

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/turkey-authorities-must-stop-use-of-31-05-2013,44697.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Turkey

Repeated attacks

Authorities must stop use of excessive force by Istanbul police

31 May 2013

[Read in Turkish / Türkçe](#)

Reporters Without Borders firmly condemns police violence against journalists covering the "Occupy Gezi Park" protests in Istanbul during the past few days. Reporters have been the victim of both targeted attacks and the indiscriminate violence used by police to disperse demonstrators.

"The Istanbul police must be called to order because [their repeated use of excessive force](#) is unacceptable," Reporters Without Borders said. "Thorough and impartial investigations should also be carried out to identify and punish the police officers who deliberately targeted journalists."

Reporters Without Borders added: "The police are required to maintain law and order, but they also have a duty to protect journalists while they are doing their job as reporters."

Well-known freelance journalist [Ahmet Sik](#) was hit on the head by a tear gas canister this morning while photographing clashes between police and protesters from a position near a group of parliamentary representatives of the opposition CHP party. Onlookers said the canister was deliberately thrown at Sik from a distance of about 10 metres.

Sik was hospitalized with injuries to the back of the head and right side of his face. Reporters Without Borders representative Erol Önderoglu said Sik was conscious but medical staff wanted to keep him under observation and conduct additional tests.

The disproportionate force repeatedly used by the police affected many other journalists. **Hüseyin Özdemir**, a photographer with the daily *Milliyet*, reported having breathing problems after Gezi Park was constantly enveloped in a thick cloud of tear gas. *Hürriyet Daily News* photographer [Emrah Gürel](#) sustained a leg injury in as yet unclear circumstances.

Located close to central Istanbul's Taksim Square, Gezi Park is to be demolished as part of the square's ongoing pedestrianization. The park's defenders have been occupying it since 26 May, holding up work. The police have repeatedly tried to evict them, using more violence each time.

The police staged dawn raids yesterday and today on the demonstrators' camp inside the park, using armoured vehicles, water canon and lots of tear gas, and setting fire to their tents. According to some accounts, the police chased the demonstrators as they fled into nearby streets this morning.

The Istanbul police already [used excessive force in earlier incidents this month](#).

[Watch Hürriyet Daily News photo gallery](#)

Follow the events on Twitter: [#occupygezi](#), [#geziparki](#), [#direngeziparki](#)

[Photo : Hürriyet](#)

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (Word - 32.5 kb)
-