

OPERATION REDLIST

Hunted in the Sunshine

Volume II

When Justice Tools Turn Political

How INTERPOL and International Justice System
Became Weapons in the Hands of Dictators
Once Upon a Time in Ankara

HOPE PARADISE

A truth-seeker defying silence and fear

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Volume II

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How INTERPOL and International Justice System

Became Weapons in the Hands of Dictators – Once Upon a Time Ankara

By: Hope Paradise - 2025

Operation Redlist – Volume II

Hunted in the Sunshine

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Tribute

I extend my gratitude to the authorities and courts of European countries, as well as the United Kingdom, that have clearly demonstrated their commitment to human rights. They have recognised the dangers posed by the double standards of authoritarian regimes that maintain a democratic façade while exploiting international systems for repression. Through their vigilance, they have effectively prevented the misuse of international judicial and policing mechanisms and embraced their responsibility to safeguard justice.

I also wish to thank all NGOs, human rights organisations, journalists, lawyers, judges, dedicated police officers, critics, researchers, and every individual who has taken a stand to prevent harm to human rights. Given the vast number of such organisations and individuals, it is impossible to name each one here. Yet, wherever you are, please accept my heartfelt gratitude for choosing the path of humanity and justice.

“This book is dedicated to all those around the world who have struggled, who are struggling, and who will struggle for the preservation of truth, the defence of freedom, and the fair treatment of every human being.”

Hope Paradise

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The primary content of this book is based on documented case studies, judicial records, international reports, and the direct personal experiences of the author, who previously held Turkish citizenship. Due to the political relations between Iran and Turkey, his citizenship was revoked, and during his own legal ordeal he became a direct witness to unfair and politically motivated actions by Turkish security authorities.

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By drawing attention to these systemic risks, the author hopes to encourage reforms that uphold the original spirit and integrity of global policing and judicial frameworks.

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Several sections of this book are reproduced directly from judicial documents and recorded testimonies, presented exactly as conveyed by the sources. In order to preserve the accuracy, credibility, and integrity of the testimony, the author has intentionally avoided altering, embellishing, or omitting any part of the account.

This book is fundamentally the result of structured research, judicial document reviews, and analysis of documented incidents. All narrative elements, where anonymity has been preserved, are crafted in a manner

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All translations were conducted manually by the author with due consideration for context, tone, and intended meaning. Final drafts were reviewed multiple times using digital linguistic tools to ensure consistency and clarity.

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This book does not promote or support any political agenda. It is solely a factual and experiential testimony aimed at highlighting the risks of institutional misuse by authoritarian states.

It neither endorses nor opposes any political group, opposition movement, or government—whether within or outside the Republic of Turkey. The purpose of this work is not to contribute to partisan debates but to document systemic patterns of abuse, grounded in verifiable evidence and first-person accounts.

The author firmly believes in the universal values of justice, transparency, and accountability, regardless of political ideologies. Any reference to specific regimes, parties, or institutions is made strictly within the context of fact-based investigation, with no underlying motive of political advocacy or incitement.

Throughout various sections of this book—particularly in the case study chapters—names of individuals, organisations, or political entities are mentioned. These references are presented with complete neutrality and without any endorsement, opposition, or alignment. The examination of these subjects is limited solely to the political nature of the issued INTERPOL Red Notices. No judgment is made regarding whether the individuals or entities mentioned have committed any other crimes beyond the scope of this analysis.

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Introduction

In The Name of Justice.

Despite direct and indirect threats from the Iranian regime and the Turkish security apparatus, I continue, and I will always speak the truth.

The truth never dies. Do not fear speaking it, no matter how difficult or painful it may be. The brave never dies.

Future generations must have a record of behaviours rooted in power. These records may one day prevent harm to others or serve as a catalyst for reform.

In the wake of the failed coup attempt in July 2016, Turkey entered a new era of repression. The government's sweeping purges extended far beyond its borders, reaching into Europe and beyond through international policing tools. INTERPOL, designed as a neutral platform to facilitate cooperation in combating transnational crime, became yet another instrument in Ankara's arsenal to silence dissent.

