way back from Zeamet Street towards Acıbadem Avenue, two individuals who were believed to be plainclothes police officers were seen in front of Muhterem Evcil Park.

At 15:10, three plainclothes police officers were observed waiting at the entrance of the M3 Metro station located at the exit of Boyacı Mehmet Street in Acıbadem.

As of 15:30, a group thought to be waiting to join the march was seen at a coffee shop on Zeamet Street. A short while later, MPs joined this waiting group.

At 15:37, approximately 10 police officers

were observed walking around Boyacı Mehmet Street.

At 15:48, at least 10 riot police officers arrived in a police bus at the parking lot on Boyacı Mehmet Street.

Around 16:00, there was a noticeable increase in the number of people believed to have come to join the march at the coffee shop on Zeamet Street.

Around 16:10, individuals thought to have come to join the march and two police officers were observed sitting at a branch of a coffee shop chain on Acıbadem Avenue. In the meantime, observers advancing from Acıbadem Bridge noted that a detention vehicle passed by.

At 16:13, a bus that had been in the parking lot on Boyacı Mehmet Street departed by turning left in the direction of D100, leaving the street.

At 16:19, a passenger police vehicle was seen heading from Boyacı Mehmet Street towards Zeamet Street.

At 16:36, a bus carrying riot police officers was seen entering Zeamet Street from Acıbadem Avenue.

At 16:57, observers who entered Necipbey Street from Acıbadem Avenue heard the slogans of march participants, moved fast, and reached the junction with Nakkaş Street at 16:59. The observers did not see any announcement vehicle at the protest site and did not hear any “Disperse” warning being issued. The first law enforcement officials to arrive at the protest site, which lasted only a few minutes, were understood to be plainclothes police officers.

It was observed that from a civilian car with the number plate 34 ADC 184, which quickly approached and stopped at the intersection of the two streets, a plainclothes individual got out and ran towards the gathered crowd. At this moment, the march participants were seen dropping the placards in their hands, dispersing by themselves.

At the entrance of the street, on the left-side pavement in front of parked cars, two plainclothes police officers were seen pinning down a protester by pressing on them with their knees. In addition to many plainclothes police officers, individuals believed to be residents were also seen trying to understand the situation.

It was observed that an argument broke out between one of these presumed residents and the plainclothes police officers. This person was heard saying to the police:

“What difference does it make if you’re a police officer, I don’t understand? I’ve lost my mom!” Then it became apparent that there was a funeral ceremony taking place at Şehit Fethi Mosque, located further along Necipbey Street from its intersection with Nakkaş Street.

Meanwhile, it was noticed that the person who had been held on the ground was being lifted by the arms by two plainclothes police officers, who were attempting to take them away. A person claiming to be a lawyer was observed objecting, saying, **“You cannot use violence, and you did, you hit his head on the ground.”** Simultaneously, police were heard warning the funeral attendees, saying, **“Let’s go down to the mosque, gentlemen.”** It was heard that a person believed to be the funeral host began an argument with the lawyer. Plainclothes police officers were observed standing between the two parties. While the police officers attempted to restrain the person claiming to be the funeral host, the lawyer was heard shouting **“Help”** and saying, **“Give me my phone.”** A person believed to be from the neighbourhood approached the crowd and was observed saying, **“Don’t bother the guys.”** While this person was seen trying to calm the lawyer, the latter was heard saying that their identity card had been taken and their phone had been broken. The lawyer also said that the person claiming to be the funeral host had taken their phone and thrown it.

At the same time, it was observed that the two plainclothes police officers were taking the protester on the ground toward a civilian-plated vehicle to detain them.

Observers who moved from Zeamet Street along Acıbadem Avenue entered Nakkaş Street from Günel street at 17:03. Sounds believed to be coming from the march participants were heard on Nakkaş Street. Further along, a few placards were seen lying on the ground. Neighbourhood residents were seen on the street, watching the events unfold.

At 17:03, a civilian-plated minibus with plainclothes police officers, equipped with flashing lights, was observed rapidly arriving at Nakkaş Street.

At 17:10, looking from Nakkaş Street, it was observed that Necipbey Street was closed with two buses, one minibus, and a large number of riot police. This street was noted to be closed to pedestrian and vehicle traffic approximately between 17:10 and 17:45.

When the observer group reached this point, they identified four detention buses (The plate numbers were: 34 AB 9624, 34 BS 4023, 34 BU 5976, and 34 HR 712).

A group of at least 13 people who had

already dispersed were seen surrounded within a crescent-shaped formation of officers, known as a 'police cordon'. It was noted that there were more police vehicles and riot police than the number of people detained. Police equipment, such as backpacks and vests labelled 'Special Forces', as well as weapons for launching tear gas projectiles, was spotted leaning against the wall behind parked vehicles.

At 17:12, one side of the street was blocked by three to four police officers at the entrance, while the group was contained on the other side by approximately 20–25 riot police and 10–15 plainclothes police officers. Both sides of the street were closed to pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Some police officers were observed covering their faces with black balaclava-style masks (buffs). A person inside the cordon was heard loudly addressing the police, saying, ***"Let us disperse, we want to go home, but we are being held here. Why are we being held here? Is there no one to provide an explanation?"***

At 17:18, a total of at least 45 police officers, in riot police uniforms and plainclothes, were observed arriving at the point where people were being held inside the police cordon. After this group, four more plainclothes individuals believed to be high-ranking police officers were observed arriving.

At 17:21, an order was heard: **"Remove those waiting."** Observers noted that the police justified removing them, along with three lawyers and others, by ordering them to **"stand clear of the secure area"**.

At 17:22, it was observed that a detention vehicle with number plate 34 BS 4023 was brought for the group and that the police formed a corridor at the front door of the vehicle.

At 17:28, a black car with a civilian number plate 34 DB 1923 arrived, leading to some movement. A police officer getting out of the minibus was heard asking, **"How many handcuffs do you need?"** The officer was observed holding white cable ties.

At 17:30, the detention process began. It was observed that the people contained in the police cordon did not engage in any argument with or resist the police; yet after their IDs and phones were taken, all were reverse handcuffed.

At 17:38, people waiting to pass through the street asked when it would be opened, and the riot police responded, **"In five minutes."** At the same time, it was noted that riot police were slowly regrouping.

At 17:40, the lawyer previously observed arguing with the funeral host and the

police was pulled by the hair, forced to the ground, reverse handcuffed despite presenting their lawyer ID, and forced to get on the detention vehicle.

At 17:41, the detained lawyer was heard addressing nearby police officers, saying, **"Why are you putting me in reverse handcuffs? They are too tight; there is no blood flow to my hands. Can you remove the cuffs? I am a lawyer!"** Police officers did not respond and were seen forcibly pulling the lawyer into the detention vehicle.

As of 17:42, it was observed that the lawyer had still not been taken to the rear of the detention vehicle. Two police officers wearing face masks, who accompanied the lawyer to the vehicle, were seen hitting the lawyer. When the lawyer started to scream, a plainclothes police officer ran to the front door of the detention vehicle and was heard shouting, **"Close the door, close the door!"**

At 17:43, a riot police officer asked an observer why they were waiting at that point. The officer tried to force back the observer by asking, **"Is this your home?"** Similarly, a bystander being asked to leave was heard saying, **"This is my home, why has this detention lasted so long?"**, and the police replied, **"Follow the rules, go your home."**

At 17:44, the detained lawyer was

observed being taken out of the detention vehicle. The lawyer was heard saying, ***“The handcuffs cut my hands, remove these!”*** A plainclothes police officer, believed to be a superior, replied, ***“You should have behaved yourself!”***

At 17:47, the detention vehicle left the street. At that time, it was noted that there were a total of five detention vehicles and seven civilian vehicles on the street.

At 17:55, observers left the area.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During Observation at the Security Directorates

Istanbul Security Directorate

Observations prior to the interviews

A lawyer assigned by the Istanbul Bar Association’s Human Rights Center as an observer arrived at the Istanbul General Directorate of Security at Vatan Avenue at 18:00, where detained individuals were brought. A police officer at the entrance of the Directorate’s building said that there was no precise information on whether the detainees would be brought to the Security Directorate and informed that,

in accordance with the instructions from the Security Branch, lawyers would not be permitted to enter the building.

Two lawyers assigned by the Istanbul Branch of the Human Rights Association (IHD) as observers arrived at the Directorate at 19:13. A police officer standing at the entrance of the building did not let the lawyers in, citing instructions from the Security Branch.

Lawyers at the Kadıköy Pier Police Station reported that a detention vehicle with a plate number that ends with 9816 left the station at 19:19.

Lawyers at the Kadıköy Pier Police Station also reported that a detention with a plate number that ends with 4023 left the station at 19:25.

Lawyers stationed for observation at various hospitals reported that the vehicle with plate 9816 entered the Eyüpsultan State Hospital at 20:15, and the vehicle with plate 4023 entered the Haseki Training and Research Hospital at the same time.

Lawyers who kept waiting outside the Istanbul General Directorate of Security as they were not permitted to enter the building, observed that relatives of the detainees arrived in front of the police building at 21:18, spoke with police officers at the gate, but were shortly

afterwards removed from the area.

At 21:19, lawyers from the IHD Istanbul Branch communicated with the police officers wearing vests with “Security Branch” badges to inquire about the detainees’ whereabouts and asked to wait in the lawyer waiting room inside the building. The police officers said that the detainees had not yet arrived and prevented the lawyers from entering the building once more, citing instructions.

At 21:23, IHD Istanbul Branch lawyers spoke with relatives of the detainees. It was observed that those unable to obtain information about their relatives’ situation appeared visibly anxious and stressed.

At 21:24, five more lawyers arrived at the Istanbul General Directorate of Security to provide legal support to the detainees.

Lawyers, still unable to enter the building and waiting outside, again spoke to the police officers wearing “Security Branch” vests at 21:34 to reiterate their request to wait in the lawyer waiting room inside the building. The police officers denied the lawyers’ entry, citing instructions again.

At 22:10, the police officers wearing

“Security Branch” vests approached the lawyers waiting outside the Istanbul General Directorate of Security and shared that the detainees had been brought to the building. Lawyers who had arrived to provide legal support asked to meet with their clients. The officers replied that the interrogation procedure would begin shortly, so the lawyers requested that some of them be allowed to go to the detention vehicles to provide for basic needs such as water and food. Police officers rejected this request with no justification.

At 22:28, the police officers wearing “Security Branch” vests approached the lawyers waiting outside the Istanbul General Directorate of Security to present a list of the detainees. The lawyers checked to list of 42 individuals, including three children.

At 22:49, a relative of a detainee waiting outside the Istanbul General Directorate of Security approached the lawyers and told them that the police had called and said that their relative was being held “in presence”. Lawyers attempting to obtain information from the police officers in front of the building were unable to confirm whether the detainees were held “in presence” or not.¹⁴

14 - According to Criminal Procedures Code “in presence” means that suspects statement will be taken before the public prosecutor’s office and that they will be transferred directly to the prosecutor’s office after the procedures at the security directorate (first interview) have been completed. This method is preferred, especially for persons suspected of serious crimes.

Lawyers who were still waiting outside the Istanbul General Directorate of Security contacted the police officers wearing “Security Branch” vests again at 23:13 to reiterate their request to wait in the lawyer waiting room inside the police building. A dispute arose between the lawyers and the police officers when the latter continued to deny entry, citing instructions.

At 23:35, the police officers wearing “Security Branch” vests informed the lawyers waiting outside that only six desks would be opened for interview procedures and, therefore, only six lawyers would be allowed into the building for statements. After the lawyers reacted to this arbitrary limitation, six lawyers were permitted to enter, along with one lawyer assigned as an observer by the Istanbul Bar Association Human Rights Center.

Observations During Interview Procedures

Of the 42 individuals detained before and after the 11th Trans Pride March, 39¹⁵ were divided into six groups and their statements were taken in this manner.

First Group

Six detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 23:43. During a 20-minute preliminary consultation with these individuals, the following information was shared:

All members of the first group were detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

All members of the first group reported that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not read to them, their relatives were not notified, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing, they were kept in reverse handcuffs for at least four hours, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies.

