

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



*Journalisten und Anwälte für Meinungsfreiheit  
(JAM) e.V., Annual Report*



# INTRODUCTION

In its inaugural year, Journalists and Lawyers for Freedom of Expression (JAM e.V.) has significantly expanded its impact in advocating for freedom of expression and media rights.

This year has been marked by a series of pivotal projects, publications, and the establishment of digital platforms.

From hosting events for exiled journalists to producing insightful reports on media capture in authoritarian regimes, JAM e.V. has made remarkable strides.

We were also actively involved in international forums, highlighting the challenges faced by journalists worldwide and advocating for their rights.

This report provides an overview of our 2023 activities and sets the stage for future initiatives aimed at defending and promoting media freedom and freedom of expression globally.



## ABOUT US

JAM was established in Berlin by journalists and lawyers from Germany and Turkey to support journalists who have had to leave their home countries due to anti-democratic practices.

Currently, it has two pro-bono project managers, Barış Altıntaş and Veyssel Ok, who are the founders of the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA).

JAM came about after too many journalists moved to Germany who were represented by MLSA in Turkey. Russia's invasion of Ukraine added to the number of journalists from our region to Europe.

Our main focus is the situation of journalists in exile and our main goal is to promote better conditions for them in order to ensure they stay in journalism through awareness, advocacy and professional support projects.



# KEY ACTIVITIES

04

## Survey of Exiled Turkish Journalists

Although not entirely in 2023, but in late 2022, JAM conducted a comprehensive survey to support the exiled community of journalists and media professionals from Turkey.

The survey's objectives included analyzing service gaps, determining strengths and assets within the community, and understanding the needs to tactically design support programs. The survey successfully engaged at least 30 journalists residing in Germany, enabling JAM e.V. to draw out a strategic approach for its Journalist Support programs.

The respondents, primarily male and above the age of 30, had mostly moved to Germany post-2016 coup attempt. Key challenges identified included financial concerns, job opportunities, housing, and psychological support. Most respondents expressed a desire to continue in journalism and needed help with language skills, networking, and accessing journalism jobs. The survey's findings are crucial for JAM e.V. in designing this year's projects, ensuring they are tailored to meet the specific needs highlighted by the exiled journalists.



# KEY ACTIVITIES

05

## Opening Dinner and Exiled Journalists Get-Together

Despite being held in December 2022, this significant event forms a pivotal part of JAM's activities for 2023 report, as it was our opening event.

The dinner was hosted at the Hotel Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Haus, Ziegelstraße 30, 10117 Berlin with the support of Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

It featured a diverse group of attendees who shared their experiences and insights. Notable speakers included Veysel Ok and Barış Altıntaş, who introduced JAM e.V., and Maksim Kurnikov from Ekho Moskv, along with Can Dünder, who spoke about the challenges of exile, especially regarding ongoing legal struggles and political threats.

Prior to the event, we also held a roundtable discussion with journalists from Turkey, focusing on the challenges they face in Germany and brainstorming solutions. The evening concluded with a networking session, providing an invaluable opportunity for participants to connect and share their experiences.



Leipzig-based European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) also joined our opening event. In the photo from left to right are ECPMF's Lutz Kinkel, JAM's Barış Altıntaş and Veysel Ok, and ECPMF Neus Vidal and Deniz Bozkurt at the opening event. (Photo taken from ECPMF's Twitter/X account).



## Publication on Media Capture and Authoritarianism

In June 2023, JAM e.V., in collaboration with the Mass Media Defence Centre (MMDC), produced a pivotal report that delves deeply into the authoritarian tactics employed against the media in Russia and Turkey.

The publication, backed by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), offers a comprehensive analysis of the past two decades, highlighting the escalating hostilities and judicial assaults on journalists. It showcases numerous cases that fit under the umbrella of SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation) in both countries. These cases include instances where journalists were framed as terrorists, accused of insulting public officials, or faced financial ruin due to their reporting on corruption and war.

The report serves as a testament to the systematic strategies used by autocrats to suppress independent journalism, stressing the urgent need for robust international mechanisms to shield journalists from such oppressive tactics. The publication garnered attention and was featured not only on JAM e.V.'s website but also on the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's platform, amplifying its reach and impact.