Introduction

Unlike Iran, whose efforts to weaponise INTERPOL have often faltered due to the absence of binding extradition treaties with most European states, Turkey operates within a different framework. As a member of the 1957 European Convention on Extradition, Ankara possesses far greater leverage. This legal infrastructure allows Turkish authorities to attach the appearance of legitimacy to requests that are, in reality, politically motivated.

The cases examined in this volume reveal how allegations of fraud, forgery, corruption, and terrorism are systematically deployed to mask political persecution. Businessmen, journalists, human rights defenders, and local officials have all been branded as criminals, their reputations tarnished and their freedoms curtailed under the guise of legal proceedings. While European courts have frequently rejected Ankara's demands, the very existence of such proceedings prolongs the suffering of the targeted individuals, keeping them in a state of perpetual uncertainty.

This second volume of *Operation Redlist*, titled *Hunted in the Sunshine*, follows the path set by the first, shifting the lens from Tehran to Ankara. It aims to document, analyse, and expose Turkey's misuse of international judicial and policing mechanisms, illustrating not only the impact on individual victims but also the broader implications for the credibility of global justice systems.

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Chapter 1

The Legal and Political Context

Extradition Framework

The way Turkey has come to rely on international policing systems cannot be understood without first looking at the legal framework that underpins these actions. After the failed coup attempt of July 2016, the Turkish government rapidly expanded its dependence on international conventions and treaties. These agreements became the legal façade behind which Ankara has pursued political opponents abroad.

At the centre of this framework lies Turkey's membership in the **1957 European Convention on Extradition**. As a member of the Council of Europe, Turkey holds the formal right to request the return of individuals from other European states. This treaty gives such requests an appearance of legitimacy, even when they are rooted in political agendas. Iran lacks similar agreements, which limits its reach. Turkey, by contrast, has used

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this advantage to open legal proceedings against critics living in Europe. Although courts in London, Stockholm, and elsewhere have often refused extradition on the grounds of political motivation, the very existence of these treaties allows Ankara to initiate the process and prolong the pressure.

Beyond the European Convention, Turkey has signed several **bilateral extradition agreements**. These reinforce its ability to chase dissidents across borders, subjecting them to temporary arrests, lengthy legal disputes, and reputational harm. In many cases the accusations have not stood up to scrutiny, but the impact on those targeted is nonetheless profound.

Turkey also relies on its long-standing membership of **INTERPOL**. The Red Notice system, in principle designed to fight international crime, has been employed as a political tool. The Constitution of INTERPOL explicitly forbids politically motivated use of its mechanisms, yet authoritarian states have regularly tested these limits. Turkey's flood of post-2016 requests is evidence of how a government can exploit both formal treaties and international policing tools to extend its reach far beyond its borders.

The internal political context is just as important. Judicial independence has eroded, particularly after the 2017 constitutional referendum, which concentrated executive power in the presidency. Courts now often work

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hand in hand with security agencies. Arrest warrants are produced not as impartial judicial decisions but as instruments of political will. Once exported through INTERPOL or the European Convention, these warrants carry the stamp of legality despite their political origin.

This dual reality—a **legal framework that grants access to international cooperation, and a political environment that weaponises it**—is what enables Turkey to pursue its critics abroad with such force. It is this combination of law and politics, appearance and reality, that makes Turkey's approach distinct, and often more effective, than that of other authoritarian regimes.

Erosion of Judicial Independence

The credibility of any extradition request depends not only on treaties and conventions but also on the independence of the judicial system that issues it. In Turkey, that independence has been steadily eroded. The failed coup attempt of 2016 provided the government with an opportunity to purge the judiciary on an unprecedented scale. Thousands of judges and prosecutors were dismissed, suspended, or arrested on allegations of affiliation with terrorist organisations. These purges fundamentally altered the composition of the judiciary, ensuring that loyalty to the executive outweighed impartiality and professional standards.

The 2017 constitutional referendum accelerated this trend by transferring significant powers to the presidency. The High Council of Judges and

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Prosecutors, once an institution meant to safeguard judicial independence, came under tighter political control. As a result, judicial decisions—particularly those involving critics of the government—were no longer perceived as the outcome of impartial legal reasoning but as instruments of political strategy.