Four individuals in the first group shared that they were subjected to practices during the body search that could amount to torture or other ill-treatment. Three of these individuals reported experiencing sexual violence during the body search. One of them stated that before being placed in the detention cell, they refused a “*strip search*” and were taken to an area with cameras where a rough body

15 - Among the 42 people taken into custody, the identity verification procedures of three individuals under the age of 18 were carried out at the Kadıköy District Security Directorate’s Children’s Bureau. Since interviews from individuals under the age of 18 can only be taken by the Public Prosecutor, these individuals were released after their identity verification.





search was conducted. During this basic body search in the camera-monitored area, the police officer lifted the person's shirt and then attempted to search under their bra with their hand; when the individual resisted, they were physically assaulted. Another person reported that their buttocks were squeezed by a police officer during the body search. A different individual reported being subjected to a rough body search seven times and stated that each time they reacted to arbitrary procedures, they were told, **“Stand up, we will search you,”** indicating that the body search had become punitive.

One member of the first group reported that a prescribed medication they needed to take regularly was not provided to them.

It was recorded that the interview of the first group finished at 00:21.

Second Group

Six detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 00:36. During a 10-minute preliminary consultation with these individuals, the following information was shared:

All members of the second group were detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

All members of the second group

reported that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not read to them, their relatives were not notified, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies. Five individuals in the group also reported being subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in reverse handcuffs for at least three hours.

One member of the second group reported that while being held at the Kadıköy Pier Police Station, they were verbally reprimanded for sitting down and being shouted at with comments such as, **“What comfort is this? You rotten, disrespectful guy!”** They also said that they were then forced to stand up, put in reverse handcuffs and made to wait standing. The same person reported being put in reverse handcuffs again after the initial examination and harshly pushed on the head while being escorted onto the bus after the examination. During the review in the consultation room, marks on their wrists consistent with the person's account were observed and recorded.

It was recorded that the interview of the second group finished at 01:15.

After the completion of the second group's interview, six lawyers who had entered the police building for

interview observation were removed by the police officers at 01:24. It was observed that the police officers had called the six lawyers into the building to begin the third group's interview, but the lawyers told the relevant police supervisor that they would not continue interviews under these conditions. Following discussions between the police supervisor and the lawyers, all lawyers were allowed into the lawyer waiting room inside the Directorate at 01:35.

Third Group

Six detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 01:43. During a 10-minute preliminary consultation with these individuals, the following information was shared:

All members of the third group were detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

All members of the third group reported that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not read to them, their relatives were not notified, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in reverse handcuffs for at least six hours, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies. It was learned that the initial examinations for all members of the third

group were conducted at the Haseki Training and Research Hospital. One person in the third group reported that while being escorted to the detention vehicle after the examination, a police officer hit them harshly on the back.

One person in the third group reported that during a rough body search, their body was touched for an extended period in certain areas and specific parts of their body were pressed deliberately.

All members of the third group reported that police officers' behaviour toward them was harsh and that they were subjected to phobic attitudes and comments.

One person in the third group reported that a prescribed medication they needed to take regularly was not provided to them.

It was recorded that the interview of the third group finished at 02:23.

Fourth Group

Six detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 02:31. During a 15-minute preliminary consultation

with these individuals, the following information was shared:

All members of the fourth group reported that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not read to them, their relatives were not notified, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in reverse handcuffs for at least four hours, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies.

One person in the fourth group reported that despite showing no resistance, when they objected to reverse handcuffing, the police officer who handcuffed them threatened them by saying, ***“If you resist any further, I will break your arm.”***

It was learned that all members of the fourth group underwent their initial examinations at the Haseki Training and Research Hospital. One person in the fourth group reported that while being escorted to the detention vehicle after the examination, a police officer violently hit them on the back.

One person in the fourth group reported that during their detention, a police officer verbally abused them using offensive words.

Four members of the fourth group reported that during a body search, when it was noticed that they were not wearing underwear, their breasts were touched on purpose.

All members of the fourth group reported that the police officers’ behaviour toward them was harsh and that they were subjected to phobic attitudes and comments.

While the lawyers were still conducting consultations with their clients, at 02:50 a police chief responsible for the statement procedures entered the lawyer consultation room. The chief began shouting in a threatening manner that the consultations were taking too long and that lawyers would not be allowed to photograph injuries on the body indicating torture or other ill-treatment, insisting that the consultations be kept short. As the police chief continued to shout and act aggressively, one detainee experienced an anxiety attack. Despite the person’s deteriorating condition, the police chief continued to behave aggressively and threatened them by saying, ***“If you won’t give a statement, we will take you to the detention cell.”*** After the lawyers reacted, the police chief left the consultation room. The detainee experiencing the anxiety attack was calmed down with the lawyers’ assistance and became capable of giving

a statement.

The interview of the fourth group finished at 03:15.

Fifth Group

Seven detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 03:22. During a 15-minute preliminary consultation with these individuals, the following information was shared:

All members of the fifth group reported that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not read to them, their relatives were not notified, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in reverse handcuffs for at least five hours, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies.

One person in the fifth group reported that their arm and wrist were bent to the point of fracture due to reverse handcuffing, that they were pushed by plainclothes police officers into a civilian vehicle, and that they were injured in the leg as they fell during detention. On the person's leg, scratches and wounds consistent with their account were recorded.

Another person in the fifth group reported that they were thrown to the ground and had their head hit against the ground during the arrest. Then their back was pressed down hard and their knee bent. The person's knee area was noted as bandaged. The same individual stated that a police officer was present during their initial medical examination.

One person in the fifth group reported that during a rough body search, certain parts of their body were touched for an extended period, and specific areas were deliberately pressed.

Another person reported being subjected to a rough body search at least eight times.

The statement procedures for the fifth group finished at 04:06.

Sixth Group

Eight detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 04:15. During a 15-minute preliminary consultation, the following information was shared:

All members of the sixth group were detained after the criminal record check

known as the GBT procedure.

All members reported that the reasons for their detention were not explained to them, their rights were not read, their relatives were not informed, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in reverse handcuffs for at least six hours, their toilet needs were not met, and they were denied access to basic hygiene supplies.

All members reported that their initial medical examinations were conducted at Eyüpsultan State Hospital.

All members stated that, at the request of the doctor, the initial examinations at Eyüpsultan State Hospital were conducted while they were in reverse handcuffs and under police supervision.

One person reported that, upon being placed in detention, a police officer insulted and threatened them by saying, **“Are you a man? I hope I search you by myself!”**

Another person reported that during a rough body search, their zippered outer garment was opened, and their underwear was removed to check their

chest.

One person, whose statement was being taken, reported that the police officer responsible for taking their statement was the same officer who had subjected them to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. After hearing this, the officers were seen to make the procedure more difficult. The lawyer reminded the person that they were not obliged to give a statement, but the person wished to continue. The officer then got angry, stood up, refused to take the statement, and left the room. Subsequently, the police officer in charge of the statement directed the person and the lawyer to another table. However, the officer initially refused to file the allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment in the official report, and when the lawyer reminded them of their duty, the officer banged on the table and stopped taking the statement. Upon hearing the debate, the supervising police officer entered the room and behaved aggressively. He said, **“Are we secretaries? Write it yourselves!”** and ordered the officers to stop taking statements. The officers attempted to remove the lawyers from the room. After the lawyers’ objection, the officer continued taking the statement, and the allegations of torture and ill-treatment were filed.

The statement procedures for the sixth

group finished at 05:11.

Observer lawyers learned from the police officers who had taken the statements that 39 individuals whose interviews at the security directorate had been completed would be held “in presence” upon the instruction by the prosecutor.¹⁶

Findings from the Examination of Interviews and Statements

Based on interviews that were directly observed by appointed lawyers and a later review of the statements, the following findings were reached:

Signs and banners containing statements such as *“I love you for the resistance that comes from kissing, for the revolution of love; You are a person from the struggle, my dear; I love you”; ‘This is my identity, not your ideological apparatus’; “This is the year of struggle against the palace, not against the LGBTI+”; “Sırrı Süreyya ÖNDER, present!”; “Not an object of capitalism, but its subject”; “None of us are truly honoured until we are all free”; “I am not here to fit*

into your world, I am here to fight for mine”, which had allegedly been seized at the site of the 11th Trans Pride March were used as grounds for criminal charges.

Two individuals were detained near their homes, one hour apart. Strong indications suggest these arrests were targeted. In both cases, attempts were made to confiscate their phones.

One person’s phone was confiscated under Article 127 of the Criminal Procedure Code Law No. 5271¹⁷ based on a written instruction from the prosecutor. Although it was not clarified how access to the phone’s contents was obtained, certain group messages allegedly present on the confiscated phone were also inquired with other individuals whose statements were taken alongside this person.

Except for two individuals under the age of 18 (whose statements were to be taken later by the public prosecutor) and one person whose statement record was unavailable, all 39 individuals whose records were

16 - According to the first paragraph of Article 91 of the Criminal Procedure Code No. 5271, individuals who are taken into custody and held “in presence” must be brought before a judge within 24 hours from the time of apprehension, after being questioned by the relevant Public Prosecutor.

17 - **Power for the seizure decision Article 127 - (1)** The seizure may be conducted by the members of the security forces upon the decision of the judge, or if there is peril in delay, upon the written order of the public prosecutor; in cases where it is not possible to reach the public prosecutor, upon the written order of the superior of the security forces.

examined stated that they were stopped while walking, standing, or leaving coffee shops under the pretext of GBT checks, and were subsequently detained.

The detainees reported that they were not informed of any ban, no announcements were made for dispersal, and they were not given the opportunity to leave by themselves.

Three individuals were stopped and detained approximately 17 km from the 11th Trans Pride March site, on the Galata Bridge in Beyoğlu district. They were asked by the Security Branch Bureau Chief: ***“On 22.06.2025, while walking on the Galata Bridge, your clothing and garments contained colours representing the LGBTI+ group; so, as part of the ongoing investigation under the prosecutor’s order, please provide detailed statements.”***

Many of the detainees reported that they were detained by plainclothes individuals who did not tell that they were police officers, and that they then were forced into unmarked vehicles.

Two detainees reported being deliberately kept in an unmarked vehicle with the air conditioning set to a high temperature for at least one hour before being transferred

to the Kadıköy Pier Police Station, where other detainees were round up.

Fatih District Security Directorate

Observations Before and During the Interview Procedures

At 19:00, a lawyer was assigned as an observer to the district security directorate upon receiving information that four individuals had been detained at the Fatih District Security Directorate’s Security Branch.

The observer arrived at the station at 19:13. Examination of the statements revealed that the individuals had been detained solely because their clothing contained colors associated with the LGBTI+ community.

In pre-interview consultation with the detained group, it was reported that their legal rights had not been communicated during detention. A trans woman reported that police officers used gendered expressions such as “brother” and “bro” during questioning. When lawyers intervened, the police claimed that the individual was “male” and that recording them as “female” in the health report was a “mistake.”

Following a dispute between police and lawyers, detainees were asked whether they recognized their lawyers, and pressure was applied by stating, “If you want, we can appoint a lawyer for you under the Criminal Procedure Code (CMK).”

The interview procedures for the four individuals were completed at 22:52. Police simultaneously informed the lawyers that the detainees would be kept in custody overnight to be referred to the prosecutor the following day under “in presence”.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During Observation at the Hospitals

The detainees’ locations for entry and exit medical examinations were not communicated to their relatives or lawyers.

Due to this lack of transparency, which violates international human rights standards, the observer institutions decided to station volunteer medical observers at four hospitals where detainees were expected to be brought for medical examinations. These hospitals were: Göztepe

Training and Research Hospital, Sultan Abdülhamid Han Training and Research Hospital, Kartal Dr. Lütfi Kırdar City Hospital, and Haydarpaşa Numune Training and Research Hospital.

However, since the detainees were taken to Eyüpsultan State Hospital and Haseki Training and Research Hospital, observers were unable to monitor the medical examinations.

Findings and Assessment Regarding the Criminal Investigation Initiated in Relation to the March

Monitoring organizations reviewed the indictments prepared by the Istanbul Anatolian Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office concerning 36 individuals who participated in, or were alleged to have participated in, the 11th Trans Pride March, as well as the indictment concerning three minors prepared by the same office.¹⁸ The examination of these indictments yielded the following information:

Indictment prepared against 36 individuals

In the indictment dated 7 July 2025 and numbered 2025/33135¹⁹, 36 individuals

18 - As of the date the report was written, no indictment has yet been prepared for the three individuals whose files were separated due to being lawyers.