# GAVELS AGAINST PENS

The judiciary's assault  
on journalism in Russia and Turkey



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN  
FOUNDATION For Freedom



MMDC  
MASS MEDIA DEFENCE CENTRE



## **Media capture in Russia and Turkey Round Table Discussion**

### **Online event, 22 June**

The roundtable discussion, centered around the publication "Gavels vs. Pens," featured distinguished speakers who delved into the nuances of media suppression in Russia and Turkey. Teresa Widlok, representing the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), welcomed the guests and opened the discussion by highlighting FNF's involvement with JAM and MMDC in this critical publication.

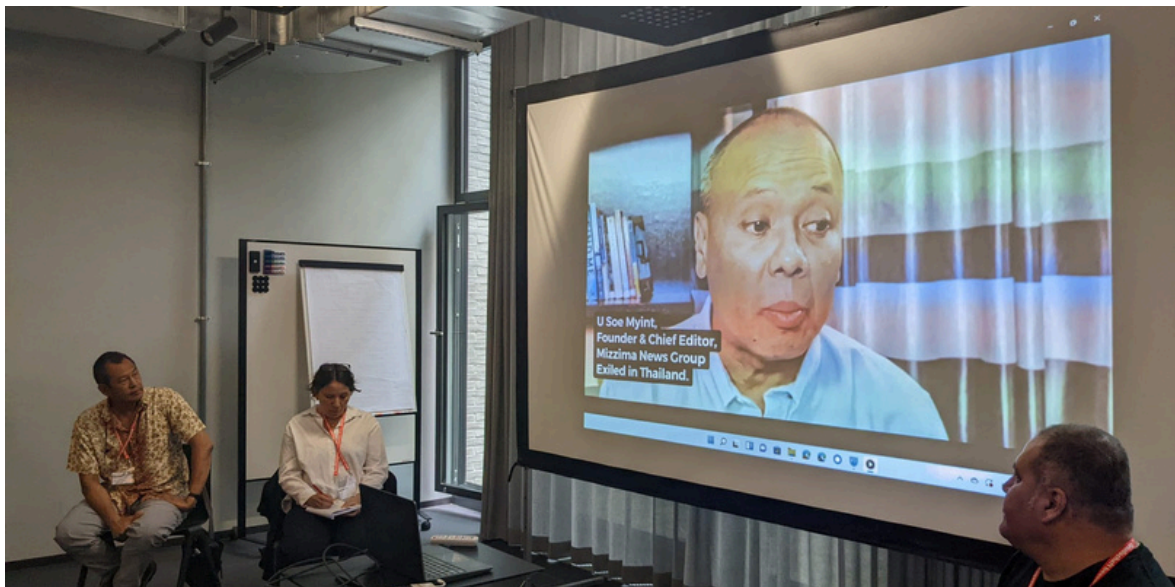
The session then transitioned to an exploration of the book's creation, led by Barış Altıntaş in the role of moderator, who introduced the contributors. Among the speakers was Nate Schenkkan, Senior Director of Research for Freedom House, who addressed the evolving nature of autocracy in Russia and Turkey.

Journalist Anna Romaschenko discussed the situation of the exiled media and possible next steps for it. Journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu, reflected on press trials. Journalist Sibel Yüklér shared insights on evolving tactics against journalists, along with potential strategies for them to continue their work amidst intimidation.

The session concluded with renowned human rights lawyers Galina Arapova, also founder and Director of MMDC and JAM's Veysel Ok. The lawyers addressed the implications of the situations in Russia and Turkey in terms of international courts and legislation, and suggested actions for the international community to protect journalists.



## Participation in Exiled Media Forum Hamburg , September 2023



Barış Altıntaş (second Left) was a speaker in JFJ's panel in Hamburg as part of the Exile Media Forum.

JAM participated in the Exile Media Forum held within the Week of Press Freedom held in Hamburg, organized by the Körber Foundation, a significant event spotlighting the global scale of press suppression. The event, starting on September 11, served as a crucial meeting point for journalists who had to flee oppressive regimes worldwide.

On September 12, JAM partner Justice for Journalists (JF) was the guest partner of the fifth Exile Media Forum and the Young Exile Media Forum.

Barış Altıntaş was a speaker in one of the three panel discussions organized by JFJ with journalists from Belarus, Iran, Myanmar, Russia, and Turkey on how to resist transnational repressions and protect sources as an exiled media outlet.

JAM representatives were able to attend and report on other panels and events, conduct interviews with fellow journalists from Turkey and Russia.



# DIGITAL PRESENCE AND OUTREACH

In its first year, JAM also took some steps expanding its digital footprint.