This shift has direct consequences for the international arena. Arrest warrants and indictments issued under such a compromised system form the basis of extradition requests and INTERPOL Red Notices. While European courts scrutinise these documents with caution, their mere existence creates immediate risks for the targeted individuals. Temporary detentions, asset freezes, and travel restrictions are often imposed while cases are being reviewed, even if the requests are ultimately rejected.

The erosion of judicial independence in Turkey therefore does not only harm domestic rule of law; it directly undermines the integrity of international legal cooperation. By issuing documents that carry formal legality but lack substantive fairness, Turkey transforms its domestic political struggles into transnational legal battles. This weaponisation of the judiciary is one of the central pillars of Ankara's strategy to pursue opponents abroad.

Political Manipulation of INTERPOL

INTERPOL was founded on the principle of neutrality, with Article 3 of its Constitution explicitly forbidding the organisation from engaging in

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any activity of a political, military, religious, or racial character. In theory, this safeguard should protect the system from manipulation by authoritarian regimes. In practice, however, Turkey has become one of the most prominent examples of how these safeguards can be tested, stretched, and at times circumvented.

Following the failed coup attempt of July 2016, Ankara submitted a surge of Red Notice requests to INTERPOL. Thousands of individuals—journalists, academics, civil servants, businesspeople, and even ordinary citizens—were targeted under accusations of terrorism, fraud, or corruption. The breadth of these requests was unprecedented, and their political undertones were evident to international observers.

European courts, the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF), and several human rights organisations have documented numerous cases where Turkish Red Notice requests were rejected due to their political nature. Yet rejection is not the end of the story. The mere existence of a Red Notice can have devastating effects: travel restrictions, detentions at airports, frozen bank accounts, and the stigma of being labelled an international fugitive.

Turkey's strategy has been to combine the formal legality of extradition treaties with the immediacy of INTERPOL's policing tools. By issuing politically motivated Red Notices, the government ensures that dissidents abroad live under a constant shadow of uncertainty. Even when these

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requests are eventually dismissed, the damage has already been done careers disrupted, families separated, reputations destroyed.

This manipulation of INTERPOL demonstrates how the organisation, despite its constitutional safeguards, remains vulnerable to exploitation. It also highlights the urgent need for systemic reforms to protect the integrity of international policing and to prevent its weaponisation by authoritarian states.



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Chapter 2

Extradition Treaties and the Balance of Power

Extradition Power Imbalance

The difference between Iran and Turkey in their ability to pursue opponents abroad lies not only in political will but also in legal capacity. Iran has long sought to use INTERPOL as a tool against dissidents, but its efforts often falter. The reason is simple: Tehran has no binding extradition treaties with most European states. Without such agreements, its Red Notice requests arrive in European courts as little more than political gestures, easily dismissed for lack of a legal foundation.

Turkey, by contrast, enters the same arena armed with treaties and conventions that carry legal weight. As a member of the **1957 European Convention on Extradition**, Ankara can issue requests that oblige other member states to at least consider them seriously. Even if judges ultimately reject these demands on human rights grounds, the process

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itself places the targeted individual at risk—detention at borders, asset freezes, and the psychological toll of long legal battles.

This imbalance creates a striking contrast. Iranian dissidents abroad often face harassment, surveillance, and threats, but formal attempts at extradition rarely succeed. Turkish dissidents, however, encounter a more dangerous reality: the machinery of international law can be turned against them, giving political persecution a veneer of legitimacy. What begins as a fabricated criminal charge in Ankara can quickly transform into a European court case, forcing the victim to fight for years simply to prove their innocence.

The balance of power is thus tipped in Turkey's favour. Where Iran relies on intimidation, Turkey relies on legal frameworks. And while both approaches are abusive, Turkey's strategy has proven far more effective in keeping its critics trapped in cycles of uncertainty, fear, and costly legal defence.

Human Rights Concerns

European courts have repeatedly highlighted the risks associated with Turkey's extradition requests. While treaties oblige judges to consider such cases, they also empower them to refuse extradition where there is evidence of political motivation, risk of torture, or unfair trial. In several high-profile rulings, courts in the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Germany have concluded that Turkey's judicial system does not meet the minimum

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standards of independence and fairness required under European human rights law.

