

# Vice goes dark, protests Turkey reporter detention

October 21 2015

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A picture taken on October 5, 2015 in Diyarbakir southeast Turkey, shows armed Turkish police vehicles patrolling the streets after clashes between the Turkish army and Kurdish rebels

Vice Media's website went dark Wednesday to protest the detention in Turkey of one of its journalists reporting on anti-government unrest in the Kurdish-dominated southeast.

The news organization said its websites would be black for two hours, linking to a petition to free Mohammed Rasool, an Iraqi journalist working as a translator with a team for Vice.

Rasool was arrested along with British reporters Jake Hanrahan and Philip Pendlebury and charged with "engaging in terror activity" on behalf of the Islamic State extremist group. The two British journalists were later freed.

In collaboration with VICE News, the US-based Committee to Protect Journalists launched a petition calling on Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to release Rasool.

"Like Hanrahan and Pendlebury, Rasool was on assignment when he was arrested. His imprisonment is a grave injustice," said CPJ's Samantha Libby.

Last week, the US State Department urged Turkey to respect international human rights obligations in the case of the reporter.

An international delegation of press freedom groups, has traveled to Turkey to highlight problems facing journalists covering unrest in the country, CPJ said.

The Vice team had been visiting the region as the government wages a relentless campaign against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants, with several local Kurdish officials arrested and accused of supporting declarations of self rule.

After the detention of the team, Amnesty International called for the release of the journalists, calling the accusations against them "outrageous and bizarre."

There has been growing concern about deteriorating press freedoms in Turkey under Erdogan and in particular over the numbers of [journalists](#) facing legal proceedings on accusations of insulting top officials.

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