19 - Investigation No: 2025/123633; Case No: 2025/42962.

were charged with ‘refusing to disperse’ under Article 32 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. Based on this article, the prosecutor in the indictment alleges that the 36 individuals committed the crime of ‘participating in unlawful meetings and marches without weapons and failing to disperse despite warning.’ The prosecutor also requests that, if convicted, the 36 individuals be deprived of certain rights in accordance with Article 53 of the Turkish Penal Code.

In its decision dated 19 February 2020, the Constitutional Court (AYM) annulled paragraph 18 of Additional Article 6 of the Police Duties and Powers Law No. 2559, which allowed the police to conduct investigations known as virtual patrols.²⁰ Despite the AYM’s decision, the following statements indicating that the application in question was carried out by law enforcement officials were included in the introductory paragraph of the indictment: ‘The Kadıköy Security Office observed various calls made by civil society organizations and individuals on social media networks under the name **“Resistance, We’re Walking 22 June Sunday Rebellion Trans Pride March Istanbul”** as part of the 11th Istanbul Trans Pride Week.’

Referring to the Kadıköy District Governorate’s banning decision dated 21 June 2025, the prosecutor stated in the indictment that **“measures were taken by the Kadıköy District Police Department throughout the district in order to protect public morals within the district of Kadıköy, prevent indecent behaviour and crime, identify individuals sought by the judicial authorities, the apprehension of perpetrators, and the seizure of any items constituting a crime.”**

In this section, the prosecutor states that two individuals were detained approximately three and a half hours before the start of the 11th Trans Pride March (at 1:30 p.m.) in the Caferağa neighbourhood, approximately 5 km from the location of the march. The prosecutor in the indictment states that **“these individuals were seen as one of the persons leading these actions, as they participated in LGBTI-related indoor and outdoor actions and issues during the monitoring of matters of concern to our department, and were considered to be one of the individuals leading these actions,” and that they were detained ‘due to suspicion that the photograph on their identity cards did not match their actual appearance during the identity check.’**

20 - AYM, Case Number: 2018/91, Decision Number: 2020/10, Decision Date: 19/2/2020, and Official Gazette Date-Number: 30/4/2020-31114. <https://normkararlarbilgibankasi.anayasa.gov.tr/Dosyalar/Kararlar/KararPDF/2020-10-nrm.pdf>

The prosecutor stated that approximately three and a half hours before the march (at 13:30) and approximately 5 km away from the location of the march, one of the individuals who had been detained received notifications on their phone indicating that there was a suspicion that a gathering might take place in the Acibadem neighbourhood, and that law enforcement officials had taken precautions at this location, stating that **“10 individuals who were found on Kaptan Ethem Street [ta] and were assessed as having gathered for a banned action,”** were detained approximately two hours before the march (at 15:17). The prosecutor in the indictment claimed, based solely on the arrest report prepared by law enforcement officials, that ‘the local authorities banned the action, would not be allowed to continue, and that the suspects were arrested after the group failed to disperse despite repeated warnings to do so.’ The prosecutor in the indictment claimed that the following items were found on these individuals: **“I love you for the resistance that comes from kissing, for the revolution of love; You are a person from the struggle, my dear; I love you”; ‘This is my identity, not your ideological apparatus’; “This is the year of struggle against the palace, not against the LGBTI+”; “Sırrı Süreyya ÖNDER, present!”; “Not an object of capitalism, but its subject”; “None of us are truly honoured until we are all free”; “I am not here to fit into your world, I am here to fight for mine”.**

The prosecutor stated in the indictment that a person was detained approximately three hours before the start of the 11th Trans Pride March (at 2:15 p.m.) in the Osmanağa neighbourhood, approximately 3 km away from the location of the march. The prosecutor stated that this person was **‘one of the individuals known to us to have participated in and led LGBTI-related public and private actions and issues during the course of our investigation into matters that concerned us previously’** and that he was detained **‘on suspicion that the photograph on his identity card did not match his actual appearance during an identity check.’**

The prosecutor stated that 17 people were detained because they **‘did not comply with warnings that their action on Nakkaş Street was illegal and that they should end it’** and claimed that the individuals **‘resisted’** their detention.

The prosecutor stated that 14 individuals were detained on the grounds that they were individuals who **‘escaped from the intervention aimed at apprehending them on Nakkaş Street.’**

The prosecutor, who did not present any evidence in favour of the 36 individuals in violation of the second paragraph of Article 160 of the Criminal Procedure Law No. 5271²¹, claimed that **“they held an unauthorised and unannounced meeting**

21 - Duty of public prosecutor informed of an offense - Article 160 - (2) - In order to investigate the factual truth and to

and demonstration by covering their faces with masks and similar objects in order to avoid being recognized, in violation of Law No. 2911, that these facts were established by security and MOBESE camera recordings and other evidence in the file, and that the suspects committed the crime attributed to them in this manner.”

The prosecutor in the indictment decided to separate the files of the three lawyers detained by law enforcement officials and to continue the investigation separately.²²

Indictment prepared against three persons under the age of 18

In the indictment dated 21 July 2025²³, three persons under the age of 18 were charged with the offence of ‘refusing to disperse’ under Article 32 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. The prosecutor, acting on this article, alleges that the three individuals committed the crime of *‘participating in unlawful meetings and marches without weapons and failing to disperse voluntarily despite warnings.’* The prosecutor requested that the penalties to be imposed on the three individuals,

if convicted, be reduced on the grounds of ‘juvility’ in accordance with the third paragraph of Article 31 of the Turkish Penal Code.

Referring to the Kadıköy District Governorate’s ban dated 21 June 2025, the prosecutor stated that a person *‘found to be carrying a banner and gathered for the banned action on Kaptan Ethem Street in the Acibadem neighbourhood of Kadıköy District’* was detained approximately two hours before the march (at 15:17). The prosecutor in the indictment, relying solely on the arrest report prepared by law enforcement officials, alleged that *‘the law enforcement officials warned this group that their actions were banned by the local authorities, that they would not be allowed to proceed, and that they should disperse, but they did not disperse.’*

The prosecutor stated that one of the other two individuals was detained on Nakkaş Street, while the other was detained while *‘escaping from the arrest on Nakkaş Street.’*

Contrary to the second paragraph of Article 160 of the Criminal Procedure Law

secure a fair trial, the public prosecutor is obliged, through the judicial security forces, who are under his command, to collect and secure evidence in favour and in disfavour of the suspect, and to protect the rights of the suspect.

22 - Investigation No.2025/133245

23 - The lawyers of the three individuals under the age of 18, considering the best interests of their clients, shared only the relevant parts of the indictment with the monitoring organizations. For this reason, information regarding the indictment and investigation numbers could not be provided.

No. 5271, the prosecutor did not present any evidence in favour of the three individuals and stated that ***‘the statements of [the children involved in the crime] at our Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office cannot be considered reliable in light of the summary prepared by the law enforcement authorities.’***

The prosecutor in the indictment stated that the three individuals had participated in a march banned by the local authorities without complying with the methods and conditions set forth in Article 20 of Law No. 2911 and the bans and precautions in Article 22 of Law No. 2911, and participated in a march banned by the local authorities,” and requested that they be punished with imprisonment of six months to three years under Article 32 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations.

Assessment of the indictments

The indictments prepared by the Istanbul Anatolia Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office against a total of 39 individuals have been assessed by observer institutions in light of international human rights standards and the obligations of prosecutors as determined in accordance with these standards.

The indictments prepared by the Istanbul Anatolia Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office contain serious and multidimensional

violations of universal human rights standards and the obligations of prosecutors determined in accordance with these standards. First and foremost, the indictments clearly violate the ‘right to be informed promptly and in detail of the nature and grounds of the charges against them’ guaranteed by Article 14(3)(a) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The indictments contain no individual and concrete assessment of each suspect’s actions, intent or role; all defendants are charged in an abstract and collective manner. No distinction has been made between participants, organisers, bystanders and children; no evidence has been presented to establish individual criminal liability. This uncertainty and lack of individualised charges prevent defendants from preparing an effective defence and violates their right to a fair trial and the principle of equality of arms.

Secondly, the language used in the indictments is contrary to the presumption of innocence (ICCPR Article 14(2)). Expressions such as ***‘it is understood that they committed the crime in this way’*** indicate that guilt is presumed in advance by expressing a definitive opinion that the crime has been established before the trial process has been completed. Again, the indictments cite Article 32(1) of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations as grounds for charging participants with violating the local government’s ban on the events and failing to comply with calls to disperse. However, the grounds for the

ban, such as vague and discriminatory expressions such as ‘public morality’ and **‘indecent behaviour,’** do not meet the requirements and proportionality criteria set forth in international human rights law. According to Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the ICCPR and General Comment No. 37 of the UN Human Rights Committee, arbitrary bans on peaceful assemblies, especially when based on discriminatory grounds, constitute a violation of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. However, the individuals referred to as **‘suspects’** in the indictment participated in a non-violent, peaceful march and merely exercised their rights guaranteed by the constitution and international law.

Thirdly, the indictments also contain serious problems in terms of the principles of legality and legal certainty (Article 15 of the ICCPR). No clear and predictable legal assessment has been made as to how the crime was committed; it has merely been assumed that participation in the demonstration is sufficient for criminal liability. This situation opens the door to the arbitrary application of criminal norms and violates the principle that individuals should be able to predict in advance which behaviours constitute a crime.

Some of the content presented as evidence in the indictments consists of private messages obtained from individuals’ mobile phones, which were presented without any information regarding procedural judicial oversight or search warrants. This situation raises serious questions in the context of the right to privacy under Article 17 of the ICCPR and constitutes a potential violation of rights.

In terms of the obligations of the prosecution, the indictments clearly contradict the UN Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors (1990).²⁴ There is no evidence that the prosecutor independently assessed the sufficiency, method of acquisition, and legality of the evidence. The indictments accept the narrative presented by law enforcement officials without question and do not take into account fundamental human rights such as the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and non-discrimination. The prosecutors’ identification with law enforcement officials by using expressions such as **‘our part’** and **‘known to us’** in the indictments, and moreover, the acceptance of the documents presented by law enforcement officials, including street names²⁵, as absolutely true, can be cited as examples of these contradictions.

24 - UN Human Rights High Commissioner, Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors, 7 September 1990, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/guidelines-role-prosecutors>

25 - Monitoring organizations have determined that, contrary to what is stated in the indictments, there is no street named “Kaptan Ethem” in the area related to the incident. It is assumed that the street, which was incorrectly written in the apprehension

The duties and responsibilities of prosecutors include not only conducting criminal prosecutions but also protecting the rights of individuals and defending the legitimacy of the judicial mechanism against arbitrary prosecutions. In addition, the obligation not to use evidence obtained through unlawful means (such as unauthorised telephone data) in court proceedings has been disregarded. The language used in the indictment and the accusations and assessments made based on actions protected under freedom of expression, such as the symbols and slogans of LGBTI+s and, in particular, the rainbow flag, indicate the existence of discriminatory motivation.

As a result, monitoring organisations believe that the indictments clearly contradict many fundamental human rights standards, including the right to a fair trial, the right not to be subjected to discrimination, and the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. The approach of the prosecution authorities points to a punitive, disproportionate and rights-based investigation practice, which risks suppressing dissenting opinion and criminalising individuals for their very existence. In the context of the international human rights treaties to which Turkey is a party, such practices constitute serious human rights violations and give rise to legal liability.

report by law enforcement officials and consequently included in the indictment in this form, is actually “Ethem Kaptan”.



23:istanbul Pride March

29th June 2025

Media

Monitoring

As part of media monitoring activities, between 25 June and 3 July 2025 in the context of the 2025 Istanbul Pride Week and March, discriminatory discourse targeting LGBTI+s was scanned in print and digital press, television, radio, and social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram). Within this scope, news articles, opinion

pieces published in print and digital press, TV and radio programs, as well as posts on social media (Facebook, X, Instagram) by government officials, journalists, institutions and organisations and their representatives, public figures, and various social media users were examined.