These rulings underscore a crucial tension: extradition treaties give Turkey a legal pathway to pursue dissidents, but human rights safeguards create an equally powerful barrier. The result is a cycle in which individuals are caught between two forces—legal obligations that force courts to open cases, and human rights principles that ultimately block their transfer.

For the victims, however, even a blocked extradition leaves deep scars. Legal battles stretch over months or years, imposing financial costs, psychological strain, and reputational harm. Families are disrupted, professional lives are stalled, and the fear of future attempts lingers. From the perspective of authoritarian regimes, the process itself is often the punishment: even when extradition is denied, the suffering inflicted along the way achieves the same silencing effect.

Impact on Victims

Behind every treaty and legal instrument lies a human story. For those targeted by Turkey's extradition requests, the consequences extend far beyond the walls of a courtroom. Arrest at an airport, even if brief, can shatter a person's sense of safety. The stigma of being listed on an INTERPOL database can isolate individuals from their communities, discourage employers, and fracture personal relationships.

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Legal battles consume resources that few dissidents can afford. Defence lawyers, translation services, expert witnesses, and repeated court appearances turn life into a cycle of expenses and uncertainty. Families often bear the heaviest burden, with spouses and children forced into precarious financial and emotional conditions. The sense of instability does not end with a court's refusal of extradition; for many, the fear of renewed attempts lingers for years.

The psychological toll is equally profound. Constant anxiety, restricted mobility, and the feeling of being branded as a criminal wear down resilience. Activists and journalists who once raised their voices against injustice find themselves silenced, not by imprisonment, but by exhaustion. This form of persecution is subtle yet devastating: a punishment without a conviction, carried out under the shadow of legal legitimacy.

By using extradition treaties in this way, Turkey has not only tested the limits of international law but has also turned those limits into instruments of suffering. The victims' struggles remind us that legal processes, even when ultimately protective, can still be weaponised to cause harm.

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Chapter 3

Case Studies – When Ankara Turns Red

Akin Ipek

Akin Ipek, a Turkish businessman and philanthropist, became one of the most prominent examples of how Ankara transformed its legal and political machinery into a weapon following the failed coup attempt of 2016. As the founder of the Koza-İpek Group, encompassing mining, media, and financial enterprises, Ipek was once regarded as a symbol of Turkey's private sector dynamism. His association with institutions linked to Fethullah Gülen, however, made him an immediate target when the government launched a sweeping purge against alleged members of the so-called "FETÖ" organisation.

In 2015, Turkish authorities seized Koza-İpek Holding, citing alleged financial irregularities and links to terrorism. After the 2016 coup attempt, these charges escalated, and Ipek himself was accused of financing

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terrorism and attempting to overthrow the constitutional order. Such accusations reflected the government's broader strategy of equating political dissent or independent business with subversion. Facing imminent arrest, Ipek relocated to the United Kingdom, where he sought legal protection against extradition.

Turkey issued a series of extradition requests and pursued the assistance of INTERPOL through Red Notices. British courts, however, examined the allegations carefully and determined that the charges were politically motivated. In 2018, Westminster Magistrates' Court rejected Ankara's extradition request, ruling that Ipek would not receive a fair trial in Turkey and that his prosecution was inseparable from the government's campaign against dissent.

The Ipek case revealed how Turkey attempted to extend the reach of its post-coup purges beyond its own borders, and how democratic states responded with judicial resistance. By refusing extradition, the British courts not only safeguarded an individual businessman but also sent a clear message to Ankara: INTERPOL's mechanisms cannot serve as an unchallenged extension of domestic repression.

Bülent Keneş

Bülent Keneş, a senior journalist and the former editor-in-chief of the Turkish daily *Today's Zaman*, represents another striking case of Ankara's use of criminal law and international mechanisms to silence

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dissenting voices. Known for his outspoken criticism of President Erdoğan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), Keneş became one of the many media figures targeted during the government's post-2016 crackdown on freedom of expression.

The Turkish authorities accused him of membership in a terrorist organisation, citing his articles, tweets, and editorial decisions as evidence. These allegations reflected a broader trend in which ordinary journalistic activity was redefined as subversive conduct. Keneş, who had already faced repeated detentions and prosecutions before 2016, eventually fled Turkey to escape the threat of indefinite imprisonment.

