



FACTS ABOUT THE APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES TO THE “ZAMAN” NEWSPAPER

- On 3 March 2016, in accordance with the Article 133 of the Turkish Code of Criminal Procedure, Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office requested appointing trustees for “Feza Gazetecilik” company, which also owns Zaman newspaper and Cihan News Agency, due to the reason that Zaman newspaper made publications by order of the founder and the executives of the FETÖ (Fettullahist Terrorist Organization) in order to praise the members of the organization and to achieve its illegal goals.
- The appointment of trustees to “Feza Gazetecilik”, is a result of the decision taken by independent Turkish judicial authorities.
- Trustees have been appointed upon the decision of the Istanbul Magistrate’s Court dated March 4th, 2016. The Court based its decision on a strong suspicion that publications of “Zaman” were linked to terrorism as well as on the following reasoning:
 - Existence of a number of ongoing investigations on the Gülen Movement (known in Turkey as “FETÖ” terrorist organization) that established a parallel structure apart from state apparatus by use of force and violence.
 - Warrants issued on Fethullah Gülen, the organization (FETÖ) leader, on the grounds of being the founder and executive of this terrorist organization, attempting to overthrow the Government or impeding its functioning, obtaining state information which should be kept secret, for the purpose of political or military espionage.
 - Warrant issued for similar charges for Ekrem Dumanlı, former Editor in Chief of “Zaman” newspaper.
- Moreover, it has been substantiated by the judicial authorities that the said organization exploited newspapers, TVs and radio channels with a view to paving the ground to achieve its illegal goals. In this context, two previous chief editors informed the relevant judicial authorities that “Zaman” newspaper’s editorials and important articles were directly approved by the organization leader Fethullah Gülen himself.
- The judicial authorities also found evidence that the newspaper disseminated false circulation figures so as to increase its advertisement revenues. According to the information gathered by the relevant authorities, the real circulation figures (15.000-50.000) collected through the distribution company are considerably much lower than the alledged ones (648.000) and “Zaman” is far from being the most diffused newspaper in Turkey.
- In view of these allegations and the evidence, the Court decided for the appointment of trustees to Feza Gazetecilik company. As such, the appointment of trustees to Feza Gazetecilik is in no way related to the work of journalism or expression of opinions. Nor has the scope of the investigation anything to do with the freedom of media.

- The protection and promotion of political rights including freedom of media in Turkey has always been one of Turkey's primary objectives. Moreover, freedom of media is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution and related laws in Turkey.
- In addition, utmost care is shown that the rights of the company would be protected. To protect the rights of the company is a clear obligation as stipulated in the Turkish law which is in full accordance with international norms, including the case-law of the ECHR.
- Moreover, effective legal remedies exist in domestic law. There is a right of appeal at each stage in the judicial process, as well as the right to individual appeal to the Constitutional Court.