Between 25 June and 4 July 2025, an increase in content containing discriminatory discourse towards LGBTI+ individuals was observed during the Trans Pride Week. During this period, 66 social media posts²⁶, 19 print news articles²⁷, 51 online news articles²⁸, and 13 TV news²⁹ were either directly targeting the Pride March or LGBTI+s in general. Expressions such as ‘pervert’, ‘deviant’, ‘disease’, ‘globalists’, ‘de-gendering propaganda’, ‘immorality’, “provocation”, and ‘harm to

26 - For some examples, see:

https://x.com/ozlemdogan_/status/1938251395460714821; <https://x.com/BAPlatformu/status/1938298948860739638>;
<https://x.com/meselelgbt/status/1937835001019502922>; <https://x.com/teskilatthaber/status/1939317470038254008>;
<https://x.com/birincimucabit/status/1939319315674566850>; <https://x.com/SinanAkyuz73/status/1939346277495349258>;
<https://x.com/misvakcaps/status/1939014474658119859>;
<https://x.com/genclikbirligi/status/1938945013158679011>

27 - For some examples, see: Yeni Akit (June 29, 2025), *Tefekkür*; Doğru Haber (June 30, 2025), “Family Year or Controversy Year?”; Milli Gazete (June 30, 2025), “The Same Perverse Scene Every Year.”

28 - For some examples, see:

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/buyuk-aile-platformundan-basketbol-super-ligindeki-sampiyonluk-kutlamasina-tepki/3614708>;
<https://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/25341799/izmir-valiligidinden-sapkin-onur-haftasi-etkinliklerine-3-gunluk-yasak>; <https://spor.haber7.com/fenerbahce/haber/3542142-fenerbahcenin-kutlamalarindaki-travesti-rezaletine-buyuk-aile-platformundan-tepki>;
<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/tarihi-sokaklarda-hayasiz-akina-gecit-yok-istanbulda-lgbt-sapkinligina-dur-denildi-1941846.html>;
<https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/sapkin-irfan-degirmenci-gozaltina-alindi-1941897.html>

29 - For some examples, see: TRT Haber (June 27, 2025), *Günün* İçinden, “Reaction from the Great Family Platform to the Celebration”; Akit TV (June 27, 2025), *Haber 14*, “International Family Fair Opened in Ankara”; Ulusal Kanal (June 29, 2025), *Ana*

the family institution' were among the discriminatory and targeting rhetoric used in these posts.

In a post on his social media account on 29 June, Istanbul Governor Davut Gül stated that 'it has been observed that some marginal groups have called for gatherings and marches on social media' and added, ***"These calls, which target the peace of society, the family structure and moral values, have not been permitted. No tolerance will be shown for any gathering or march that threatens public order, and the relevant authorities will take the necessary action."***

Additionally, in a speech delivered at the AKP Women's Branch camp programme in Ankara on 2 July 2025, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated, ***'We are fighting on a new front every day, from perversions such as LGBTI to virtual betting traps, from 'anti-gender' policies to cultural imperialism.'***³⁰

Haber, "İstiklal Street Closed"; Ulusal Kanal (June 30, 2025), *Gündemin Nabız*, "LGBT Associations' Pride March Action"; Lider TV (July 1, 2025), *Gündem Değerlendirmesi*.

30 - Diken (July 2, 2025),

<https://www.diken.com.tr/erdogan-lgbt-sapkinliklarindan-sanal-bahise-her-gun-yeni-bir-cephede-mucadele-veriyoruz/>

Assembly Observation

Monitoring organisations observed the 23rd Istanbul Pride March, held on 29 June 2025 in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, with nine observers. As part of the assembly observation work, law enforcement and hospital procedures before, during and after the march were observed.

Measures Taken by Administrative Authorities and Law Enforcement to Prevent the March

Banning decisions taken by administrative authorities

Through monitoring the official websites and social media accounts of the relevant administrative authorities and by reviewing related documents, monitoring

organizations determined that various administrative authorities had issued banning decisions aimed at preventing the 23rd Istanbul Pride March.

No banning decision published by the Istanbul Governorate in any public medium could be identified. Nevertheless, it was determined that Istanbul Governor Davut Gül made the following post on his personal social media (X) account on 28 June 2025, which included discriminatory statements: *“It has been observed that some marginal groups are calling for gatherings and marches on social media. Permission has not been granted for these calls, which target the peace of society, the family structure and moral values. No tolerance will be shown for any gathering or march that threatens public order, and the relevant units will take the necessary action.”*³¹

Metro Istanbul, operated by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, announced on its official social media account that, in line with the Istanbul Governorate’s decision, the Taksim and Şişhane stations on the M2 Yenikapı-Hacıosman metro line, the Fulya and Yıldız stations on the M7 Yıldız-Mahmutbey metro line, and the F1 Taksim-Kabataş Funicular line will be closed *“until further notice as of 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, 29 June 2025.”*³² This initial announcement,

31 - Davut Gül (June 28, 2025), https://x.com/gul_davut/status/1939030294092292406.

32 - Metro Istanbul (June 28, 2025), <https://x.com/metroistanbul/status/1939015796610474303>.

made at 20:39 on Saturday, 28 June 2025, was updated by a second announcement made at 23:44 on the same day to state that the closure would be **“until further notice, effective from 08:00 on Sunday, 29 June 2025”**.³³ The announcement that the Taksim and Şişhane stations on the M2 Yenikapı-Hacıosman metro line had reopened was made at 00:02 on Monday, 30 June.³⁴ The announcement that the Fulya and Yıldız stations on the M7 Yıldız-Mahmutbey metro line and the F1 Taksim-Kabataş Funicular line had reopened was made at 05:50 on Monday, 30 June.³⁵ According to calculations based on the times of the announcements stating that the lines closed at the time specified in the Governorate’s decision had reopened, the observer institutions determined that the Taksim and Şişhane stations of the M2 Yenikapı-Hacıosman metro line had been closed to the public for 16 hours and 2 minutes; the Fulya and Yıldız stations of the M7 Yıldız-Mahmutbey metro line, and the F1 Taksim-Kabataş Funicular line were closed to the public for 21 hours and 50 minutes.

Şehir Hatları A.Ş.³⁶, operated by the

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, announced on its corporate social media account at 12:23 on Sunday, 29 June 2025, that Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa and the Historic Beşiktaş Piers would be closed to service in accordance with the decision taken by the Istanbul Governorate.³⁷ The reopening of the piers to service was announced in a statement made at 12:05 on Monday, 30 June.³⁸ Based on the social media posts announcing the closure and reopening of the piers, observer institutions determined that the Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa and Historical Beşiktaş Piers were closed to public use for 23 hours and 42 minutes.

The Kadıköy District Governorate, through an announcement titled **“Press Release”** published on the district governorate’s website on June 27, 2025 stated that **“it has been learned that, in violation of the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations via social media accounts, June is regarded as the so-called Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride Month, and illegal groups, various civil society organizations, political parties, foundations, and associations are planning calls for gatherings**

33 - Metro İstanbul (June 28, 2025), <https://x.com/metroistanbul/status/1939062354227945905>.

34 - Metro İstanbul (June 20, 2025),

https://x.com/metroistanbul/status/1939429204107333770?t=z190uw_w_eVKsfRw7BFJnQ&s=08.

35 - Metro İstanbul (June 30, 2025),

<https://x.com/metroistanbul/status/1939516852050206747?t=z8895aZ0iqFkwjG9rxXJ8A&s=08>.

36 - Şehir Hatları, founded in 1851 and is a subsidiary of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in sea transportation.

37 - Şehir Hatları (June 29, 2025), https://x.com/sehir_hatlari/status/1939072201514459322.

38 - Şehir Hatları, X post, 30 June 2025, https://x.com/sehir_hatlari/status/1939429939721212358

and actions.” The announcement further noted that “*considering social media posts, the event planned within our district under the title ‘We Do Not Accept the Blocking of Hormone Access. Istanbul Pride March on June 29 Against Transphobic Policies!’* and gatherings with slogans such as ‘*We Burned the Closet, We Destroyed the Family, Pride Cannot Fit in Ten Years. We Do Not Fit Into Laws or Families, We Are in the Streets for Our Existence During Pride Month!’* could, due to their propagandistic nature, affect national, moral, and human values, threaten social peace, and provoke reactions from certain groups, thus posing a risk and imminent danger”.

Based on these grounds, the governorate banned the planned events for two days, including all related gatherings under the same content or similar actions by different groups—such as meetings, vehicle removal, demonstration marches, press statements, sit-ins, human chains, protest actions, rallies, distribution of handouts/leaflets/brochures, and hanging of posters/banners—as well as the event announced under the title “*We Do Not Accept the Blocking of Hormone Access. Istanbul Pride March on June 29 Against Transphobic Policies!’*” The district governorate cited Articles 17 and 22 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and

Demonstrations and Article 32/ç of Law No. 5442 on Provincial Administration as the legal basis for the ban.³⁹

On June 28, 2025, the Beyoğlu District Governorate, through an announcement titled “*Press Release*” published on the district governorate’s website, stated that “*it has been understood that calls for gatherings were made through some social media accounts for 29.06.2025*” and announced that these gatherings were banned for one day on the grounds that “*...these gatherings could lead to actions that disrupt public order and social peace.*” The district governorate cited Article 17 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations and Article 32/ç of Law No. 5442 on Provincial Administration as the legal basis for the ban.⁴⁰

It was learned from the indictment prepared by the **Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau** on 3 July 2025 that the ban decision was taken by the **Beşiktaş District Governorate** on 27 June 2025. Monitoring organizations determined that the ban decision in question was not published in any medium open to the public.

39 - Kadıköy Governorate, “Press Release”, 27 June 2025, <http://kadikoy.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi270625#>.

40 - Beyoğlu Governorate, “Press Release”, 28 June 2025, <http://www.beyoglu.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi---28062025#>.

Measures taken by the general and district police departments

In line with the decisions taken by the authorities to prevent the 23rd Istanbul Pride March, monitoring organizations conducted on-site inspections in the districts of Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, and Kadıköy to monitor the measures implemented by the general and district police departments.

Şişli

As of 10:20, police officers in jackets were observed patrolling various side streets in the Şişli district.

At 10:21, police officers in blue T-shirts were seen waiting at the Pangaltı exit of the M2 Metro, and a riot police bus was deployed in front of a hotel on the opposite corner of the metro exit.

As of 10:22, three riot police minibuses were observed stationed opposite each other near the traffic lights in front of a hotel across from the metro exit.

At 10:23, a TOMA (T-46) was observed waiting at the Military Museum turning point.

As of 11:13, a riot police team of eight to ten people with equipment was seen deployed at the bus stop exit of the Mecidiyeköy Metrobus stop.

At 11:17, it was determined that riot police were waiting inside a detention vehicle parked at the bus stops.

As of 11:20, at least one detention vehicle and one mobile immigration vehicle were observed in Mecidiyeköy Square.

At 11:22, two midibuses, two minibuses and a mobile police vehicle were deployed in the area; at the same time, a TOMA (T-65), four police minibuses, a midibus, two black civilian police vehicles and several more midibuses were observed in front of Cevahir Shopping Mall and across the road.

Furthermore, at 11:31, a TOMA and a police minibus were deployed in front of Şişli Mosque.

As of 11:37, three police minibuses and one police minibus were observed at the Rumeli Avenue exit of Osmanbey Metro station. At the same time, a TOMA was deployed in front of the Nişantaşı bus stop (near the former Harbiye minibus stop); a police vehicle was observed waiting at the traffic lights at the intersection of Rumeli, Valikonağı and Teşvikiye Streets.

In the Nişantaşı area, as of 11:27, police officers wearing yellow vests were patrolling at various points along Vali Konağı Street.

At 11:28, a TOMA (T-77) was deployed in front of a shoe shop on the corner of Akkavak Street.

At 11:29, two police officers wearing vests marked 'TEM Branch' were observed on patrol in Mıstık Park, and at the same time, a riot police bus was seen in front of the park.

At 11:30, a civilian police vehicle with the plate number 34 AM 2535 was seen patrolling on Ahmet Fetgari Street.

Beyoğlu

At 10:33, police officers wearing blue T-shirts were observed waiting at the opposite corner of a hotel located right next to Gezi Park in Taksim. By 10:35, riot police units had been deployed in the area extending to the Taksim HAVAŞ bus stop, and by 10:36, all street entrances leading from Tarlabası to İstiklal Avenue had been closed off with double rows of barriers.

