



Alliance
for
Shared Values

July 15, 2026

Ten Years After July 15: The Lasting Consequences for Democracy and Human Rights in Türkiye

July 15, 2026 marks the tenth anniversary of one of the most consequential and controversial events in modern Turkish history. On the night of July 15, 2016, Türkiye witnessed a violent military mobilization that was officially presented as a failed coup attempt. In the wake of that horrific event, a systematic campaign of repression and persecution was unleashed against hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens.

What began as a sweeping purge quickly evolved into one of the largest campaigns of political persecution in Türkiye's modern history. Millions of lives were affected as ordinary citizens were investigated, prosecuted, imprisoned, dismissed from their jobs, stripped of their property, separated from their families, or forced into exile, often for nothing more than their lawful association with the Hizmet movement. Ten years later, the consequences of July 15 continue to shape Türkiye's democracy, its institutions, and its human rights record.

On this tenth anniversary, the Alliance for Shared Values is releasing a new report, *July 15: Erdoğan's False Flag Operation and the Systemic Destruction of Turkish Democracy*. Drawing on a decade of newly available court testimonies, witness accounts, international legal findings, official records, and political developments, the report reexamines the events of July 15 and their aftermath. It concludes that the military mobilization on July 15 was a false flag operation planned and executed by the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), the Chief of General Staff and commanders from the top brass of the military under Erdoğan's directions.

The report also presents the evidence accumulated over the past ten years that points to a broader process through which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan consolidated power and accelerated Türkiye's transformation into a personalized authoritarian regime. July 15 was the ultimate enabling event in this process.

As the events unfolded on July 15, 2016, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan immediately blamed Fethullah Gülen without waiting for any investigation. Mr. Gülen categorically condemned the mobilization while it was still underway, rejected the accusations, and called for an international commission to investigate the events. He publicly declared his willingness to return to Türkiye and stand trial if such an investigation established his responsibility. That call was never accepted.

To date, the events of July 15 have not been subjected to an independent, impartial, and transparent legal investigation conducted in accordance with international standards. Trials carried out under political pressure resulted in convictions based largely on the defendants' alleged identities and affiliations.

Moreover, the final report prepared by the Parliamentary Investigation Commission established to examine the events of July 15 was withheld from the public and, despite the passage of ten years, has still not been released. Officials who held critical positions and possessed direct knowledge of the events, including the then Chief of the General Staff and the head of the National Intelligence Organization, were not personally heard by the Parliamentary Investigation Commission, despite repeated requests from its members. Requests for these individuals to testify in open court in major trials related to the alleged coup attempt were also rejected.

Testimonies presented during subsequent court proceedings and evidence that emerged over the following years exposed numerous contradictions in the official narrative. Rather than allowing an independent examination of the facts, the government suppressed any such efforts and used July 15 to justify an unprecedented campaign of political repression.

The witchhunt that followed the tragic incident extended far beyond those accused of participating in the military mobilization. While military activity was still unfolding on the night of July 15, lists of judges and prosecutors - apparently prepared in advance - were announced. By the morning of July 16, thousands of members of the judiciary had been suspended and subjected to legal or administrative proceedings on the basis of those lists. This unprecedented speed of the purge was also closely documented by international observers. The campaign quickly expanded to journalists, academics, lawyers, teachers, students, businesspeople, civil society organizations, opposition figures, and countless ordinary citizens.

Official data and human rights watchdog reports illustrate the extraordinary scale of this persecution: more than 2 million people have been investigated, over 720,000 prosecuted, more than 300,000 convicted, and more than 134,000 public servants dismissed. Thousands of institutions, including schools, universities, media outlets, hospitals, charities, and businesses, were closed or confiscated, while more than 230,000 passports were canceled.

The United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and numerous international human rights organizations have consistently documented arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, violations of due process, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the systematic erosion of the rule of law in Türkiye. The Erdoğan government's campaign also has extended well beyond Türkiye's borders. International reports identify Türkiye as one of the world's leading practitioners of transnational repression, using intelligence operations, abuse of international legal mechanisms, passport cancellations, and kidnappings to pursue critics abroad.

On this tenth anniversary, we call upon the international community not to remain silent in the face of the continuing deterioration of democracy, rule of law, and fundamental freedoms in Türkiye. The Turkish government must be urged to comply with its obligations under international human rights law, implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, and end politically motivated prosecutions. International engagement with Türkiye should be guided by measurable improvements in human rights and the rule of law.

Ten years later, as we remember with sorrow and pray for all innocent lives lost, July 15 should not be remembered only as a dark night of modern Turkish history. It should also be remembered as the beginning of a transformation that turned Türkiye's democratic institutions into political tools of the regime and the start of systemic human rights abuses that continue to ruin the lives of millions of citizens.

We once again renew our call for an independent international investigation of the tragic incident and the restoration of justice, freedom, accountability, and respect for human dignity for all the people of Türkiye.

To read our full report [*July 15: Erdoğan's False Flag Operation and the Systemic Destruction of Turkish Democracy*](#) [click here](#).

About Alliance for Shared Values

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit www.afsv.org.

Media contact

media@afsv.org

212-682-4278