The launch of JAM e.V.'s official website (<https://jam-ev.com/>) marked a significant milestone. The website serves not just as a digital face for the organization but as a dynamic resource hub. JAM also established an X (Jamev\_) and a Blue Sky account.

## Ongoing projects

### Book Project on Combating Propaganda:

In late 2023, JAM started another collaboration with our partners FNF in Berlin for a publication that aims to shed light on the complexities of authoritarian propaganda and the role of journalism in upholding truth and countering misinformation.

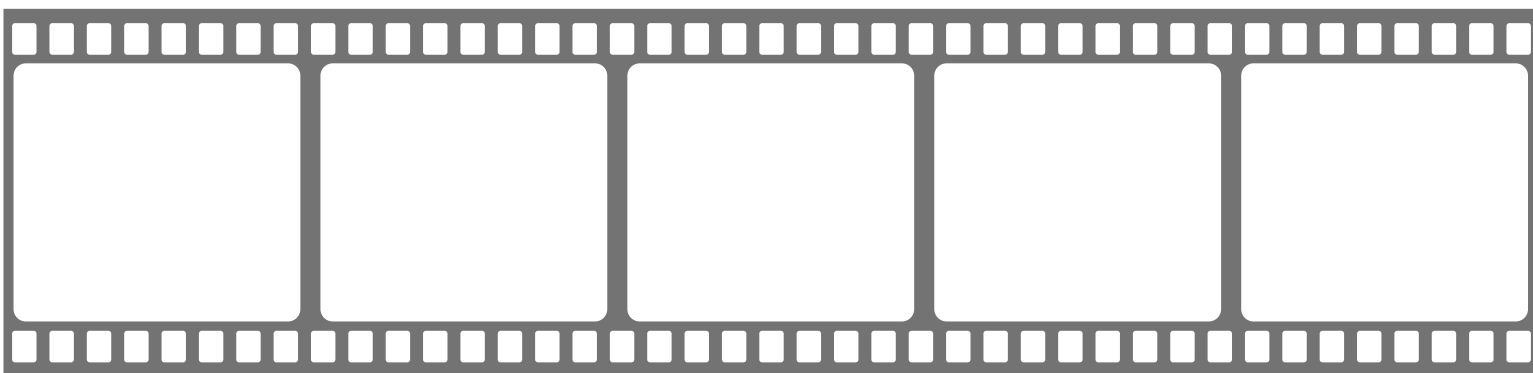
The publication, slated for release in February 2024 offers a critical exploration of propaganda tactics employed by authoritarian regimes in Russia and Turkey. It comprises various headings focusing on different aspects of propaganda and its impacts.

### Documentary Filming: Exiled journalism

In partnership with the JFJ Foundation, JAM embarked on a documentary project focusing on media landscapes in Russia, Belarus, and Turkey.

The project which focuses on newsmaking in the age of thugroacies, aims to document and address security and other issues journalists from Turkey and Russia face, even after leaving their home countries. It includes producing a comprehensive report and a documentary featuring interviews with at least 13 exiled journalists and various experts.

The project emphasizes the need for supporting exiled media, exploring host countries' approaches to their security, and fostering ways to integrate their reporting safely. The findings and documentary, to be released in February 2024, will be pivotal in understanding and mitigating the threats faced by these journalists.





# OUR TEAM

11



**Barış Altıntaş**  
Senior Projects Manager



**Veysel Ok**  
Head of the Human Rights  
Department!"



[info@jam-ev.com](mailto:info@jam-ev.com)





## Future Directions and Acknowledgements

Looking ahead, JAM e.V. plans to continue expanding its impact through more collaborative projects, advocating for press freedom and supporting exiled journalists.

We extend our gratitude to our partners, supporters, and the journalist community for their continuous support and contributions to our cause. We are especially grateful to the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), for their unwavering support and encouragement, to Justice for Journalists Foundation (JFJ) for working with us on an exciting project, to the Reporters without Borders (RSF) Germany office for their support and encouragement while establishing JAM and to our friends and colleagues Aret Demirci, Daniel-Dylan Böhmer, İmran Ayata, Tilman Klauss, Carsten Ilius, Christian Mihr and Jennifer Gaspar.



(JAM) e.V.

Reporter ohne Grenzen

Postfach 304108 10756 Berlin



+49 1521 2656982



[www.jam-ev.com](http://www.jam-ev.com)