At 10:38, an Akrep-type armoured vehicle (Kartal 77), a TOMA (T-76) and two riot police buses were seen in front of the British Consulate.

By 10:44, the Şişhane Metro entrance had been closed, and by 10:50, Şişhane Square had been completely closed to pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

At 10:54, riot police with shields were seen waiting at the Tunnel exit, and three riot police buses were deployed in the area.

At 10:55, four checkpoints were passed through, entering İstiklal Avenue from the Şişhane direction, and it was observed that the avenue was approximately 95% empty.

At 10:59, the fifth checkpoint near Odakule was passed, and at 11:03, it was observed that citizens were being held at the sixth checkpoint in Galatasaray Square and that two riot police buses were present in the square.

As of 11:06, it was noted that passage was not permitted at this checkpoint.

Beşiktaş

At 11:10, a water cannon vehicle was seen deployed at the centre of the traffic lights in front of the Sinan Paşa Mosque in Beşiktaş. At the same time, three detention vehicles (minibuses) were spotted on the Barbaros Boulevard side of Beşiktaş Çarşı.

By 11:12, this number had increased to four.

At 11:15, two minibuses were deployed in front of the Beşiktaş Eagle Statue, one of which was parked in such a way as to

block the entrance to a side street. At the same time, a police vehicle was spotted in front of Beşiktaş Balıkçılar.

At 13:01, a riot police bus and a riot police minibus were observed opposite the Tüpraş Stadium, and at 13:04, an Akrep-type armoured vehicle (Z-53) and a riot police bus were observed in front of the Beşiktaş Pier.

Kadıköy

As of 10:33, a police minibus and a detention vehicle were deployed in front of the Göztepe Marmaray stop; two uniformed police officers were observed waiting at the Marmaray entrance.

At 10:40, a group of police officers were observed inside the Söğütlüçeşme Marmaray station and three police officers were observed waiting around the Metrobus stop.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During On-Site Observation

At 13:00, the first group of observers arrived near the Teşvifatçı Hacı Mahmut Mosque on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 13:08, another observer group arriving at Kabalak Street in Ortaköy spotted a minibus used to transport police officers

in the garden of Burak Reis Primary School on the road.

At 13:12, a minibus with plate number 34 KS 2385 and riot police officers were observed opposite Lozan Street, travelling along Dereboyu Avenue.

At 13:13, observers monitoring the Burak Reis Primary School grounds observed a minibus with plate number 34 LAV 082, used to transport police officers, waiting in the school grounds.

At 13:15, police vehicles and uniformed police officers, as well as individuals believed to be plainclothes police officers, were observed along Dereboyu Avenue. A MOBESE camera was detected on Çevirmeci Avenue.

At 13:17 and thereafter, during an investigation conducted from Çevirmeci Avenue towards Ortaköy, six individuals, believed to have come to participate in the march, were observed walking in pairs.

At 13:37, two plainclothes police officers were seen at the intersection of Dereboyu Avenue and Gültekin Street.

At 13:41, a police car was seen at the intersection of Osmanzade Street and Muvakkit Street.

At 14:02, observers waiting on İşkembeci

Yaver Street observed a police car arriving from the direction of Çevirmeci Avenue.

At 14:05, it was determined that a minibus with plate number 34 KS 2385, accompanied by riot police, was still waiting opposite Lozan Street on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 14:08, a detention vehicle was seen passing through Büyükkuyu Street and heading towards Dereboyu Avenue.

At 14:21, an observation team positioned in a café on Dereboyu Avenue observed two individuals, later confirmed by video recordings to be plainclothes police officers, walking down Dereboyu Avenue towards Ortaköy.

At 14:28, the same two individuals were seen again walking up the street.

At 14:25, an individual, presumed to have arrived to join the march, was seen turning onto Çevirmeci Avenue from Büyükkuyu Street. The same individual returned at 14:32 and headed towards Dereboyu Avenue from in front of the mosque.

At 14:34, several individuals, presumed to have arrived to join the march, were seen at the lower end of Çevirmeci Avenue.

At 14:42, a minibus with plate number 34 KS 2385, positioned opposite Lozan

Street and carrying riot police, was seen moving between Refik Fenmen Çıkmazı and Saadet Street and parking in a pocket on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 14:43, a person who was thought to have come to join the march was seen passing by the corner of Büyükkuyu Street.

At 14:51, when we went to the junction of Çevirmeci Avenue and Lozan Street, Kezban Konukçu, Member of Parliament for the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), and two other people were seen there. The group then moved towards Dereboyu Avenue.

At 14:52, two police vehicles with plate number 34 A 6231 were seen arriving behind the minibus parked on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 14:55, two people in plain clothes, later identified as police officers, were seen waiting at the intersection of Çevirmeci Avenue and Lozan Street.

At 14:56, a group of police officers in plain clothes were seen running towards Hülya Street.

At 14:56, upon reaching the group making a statement on Hülya Street, seven people were identified recording the statement, which continued with the words, '**We are here again, as we are every year!**' Twelve

people participating in the statement and carrying flags and other materials were seen. It was observed that the statement was made on a street between apartment buildings and that citizens were following the statement from the balconies on the upper and lower floors of the buildings. It was observed that the protesters paused the statement with slogans such as **'Not in the law, but in life.'** Two protesters were seen carrying lollipops with the words **'Perpetrator: The State'** written on them. Other protesters were seen carrying various rainbow flags. While the person reading the statement continued, saying, **'In our year of honour against your year of the family...'**, someone was heard shouting, **'Police!'** The group was observed dispersing, running towards Dereboyu Avenue via Hülya Street.

At the same time, at least three plainclothes police officers were seen at the intersection of Hülya Street and Lozan Street. It was observed that before entering Hülya Street, one of these officers whistled towards Dereboyu Avenue. Immediately afterwards, at least 10 plainclothes police officers were seen running towards the area.

At 14:57, riot police carrying shields were seen running along Lozan Street and entering Hülya Street. The police officers were seen chasing the protesters, who had dispersed on their own without any warning.

At 14:58, a person was heard saying, 'I'm journalist, what are you doing? I'm journalist.' This person was also observed being taken to a spot in front of an apartment building towards the end of Dereboyu Avenue on Hülya Street, and his phone was taken from him at this time.

At 14:59, a police officer believed to be the team leader was heard shouting orders to riot police to block the Lozan Street exit of Hülya Street, saying, **'Why aren't you closing this off? Close it off!'**

Although three of the five observers on Hülya Street were at a more distant point from the group, it was noted that the same police officer angrily shouted, **'Take these ones too!'** targeting the observers. As a result, three observers had to leave the area and exit via Lozan Street onto Dereboyu Avenue. At this point, only two observers from the observation team remained on Hülya Street.

At 15:00, shouts were heard from the open car park of an apartment building located towards the end of Hülya Street on Dereboyu Avenue. An activist was seen being pinned to the ground in reverse handcuffs, with a riot police officer pressing down on his back. At this time, riot police officers were observed using physical violence in the form of rough beatings against some other activists who were reacting.

At 15:02, riot police officers carrying shields were seen getting out of a police vehicle with plate number 34 UY 7648, which was parked on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 15:03, riot police gathered in front of an insurance company building on Dereboyu Avenue were seen deploying with their shields to block the side street, then moving to the rear via the side street.

At 15:04, a police minibus with plate number 34 ADE 216 was seen arriving on Dereboyu Avenue, near Hülya Street, where the arrest took place. The plate numbers of other police vehicles arriving on the street at the same time were also identified as follows: 34 LCZ 979, 34 KBJ 303, and 34 HP 7093.

At 15:04, riot police arriving at the car park of an apartment building at the end of Hülya Street towards Dereboyu Avenue were seen blocking the car park entrance with their shields. Police officers wearing vests marked ‘Security Branch’ were observed attempting to remove members of the press and observers from the area, along with DEM Party MP Kezban Konukçu.

At 15:06, law enforcement officials caused chaos on Dereboyu Avenue, bringing traffic to a standstill. At the same time, a group of riot police were seen running towards Gültekin Street on the opposite side of the avenue.

At 15:08, around 10-15 riot police were seen stationed at the entrance to the dead-end street where the cemetery and church are located.

At 15:08, individuals believed to be the Istanbul General Directorate of Security’s Security Branch Manager and a high-ranking police officer, dressed in civilian clothing, were seen entering Hülya Street from Dereboyu Avenue and moving towards the car park where protesters were being detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

At 15:08, a plainclothes police officer was seen entering Hülya Street from Dereboyu Avenue and bringing a protester with him towards the detention point.

At 15:08, a high-ranking riot police commander was heard shouting aggressively at a group of riot police officers on Hülya Street, giving the order, **‘F*** off press, get these guys away!’** Following the order, some members of the press and observers were removed from the car park towards Lozan Street, where protesters were being detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

At 15:10, numerous police vehicles, including minibuses and buses, as well as plainclothes and uniformed police teams, were recorded along Dereboyu Avenue.

The observation team, attempting to continue their observation by crossing to the opposite pavement in front of an insurance company, noted that local shopkeepers, commenting on the situation with pedestrians, said, **'With so many police here, it must be something to do with terrorism, there must be a terrorism case.'**

At 15:11, a six-person rapid response team carrying shields was seen stationed at the beginning of Bulgurcu Street.

At 15:11, the observation team noticed police officers rushing around in the vicinity of Gültekin Street and headed there, but despite reaching the beginning of the street, they were unable to observe anything. Citizens waiting on the road were being warned not to wait. While the observation team was searching for a suitable spot on Dereboyu Avenue to safely continue their observation, they recorded a police officer passing by saying, loud enough for them to hear, 'These are also among them.'

As of 15:15, this observation team was forced to remain stationary in a café due to the presence of a large number of plainclothes and uniformed police officers on the street and their inability to find a suitable location for observation.

At 15:15, three plainclothes police officers were seen entering Hülya Street from

Dereboyu Avenue, bringing two activists with them towards the detention point.

At 15:17, a group was seen being surrounded in front of a liquor store on Dereboyu Avenue. Those inside the cordon were heard shouting, but it was impossible to make out what they were saying or how many people were there. The police were heard trying to disperse citizens in the vicinity and telling one citizen observing the situation, **'I'll arrest you too.'** The observation team also noted that a person present who identified himself as a journalist was told, **'I'll start with your journalism.'**

At 15:19, citizens around the cordon in front of the monopoly shop were heard saying among themselves, **'They took people from Toyota.'**

At 15:19, shopkeepers on Dereboyu Avenue were heard saying among themselves, **'So many police for LGBTI? It could be terrorism.'**

At 15:19, a detention bus with number 34 AF 1671 was seen entering Hülya Street from Dereboyu Avenue and approaching the car park, where protesters were detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment.

At 15:20, a person believed to be a plainclothes police officer entered a café where some observers were present,

talking on the phone. The police officer quickly headed to the café's back garden and was seen leaving shortly afterwards. As the plainclothes police officer left the café, he was heard saying, **'There's no one here.'** The same person returned to the café a short time later and checked the surroundings and the garden.

At 15:20, an observer who witnessed Dereboyu Avenue being closed to traffic heard citizens commenting on the situation, saying, **'We thought there was a bomb! If nothing had happened, there wouldn't be so many police here.'**

At 15:23, a minibus, a minivan and a police vehicle with flashing lights were seen descending from Şehit Nuri Pamir Street. A large number of police officers were seen inside the vehicles. Two police teams accompanying the vehicles were later observed returning in the opposite direction.

As of 15:23, it was seen that the protesters were being removed from the car park, where they had been detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The protesters, who were subjected to a rough body search, were observed being loaded onto a detention bus with plate number 34 AF 1671. It was determined that at least 12 of the 15 people put into the detention vehicle were in reverse handcuffs. Observers on Hülya Street, from the

first moments of the police intervention regarding the press statement until the detention vehicle departed, noted that the individuals who were reverse handcuffed did not resist the arrest in any way.

At 15:24, Dereboyu Avenue was observed to be closed to vehicle traffic.

At 15:25, the detention vehicle with plate number 34 LB 0515 was seen entering Bulgurcu Street.

At 15:27, police officers were heard saying 'four people' about four individuals sitting at the börek shop on the corner of Müsahip Street on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 15:28, citizens were seen being removed from Bulgurcu Street.

At 15:29, a detention vehicle at the entrance to Bulgurcu Street was seen carrying out detentions, accompanied by approximately 30 riot police and at least 10 plainclothes police officers. The number of people detained could not be determined due to the depth of the police cordon.

At 15:30, the front of the pastry shop on the corner of Müsahip Street was cordoned off in a semi-circle. The observation team present there was removed by the police.

At 15:32, as an observation team member

crossed to the pavement opposite the pastry shop, a riot police officer in a moving vehicle was heard saying, '***This one on the left could be it, huh?***' At this moment, it was observed that the semicircle in front of the pastry shop had dispersed.

At 15:32, three activists were seen being taken off the detention vehicle with number 34 AF 1671, which had been used to transport those detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment on Hülya Street. These individuals were observed being put into a minibus with plate number 34 ADE 216, which was parked on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 15:33, the '***security cordon***' formed in front of the monopoly shop was seen to be dispersed after the detention process was completed.

At 15:37, the detention vehicles carrying the activists, who were detained in a manner that could constitute torture and other forms of ill-treatment on Hülya Street, were seen moving away towards Ortaköy.

As of 15:43, the observer teams wished to continue observing developments, as the police were stationed at the entrances to side streets along the entire length of Dereboyu Avenue. It appeared that the riot police had received orders to maintain their positions. Police officers were seen

patrolling the street and establishments along it in groups. However, due to concerns about the safety of the observation and the observers, the observers decided to leave the area.

Three police officers wearing vests marked 'Security Branch' stopped by the café where an observer team had been earlier and were heard saying, '***They were sitting in the café too,***' as the same observer team passed by them while dispersing.

Another observer team, which left the café around 16:00, proceeded towards Ortaköy via Dereboyu Avenue. In a venue near Bulgurcu Street, they identified a Kaos GL lawyer sitting with a group.

As of 16:08, police activity was observed to be continuing on Dereboyu Avenue.

At 16:10, a detention vehicle was seen moving on Dereboyu Avenue.

Another observation team, leaving the area and moving from Dereboyu Avenue towards the Ortaköy shore, identified at least eight police minibuses and numerous plainclothes and uniformed police officers along the street. Three police minibuses were observed at the beginning of Portakal Yokuşu.

At 16:13, another observation team leaving the area towards Çırağan Avenue

saw riot police deployed at the entrances to Refik Fenmen Street, Saadet Street and Bulgurcu Street.

At around 16:15, an observation team preparing to leave the area saw two people being put into one of the minibuses at the entrance to Portakal Yokuşu, with plate number 34 EB 9820. These individuals were heard protesting, stating that they were lawyers, arguing with the police, and saying, ***‘You cannot take the lawyer in this vehicle.’*** It was clearly observed that one of them was handcuffed and taken into custody. The other person’s face was turned away, but because there were so many police officers surrounding him, the moment he was handcuffed could not be recorded. The police were seen placing some items in a black bin bag and then taking a white banner with coloured writing on it out of the same bag. Several police officers unfurled the banner, while another recorded the scene. It was not possible to see what was written on the banner.

As of 16:36, all observer teams had left the area.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During Observation at the Security Directorates

Observations prior to the interviews

A lawyer assigned as an observer by the Istanbul Branch of the Human Rights Association (İHD) arrived at the Istanbul General Directorate of Security at Vatan Avenue at 17:28, where the detained persons were brought. It was observed that the entrance of the building was completely blocked by barriers. A police officer at the entrance prevented the observer lawyer from entering the building, stating that the detained persons had not yet been brought to the directorate.

It was observed that the number of lawyers waiting in front of the directorate increased until 19:30. It was observed that the detention vehicle arriving from Eyüpsultan State Hospital, where the detained persons had been taken for their initial examination, entered the security directorate’s compound at 19:30. Lawyers, who continued to wait in front of the Istanbul General Directorate of Security because they were prevented from entering, stated that they wanted to see their clients upon the arrival of the detention vehicle and requested to wait in the lawyers’ waiting room inside the police building. Police officers wearing vests marked ‘Security Branch’ waiting in

front of the directorate's building were observed preventing the lawyers from entering, claiming that no detention vehicles had yet been brought in. Upon the lawyers' insistence, the police officers stated that the vehicles had not yet arrived and that the interrogation process would not begin until all detained persons had been brought in.

As they were prevented from entering, the lawyers continued to wait in front of the Istanbul General Directorate of Security. At 21:30, they were observed to have contacted police officers wearing vests bearing the words 'Security Branch' again and reiterated their requests to meet with their clients. Upon the rejection of these requests without any justification, it was heard that the lawyers requested that a small number of lawyers be allowed to go to the detention vehicles to meet basic needs such as water and food. It was observed that the police officers rejected this request from the lawyers without giving any reason.

At 21:51, a plainclothes police officer was heard stating that the lawyers could be admitted to the waiting room. Upon this, five lawyers entered the directorate. However, it was soon observed that these lawyers were not being admitted inside. It was learned that another police officer prevented the lawyers from entering the directorate, saying, 'There are instructions.' However, shortly afterwards, these five lawyers were observed to have re-entered

the directorate.

The five lawyers waiting in the lawyers' waiting room inside the directorate were seen leaving at 22:23. It was learned that administrative proceedings were initiated against the plainclothes police officer who said the lawyers could enter, as he had acted contrary to the instruction that everyone, including the lawyers, should wait outside the barriers. At the same time, it was noted that the lawyers waiting outside the directorate were also removed from outside the barriers.

At 22:52, a dispute broke out between the lawyers, who continued to wait in front of the Istanbul General Directorate of Security after being prevented from entering, and the police officers waiting in front of the building, after the lawyers reiterated their request to meet with their clients. It was heard that the police officers called riot police to the scene.

It was observed that a chief police who was also responsible for the interviews of individuals detained after the 11th Trans Pride March, step outside the police building at 23:10 and announced to the lawyers waiting in front of the building, who were prevented from entering, that the lawyers of five individuals whose names he would read out would be allowed inside for interviews. It was observed that when the lawyers demanded that all lawyers be allowed inside and that they be allowed

to immediately meet with their clients, who had been detained for a long time, the chief began to behave aggressively. It was heard that the chief stated that no one could visit the detention vehicles and that no lawyer could ever be an observer during the interviews, adding that if this were the case, he would not begin the process. It was noted that when the lawyers persisted, the chef threatened to ***‘extend the detention period’*** and ***‘take everyone in custody’***.

As a result of the negotiations, it was observed that the interviews began at 23:30 and that the lawyers were present as observers during the process.

Observations made during the interviews

The 53 individuals detained before and after the 23rd Istanbul Pride March were divided into six groups, and their statements were taken accordingly.

First group

Five detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 23:30. The following information was shared during the preliminary interview with the individuals, which lasted 17 minutes:

It was noted that everyone in the first group was detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

Everyone in the first group stated that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, that their rights were not explained to them, that their relatives were not notified, that they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in this position for at least eight hours, that none of their needs, including water and food, were met except for toilet needs, and that they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies. Two individuals who began a hunger strike in protest of their detention stated that their need for sugar was not met.

Everyone in the first group shared that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then to Bayrampaşa State Hospital for an initial examination.

Everyone in the first group stated that their phones were confiscated without no record made.

Three people in the first group stated that they were subjected to insults and threats inside the detention vehicle.

Two people in the first group reported that they were not given the medication they needed to take regularly.

One person in the first group stated that after being detained, they were put into a civilian vehicle with plate number 34 MMV 677.

Second group

Ten detainees who were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 00:09. Two foreign nationals were seen among the group. The following information was shared during the preliminary meeting with the individuals, which lasted 15 minutes:

It was noted that everyone in the second group was detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

Everyone in the second group stated that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not explained to them, their relatives were not notified, they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and kept in this position for at least nine hours, none of their needs, including water and food, were met except for toilet needs, and they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies.

Everyone in the second group stated that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then to Bayrampaşa State Hospital for an initial examination.

Five people in the second group stated that their phones were confiscated with no record made.

Four individuals in the second group

stated that they were subjected to insults and threats inside the detention vehicle.

Three individuals in the second group stated that after being detained, they were put into a civilian vehicle with plate number 34 MMV 677.

Third group

Nine detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 01:05. The following information was shared during the preliminary meeting with the individuals, which lasted 15 minutes:

It was noted that everyone in the third group was detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure.

Everyone in the third group stated that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not explained to them, their relatives were not notified, none of their needs were met except for toilet facilities, including water and food, and they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies.

Everyone in the third group stated that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then taken to Bayrampaşa State Hospital for an initial examination.

Everyone in the third group stated that

their phones were confiscated with no record made.

Five individuals in the third group stated that they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and were kept in this position for at least four hours.

Five individuals in the third group stated that they were subjected to insults and threats inside the detention vehicle.

The person in the third group shared that they were subjected to physical violence inside the detention vehicle. One person stated that their throat was squeezed, while another stated that they were kicked.

Two persons in the third group, who are lawyers, shared that they were detained while going to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate to observe.

Fourth group

Six detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 01:53. The following information was shared during the preliminary meeting with the individuals, which lasted 15 minutes:

It was noted that everyone in the fourth group was detained after the criminal record check known as the GBT procedure. The individuals interviewed

stated that they were stopped by police officers sitting in a nearby café as they were leaving a pastry shop and were then detained.

Everyone in the fourth group stated that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, their rights were not explained to them, their relatives were not notified, none of their needs were met except for toilet facilities, including water and food, and they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies.

Everyone in the fourth group stated that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then to Bayrampaşa State Hospital for an initial examination.

Everyone in the fourth group stated that their phones were confiscated with no record made.

Five individuals in the fourth group stated that they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and were kept in this position for at least two hours.

Fifth group

Ten detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 01:53. The following information was shared during the preliminary meeting with the individuals, which lasted 15 minutes:

Everyone in the fifth group stated that they were not informed of the reasons for their detention, that their rights were not explained to them, that their relatives were not notified, that none of their needs, including toilet, water and food, were met, and that they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies.

Nine individuals in the fifth group stated that they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and were kept in this position for at least four hours.

Everyone in the fifth group reported that the first detention vehicle they were placed in after their arrest was excessively hot and extremely stuffy. It was reported that two individuals in the group experienced breathing difficulties and were removed from the vehicle after 15 minutes, while the other eight individuals were kept in this vehicle for 35 minutes before being transferred to another vehicle.

Everyone in the fifth group stated that their phones were confiscated with no record made.

Everyone in the fifth group stated that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then to Eyüpsultan State Hospital for an initial examination.

Everyone in the fifth group stated that while waiting in the courtyard of

Eyüpsultan State Hospital, they were subjected to insults and threats by police officers on duty in the detention vehicle. It was shared that the police officers addressed the detained individuals, saying, **'You are all disgusting! Look at yourselves, your disgustingness will rub off on us'** and **'If you make a sound, we will put you in reverse handcuffs again!'**

Everyone in the fifth group shared that hospital security was present in the examination area during all of the initial examinations conducted at Eyüpsultan State Hospital. It was reported that the examination area was created by surrounding the hospital security guards' work area with curtains and that the police officers waited in a position where they could hear the examinations.

Everyone in the fifth group shared that after being brought to the Istanbul General Directorate of Security, a police officer came to the detention vehicle and threatened them, saying, **'If you make a sound, I will keep you in custody!'**

Everyone in the fifth group shared that police officers on duty in the detention vehicle took pictures of the detained persons with their personal phones.

One person in the fifth group reported that during the arrest, a police officer made transphobic remarks, saying, **'It's not clear if you're a woman or a man!'**

One person in the fifth group shared that they were subjected to physical violence during the arrest. Bruises were recorded on the person’s back and arms.

After the statements of the individuals in the fifth group were completed, a lawyer conveyed to the police chief in charge of the statements that his client, a trans woman, should be searched by a female police officer before being taken to the detention centre. The police chief reportedly responded sarcastically, ***‘I don’t have any faggot officers, what can I do?’***

Sixth group

Thirteen detainees were brought to the lawyer consultation room at 3:30 a.m. It was learned that everyone in the group was taken to the detention center before their statements were taken and were brought to the lawyer consultation room from the detention center. The following information was shared during the 15-minute preliminary meeting with the individuals:

Everyone in the sixth group stated that they were not told why they were detained, that their rights were not explained to them, that their relatives were not notified, that none of their needs, including toilet, water, and food, were met, and that they did not have access to basic hygiene supplies.

One person in the sixth group stated that

despite indicating that they had a chronic heart condition, they were not given their medication.

Twelve individuals in the sixth group stated that they were subjected to reverse handcuffing and were kept in this position for at least four hours. One individual subjected to reverse handcuffing reported that their hands turned blue due to the handcuffs being too tight.

Three individuals in the sixth group reported being subjected to physical violence during their arrest. They shared that their arms were twisted behind their backs so forcefully that they nearly broke, and that they were pinned to the ground in this position. Bruises were observed on their arms.

Everyone in the sixth group stated that their phones were confiscated with no record made.

Everyone in the sixth group shared that the first detention vehicle they were put in after the arrest was extremely hot and had very poor ventilation. It was reported that after being held in this vehicle for more than half an hour, the vehicle was changed.

Everyone in the sixth group stated that they were first taken to the Beşiktaş District Security Directorate and then taken to Eyüpsultan State Hospital for an

initial examination.

Everyone in the sixth group shared that hospital security was present in the examination room during all of the initial examinations conducted at Eyüpsultan State Hospital. It was reported that the examination environment was created by surrounding the area where the hospital security guards worked with curtains, and that police officers waited in a position where they could hear the examination.

It was recorded that all interviews were completed at 04:43.

Findings from Examination of Interviews and Statements

Based on the interviews directly observed by lawyers appointed as observers and the later review of the statements, the following findings were reached:

It was observed that the banner bearing the phrase ***“Insist on life! 23rd Istanbul Pride March”*** which allegedly seized at the location of the 23rd Istanbul Pride March, as well as ***“LGBTIQ+ flags and banners”*** was used as a justification for the charges.

Contrary to the findings of monitoring organizations mentioned in the previous section, individuals detained on the grounds that they had committed the crime of ***“refusing to disperse”*** as defined in Article 32 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations were warned for

dispersal with the announcement, ***“On 29.06.2025, despite warnings to disperse presented with the Beşiktaş District Governorate’s ban, you were arrested for the crime of violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations as a result of your actions in failing to disperse”***.

It was determined that individuals detained while walking or standing at various locations or leaving cafes stated in their statements that they were not notified of the relevant administration’s ban, that no prior announcement for dispersal was made, and that they were not given sufficient time to disperse.

It was observed that most of the individuals detained while walking or standing at various locations or leaving cafes were detained by individuals in civilian clothing who did not present them as police officers and were forced into vehicles with civilian number plates.

It was noted that when a person who was reverse handcuffed during the arrest objected to this practice, the police officers responded, ***“This is the procedure!”***

It was noted that when a person who was handcuffed tightly during the arrest requested that the handcuffs be loosened, the police officers responded, ***“This is how it should be.”***

While the detained individuals were being

held at the Istanbul General Directorate of Security for interviews, a police commander came to one of the detention vehicles and stated, “If anyone makes a sound, send me their photo, and I will keep them in presence.” which was recorded in the minutes.⁴¹

Observer lawyers learned that 53 individuals whose interviews at the security directorate had been completed would be held “in presence” upon the instruction of the prosecutor.⁴² The information provided by the police officers assigned for the interviews.

Findings and Human Rights Violations Identified During Observation at the Hospitals

The detainees’ locations for initial and final medical examinations were not communicated to their relatives or lawyers.

Due to this lack of transparency, which violates international human rights standards, the monitoring organizations decided to appoint volunteer medical observers at two hospitals where

detainees were expected to be brought for medical examinations. These hospitals were: Bayrampaşa State Hospital and Eyüpsultan State Hospital.

The physicians observed the initial examinations of detained individuals at Bayrampaşa and Eyüpsultan State Hospitals, as well as the final examinations conducted at Bayrampaşa State Hospital on June 30, 2025.

Eyüpsultan State Hospital - Initial Medical Examinations

The observing physician arrived at Eyüpsultan State Hospital at 2:30 p.m.

At 16:38, a vehicle carrying some individuals who had been taken into custody was seen entering the hospital premises. Shortly thereafter, a police officer was heard getting out of the vehicle and registering 23 individuals collectively. This police officer was then seen entering the office of the doctor who was later observed conducting the examinations.

The vehicle carrying the individuals taken

41 - Under the Criminal Procedure Code No. 5271, only the Public Prosecutor is authorized to decide whether individuals taken into custody will be processed through completion of investigation (“ikmalen”) or while being held “in presence” (“mevcutlu”).

42 - Under the first paragraph of Article 91 of the Criminal Procedure Code No. 5271, individuals who are taken into custody and held “in presence” must be brought before a judge within 24 hours from the time of apprehension, after being questioned by the relevant Public Prosecutor.

into custody was seen parked in a shaded area on the hospital premises. It was observed that the air conditioning of the vehicle, whose doors were closed, was turned on at 17:31.

It was observed that the detained individuals were brought to the hospital for examination in groups of three or four. It was observed that the detained individuals were taken to the green area of the hospital and kept waiting there.

It was observed that the detained individuals were brought to the examination room in handcuffs, passing through other patients, and that the handcuffs were not removed until each person's examination began. It was noted that the individuals whose handcuffs were removed had red marks on their wrists due to handcuffs, and that some individuals had bruises and injuries on their bodies.

The first examination was recorded as starting at 16:53. It was determined that the longest examination lasted three minutes, while on average each examination lasted two minutes.

As the first examination began, a police officer approached the observing physician and requested identification and a letter of assignment. The police officer examined the documents and photographed both.

It was determined that the examination environment failed to guarantee the privacy of the patient-doctor relationship. A gap was observed in the ceiling of the examination room, which was approximately four-square meters in size. It was noted that five to six police officer were present at the door of the examination room and that, even though the door was closed, everything spoken in the examination room was easily audible from outside. It was observed that during all examinations conducted until 18:00, the hospital security guard stand inside the examination room, where he could see and hear everything.

It was observed that some of the individuals taken into custody refused to be examined because the security guard was present in the examination room. The doctor conducting the examinations was heard saying, ***"I will continue the examinations this way; if you don't want to, you don't have to be examined."*** Upon this, a police officer was heard asking, ***"Will you examine without security?"*** as he moved to the examination room next door. Two individuals were then seen being taken into this room.

The observing physician was only able to accompany one examination. It was observed that no physical examination was performed during this observed examination.

The police officer, who had previously photographed the observer physician's ID and assignment letter, approached the observer physician and informed him that he had sent the photos to his superiors and that he could only be present in the examination room for observation purposes.

At 18:00, the observer doctor was again asked to show his ID and assignment letter. After examining the documents, the police officer said, "How do I know you're a doctor?" and removed the observing doctor from the examination room.

At 19:02, the detention vehicle was recorded leaving the hospital premises.

Bayrampaşa State Hospital – Initial Medical Examinations

Two observing physicians arrived separately at Bayrampaşa State Hospital at 1:45 PM and 7:15 PM.

It was recorded that the first detention vehicle arrived at the hospital at 16:45. Approximately 20 people were seen in the detention vehicle. It was observed that the initial examinations of the detained persons began at 17:18, and that the persons were brought to the examination one by one and reverse handcuffed. It was observed that the individuals' handcuffs were removed before the examination and that they were reverse handcuffed

again after the examination. It was determined that the examinations were conducted in the forensic examination unit and lasted an average of one minute. Although law enforcement officials stood nearby, it was observed that the doors of the examination room were closed and that the law enforcement officials did not enter the examination room. While the examinations were ongoing, it was observed that individuals brought to the hospital to use the restroom were reverse handcuffed and that the police officers accompanying them held their arms tightly. It was recorded that the detention vehicle left the hospital at 5:30 p.m.

The second detention vehicle was recorded as arriving at the hospital at 18:50. Eleven people were seen in the detention vehicle. It was observed that the initial examinations of the detained persons began at 19:02, and that the persons were brought to the examination one by one. It was observed that three persons were brought to the examination in reverse handcuffs, while the rest were brought with tight straight handcuffs. Some persons with straight handcuffs were observed to have abrasions along with bruises. It was observed that the individuals' handcuffs were removed before the examination and that everyone was handcuffed with straight handcuffs after the examination. It was determined that the examinations were conducted in the forensic examination unit and lasted an average of one minute. Although

law enforcement officials stood nearby, it was observed that the doors of the examination room were closed and that the law enforcement officials did not enter the examination room. While the examinations were ongoing, it was observed that individuals brought to the hospital to use the restroom were reverse handcuffed and that the police officers accompanying them held their arms tightly. It was recorded that the detention vehicle left the hospital at 19:23.

The third detention vehicle was recorded as arriving at the hospital at 7:50 p.m. Six people were seen in the detention vehicle. It was observed that everyone in the detention vehicle was taken out of the vehicle at once and kept waiting at the door of the examination room. Two individuals who were removed from the vehicle were seen in reversed handcuffs. It was noted that the initial examinations of the detained individuals began at 8:00 p.m. It was determined that the examinations were conducted in the forensic examination unit and lasted an average of two minutes. Although law enforcement officials stood nearby, it was observed that the doors of the examination room were closed and that the law enforcement officials did not enter the examination room. It was observed that the individuals' handcuffs were removed before the examination and that everyone was handcuffed after the examination. It was recorded that the detention vehicle left the hospital at 8:13 p.m.

Bayrampaşa State Hospital – Final Medical Examinations

The observing physician arrived at Bayrampaşa State Hospital at 12:15 p.m. on Monday, June 30, 2025.

Upon arrival, the observing physician saw three detention vehicles waiting in the hospital garden, but it could not be determined at what time the detainees had been brought to the hospital. It could not be determined how many people had been brought to the hospital for examination, and despite being asked, the police officer on duty did not provide this information.

It was observed that all of the detention vehicles were parked in the hospital courtyard under the sun and that their doors were closed. However, as it was not possible to approach the vehicles, it could not be determined whether their air conditioning was working.

It was observed that the detained individuals were taken out of the vehicles in handcuffs. It was observed that some of these individuals were reverse handcuffed. It was noted that the individuals' handcuffs were removed after they entered the examination room. It was observed that the individuals were handcuffed again, facing forward, when they were put back into the vehicle after the examination.

At what time the detained individuals were brought to the hospital is now known to the observers, making them unable to specify when the examinations began.

However, based on the examinations that could be observed, it was recorded that the examinations only lasted between one to five minutes.

It was observed that the examinations were conducted in an area outside the emergency room. The door to the examination room was seen to be closed. However, as the observing physician was kept at a distance, it could not be determined whether the numerous police officers waiting in the examination area could hear the examinations.

At 12:53, a person addressed as “Chief Commissioner” approached the observing physician and requested his ID and assignment letter. The police chief, who said, “Nothing illegal is happening here,” tried to remove the observing physician, but the latter kept observing from where he was.

At 13:14, a police officer was seen starting to record with a camera in his hand from the location of the examination room door. It was noted that the camera recording continued until the examinations of the detained individuals were completed.

At 13:20, four lawyers registered with

the Ankara Bar Association were heard stating that they wanted to observe the examination area. Police officers were seen preventing the lawyers’ entry.

At 13:30, someone in the rear of the vehicles parked in the hospital garden was heard shouting, “No food, no water!” The shouting continued, and the vehicle door was observed to be closed.

At 13:38, a person was heard shouting from inside the vehicle, “I want to talk to my lawyer!” It was observed that the person was allowed to speak with their lawyer for two minutes outside the detention vehicle. The observing physician contacted the lawyer who spoke with the person to obtain information. The lawyer stated that the person they spoke with said that a person with heart disease had a nervous breakdown on the bus and became rigid as a result, but no intervention was made; they were kept in the vehicle tightly handcuffed and in a reverse position, the vehicle interior was hot and stuffy, and when they were taken out, they were led to the vehicle handcuffed in front as a charade, and they were reverse handcuffed inside the vehicle.”

At 14:20, the detention vehicles were recorded leaving the hospital premises.

Findings and Assessment **Regarding the Criminal**

Investigation Initiated in Relation to the March

Monitoring organizations reviewed the documents related to the judicial control measures and arrest warrants issued as part of the investigation, in addition to the indictment prepared by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau against 53 individuals who participated in and/or are alleged to have participated in the 23rd Istanbul Pride March. The review of the aforementioned documents revealed the following information:

Judicial control measures

It was determined that 50 of the 53 individuals held in custody on the instructions of the prosecutor assigned to the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau were referred to the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace with a request for a "travel ban" without being heard by the prosecutor, in accordance with Article 109, paragraph 3(a) of the Criminal Procedure Law No. 5271. to the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace.

It was observed that although the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace issued an

*"Interview Statement Record"*⁴³ on June 30, 2025, it ruled "on the file" regarding the individuals for whom a judicial control measure equivalent to detention was requested, citing **"workload"** as the reason. The judge decided to apply a judicial control measure in the form of a **"ban on leaving the country"** to 50 individuals collectively, claiming that **"the evaluation of the file revealed concrete facts indicating the existence of strong suspicion of the crime of participating in an unlawful assembly and march without weapons and failing to disperse despite warning"**.

Arrest warrants

Three individuals among the 53 people held in custody on the instructions of the prosecutor assigned to the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau were referred to the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace with a request for their arrest under Article 100 of the Criminal Procedure Law No. 5271 following their statements to the prosecutor's office.

The **"Statement of Interrogation"**⁴⁴ prepared by the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace on June 30, 2025, shows that the three individuals for whom arrest were requested were interrogated in the presence of their lawyers.

43 - Interrogation No. 2025/669.

44 - Interrogation No. 2025/670.

The judge, ignoring the allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment mentioned during the interrogation and the defence that the elements of the crime attributed to them did not exist, decided to arrest the three individuals on the grounds that **“the application of judicial control measures would be insufficient at this stage, and the expected benefit could not be achieved.”**

Two of the three individuals detained by the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace remain in custody as of the date of this report.

Indictment prepared against 53 individuals

The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office Terrorism Crimes Investigation Bureau has prepared an indictment against 53 individuals who participated in and/or are alleged to have participated in the 23rd Istanbul Pride March.

In indictment numbered 2025/21492,⁴⁵ the 53 individuals were charged with “Refusing to disperse” under Article 32 of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations. Acting on this article, the prosecutor in the indictment charged 36 individuals with the crime of **“participating in unlawful meetings and marches without**

weapons and refusing to disperse despite warning.” The prosecutor in the indictment also requested that, if convicted, the 36 individuals be deprived of certain rights as per the Article 53 of the Turkish Penal Code.

Referring to the banning decision on 27 June 2025 by the Beşiktaş District Governorate, which was found not to have been published in any public medium, the prosecutor alleged that the law enforcement officials arrested 53 people after they **“marched in a group with LGBTI+ flags and banners.”** It was noted that the prosecutor used the term **“so-called”** when referring to LGBTI+ Pride Week, about which he provided inaccurate information, stating that it was the 33rd such event.

The prosecutor presented the banner bearing the words **“Insist on life! 23rd Istanbul Pride March”** and rainbow flags, allegedly seized at the site of the 23rd Istanbul Pride March, as evidence of criminal activity.

The indictment prosecutor, who included the image review report prepared by law enforcement officials in detail in the indictment, stated that 28 people were identified in the images, presenting participation in a peaceful march itself as evidence of a crime. However, it was also noted that the indictment prosecutor

45 - Investigation No. 2025/141051; Case No. 2025/32997.

stated that the remaining 25 people could not be found in the review of the incident images.

The prosecutor stated, *“The suspects gathered together as part of a specific organization on the day of the incident and chanted slogans, refusing to disperse despite warning, that they knowingly and willingly took part in the group, became integrated into the group, and that all suspects gathered for illegal action and acted with the same purpose, committing the crimes of violating Law No. 2911 with their statements and actions”*, in accordance with Article 32 of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911, for a period of six months to three years.

Findings and Assessment Regarding the Criminal Investigation Initiated in Relation to the March

Monitoring organizations have reviewed the indictment prepared against 53 individuals who participated in and/or are alleged to have participated in the 23rd The indictment prepared against 53 individuals who participated in and/or are alleged to have participated in the Istanbul Pride March, as well as the judicial control and detention decisions issued within the scope of the investigation, are considered to be in conflict with universal human rights principles in terms of both procedural safeguards and substantive legality.

Firstly, the absence of individual assessments in the indictment and judicial decisions, the abstract and generalized nature of the charges, violates the “right to a fair trial” protected under Article 14 of the ICCPR, particularly the principles of “being informed of the charges in a timely and detailed manner,” “preparing a defence,” and “presumption of innocence.” Although the indictment states that only 28 individuals were identified in footage of the events, charges were brought against 53 individuals collectively, with no concrete evidence presented, either directly or indirectly, against many of them. The charges are generally based on actions that could be considered within the scope of the right to peaceful demonstration, such as “acting together,” “integrating with the group,” and “chanting slogans.”

Monitoring organizations are concerned that the language used in the indictment violates the prosecutor’s obligation of impartiality. In particular, derogatory expressions such as “so-called Pride Week” and the symbols of LGBTI+s (rainbow flags, banners, and the “Insist on Life” banner) have been presented in the indictment as elements of crime, in violation of the right to freedom of expression (Article 19 of the ICCPR) and non-discrimination (Article 26 of the ICCPR). Furthermore, despite the fact that the Beşiktaş District Governorate’s ban was not announced in public forums, incriminating criminal charges based on this ban demonstrates that the right to freedom of peaceful

assembly (Article 21 of the ECHR) has been arbitrarily restricted and that the basis for the charges lacks legal certainty. This situation is also incompatible with the principles of legality and foreseeability (ICCPR Article 15).

Judicial control and detention decisions also involve serious procedural human rights violations. The Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace ruled on the cases of 50 individuals without even taking statements from the prosecution and despite the fact that “interrogation records” had been prepared, solely on the grounds of “workload.” Although this decision was made under Article 109 of the Criminal Procedure Code, considering that the ban on leaving the country is a measure as severe as detention, subjecting individuals to this measure without hearing them in person, without individual assessment, and without presenting concrete evidence is contrary to both domestic law and international standards. In line with the Article 9 of the ECHR, decisions to deprive someone of their liberty or restrict their liberty must be taken only in cases expressly provided for by law and after individual assessment for each person. Similarly, in the decision to arrest the three individuals, even though one of them had raised allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment during interrogation, the court did not conduct any assessment, did not take the defences into account, and based its decision to arrest them solely on the prosecutor’s abstract assessment, on

the stated grounds that “judicial control would be insufficient.”

These decisions issued by the Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace are inconsistent with the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, and the European Charter for Judges of the Council of Europe. The obligation of judges to render independent, impartial, and reasoned decisions in light of the specific facts and evidence of each case has been violated. The statements in the criminal court of peace decisions raise serious concerns in terms of both apparent impartiality and judicial independence. The court accepted the administration’s arbitrary bans as they were, did not question the police intervention that led to the violation of constitutional rights, and did not assess whether the actions subject to trial were related to the right to protest.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and documentation activities carried out during the 2025 Istanbul Trans and LGBTI+ Pride Marches reveal that Turkey has failed to comply with the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), ICCPR, and framework documents by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and UN Special Rapporteurs.

Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Expression

The right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, guaranteed under Articles 10 and 11 of the ECHR and Articles 19 and 21 of the ICCPR, is a prerequisite for different social groups to be able to express their identities. As enshrined in the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (2007)17, the authorities are duty bound not only to recognize these rights but also to ensure that they can be exercised effectively.

Regarding the 2025 Pride Marches, the blanket bans imposed by Istanbul Governorate and district governorates prior to the marches violate the principle established in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgments in the cases of Oya Ataman v. Turkey (2006), and Bukta v. Hungary (2007), stipulating that "even meetings that have not been notified in advance must be protected if they are peaceful in nature." In particular, the intervention of law enforcement officials against protesters without prior warning is in contravention with the principles of proportionality and necessity, as the ECtHR stated in Akgöl and Göl v. Turkey (2011). Moreover, the detention of individuals carrying colours or slogans associated with LGBTI+ identity has arbitrarily restricted their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, creating a chilling effect that has rendered the exercise of these rights virtually impossible.

Authorities must immediately end the violations against the LGBTI+ individuals' rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, personal liberty and security, and to live free from discrimination. They must ensure that everyone, including LGBTI+ individuals, can exercise their right to peaceful assembly without discrimination, including by establishing adequate safeguards for the right to organize and participate in peaceful assemblies. All charges against protesters, including LGBTI+ protesters who have been prosecuted solely for exercising their right to peaceful assembly, must be dropped immediately and unconditionally.

Prohibition of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment

The prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment is absolute in nature under Article 3 of the ECHR and Articles 1 and 16 of the UN Convention Against Torture. The practices documented in this report, such as physical violence, sexual violence, prolonged and painful reverse handcuffing, and denial of basic needs by law enforcement authorities against detained persons, may in some cases amount to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. The authorities must conduct prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigations into all these allegations of human rights violations.

The degrading treatment of detainees

based on their gender identity and appearance clearly violates the obligations set out in Istanbul Protocol.

Conducting medical examinations on detainees while they are reverse handcuffed, sometimes in the presence of law enforcement officials and without any confidentiality, is clearly contrary to both ethical principles and the standards of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture. The ECtHR's decisions in *El-Masri v. Macedonia* and *Bouyid v. Belgium* have established that such treatment may constitute torture or inhuman and degrading treatment.

All medical examinations on detainees must comply with the Istanbul Protocol. In particular, doctors should be able to examine the detainees individually and comprehensively. The right of the detainees to benefit from the highest attainable standard of health and to be free from torture and other forms of ill-treatment requires that medical checks be conducted individually and confidentially, without police officers being present.

Right to Non-Discrimination

In accordance with the Article 14 of the ECHR and Article 1 of Additional Protocol No. 1, as well as Articles 2 and 26 of the ICCPR, all fundamental rights and freedoms must be exercised without discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

In its judgments in *Identoba v. Georgia* (2015) and *Zhdanov v. Russia* (2019), the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) clearly stated that restrictions on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly of LGBTI+ persons constitute a peculiar violation of non-discrimination if they are based on discrimination. The systematic bans imposed on Pride marches in Turkey since 2015 and the intervention of law enforcement agencies contradict the aforementioned jurisprudence and have become part of the structural discrimination against the LGBTI+ community.

The authorities' use of vague and abstract justifications such as "public morality," "public order," or "risk of provocation" in their statements, decisions, and actions regarding the LGBTI+ events also coincides with the discriminatory patterns of practice defined in Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (2010) 5 on the rights of LGBTI+ persons. The homophobic and transphobic rhetoric of those in positions of public authority has also been criticized in the reports by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on Turkey, which emphasized that this rhetoric deepens social polarization.⁴⁶

The practices documented above demonstrate that LGBTI+ individuals are

systematically deprived not only of their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, but also of their fundamental rights to security, bodily integrity, and equal protection under the law. This situation clearly contradicts Turkey's human rights obligations under the Council of Europe, the United Nations, and the OSCE.

Since 2015, authorities have been unlawfully and systematically obstructing Pride marches in Turkey, violating the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, and non-discrimination. Authorities must cease using stigmatizing language and discriminatory remarks against LGBTI+ individuals. At the same time, authorities are obliged to publicly challenge gender-based stereotypes and raise public awareness about the rights of LGBTI+ individuals.

All allegations of unlawful use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officials against protesters, including gender-based violence, torture, and other forms of ill-treatment, must be subject to effective, impartial, and timely investigations.

LGBTI+ individuals should be able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly without being subjected to violence or

46 - ECRI - Country monitoring in Türkiye,

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/turkey>.

discrimination. People should have the right to protection and, moreover, the right to be supported in standing up against injustice and discrimination, rather than being harmed or punished for peacefully exercising their rights.

Turkish authorities are obliged to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of LGBTI+ individuals without discrimination. They must immediately end the human rights violations to which LGBTI+ individuals are subjected by the police and other authorities and, instead, take positive steps to combat institutional homophobia and transphobia, including homophobia and transphobia among law enforcement officials, as well as entrenched gender-based stereotypes.

MAY 17
ASSOCIATION

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