In 2022, Turkey submitted a request for Keneş's extradition from Sweden, linking the issue directly to Ankara's negotiations over Sweden's NATO membership. The move revealed how extradition demands and, by extension, INTERPOL channels, could be used as bargaining chips in international diplomacy. Sweden's Supreme Court rejected the request, ruling that Keneş would face political persecution and an unfair trial if returned.

The case of Bülent Keneş illustrated the dangerous intersection between geopolitics and human rights. His situation underscored how Turkey's pursuit of journalists abroad was not merely about punishing individuals but about sending a message of intimidation to the wider diaspora. The refusal of Swedish courts to comply demonstrated that independent

judiciaries remain a vital safeguard against the instrumentalization of international law for authoritarian purposes.

Istanbul Municipality Officials

The pressure exerted by Ankara did not stop at businessmen or journalists; it also extended into the realm of local politics. Following the opposition's victory in the 2019 municipal elections, particularly in Istanbul, senior officials of the municipality quickly became targets of politically motivated investigations. The city, long regarded as the country's economic and cultural heart, had slipped from the control of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), an outcome that the central government struggled to accept.

Prosecutors launched a series of criminal cases against municipal employees and senior administrators, alleging links to terrorist organisations. These allegations were often based on tenuous grounds, such as past employment in institutions associated with Fethullah Gülen or routine administrative decisions taken in the course of public service. Several officials were arrested, while others faced the looming threat of dismissal or prosecution.

The government also attempted to engage international mechanisms. Reports surfaced that Turkish authorities had sought to pursue some of these municipal figures through INTERPOL Red Notices, a step that blurred the line between domestic political disputes and international

policing cooperation. While not all of these requests were successful, the very attempt revealed Ankara's determination to project its domestic political battles onto the global stage.

The case of Istanbul's municipal officials highlighted a broader trend: the criminalisation of local governance when it falls outside the control of the central government. It also demonstrated how Red Notices could be contemplated as tools not merely against individuals accused of conventional crimes, but against elected representatives and civil servants whose only offence was their association with an opposition-led administration.

Pelin Ünker

Pelin Ünker, a Turkish investigative journalist, became internationally recognised for her work on the "Paradise Papers", a major cross-border investigation coordinated by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). Her reporting exposed offshore financial dealings involving figures close to the Turkish government, including relatives of senior officials. What would normally be considered legitimate journalistic scrutiny in a democratic society was swiftly rebranded as criminal conduct in Turkey.

In 2019, Ünker was sentenced to imprisonment on charges of defamation and insult, following lawsuits brought by political figures named in her reporting. Although her sentence was later reduced on appeal, the case

was emblematic of the government's broader efforts to criminalise investigative journalism and to intimidate those who sought to uncover inconvenient truths. The message to the press was clear: exposing corruption or financial misconduct within the ruling elite would come at a heavy personal cost.

The Turkish authorities did not limit themselves to domestic measures. Human rights groups reported concerns that international policing mechanisms, including the possibility of Red Notice requests, could be considered against journalists such as Ünker. While there is no public record confirming that INTERPOL published such a notice in her case, the climate of fear generated by Turkey's willingness to internationalise its campaign against dissent was palpable.

The case of Pelin Ünker underscored how financial transparency and investigative journalism became battlegrounds in Turkey's post-2016 environment. By pursuing criminal charges against a journalist who merely reported on verifiable documents, the government sought to redefine truth-seeking as a prosecutable offence. This episode served as a warning to other journalists both inside and outside Turkey: revealing corruption at the highest levels might not only cost one's liberty but could also trigger transnational consequences.

Taner Kılıç

Taner Kılıç, a respected human rights lawyer and the founding member of Amnesty International's Turkey section, became one of the most emblematic victims of Ankara's post-2016 crackdown. His case drew worldwide condemnation, not least because he represented the very values of human rights and rule of law that the Turkish government claimed to uphold.

In June 2017, Kılıç was arrested and accused of membership in a terrorist organisation. The primary evidence presented by prosecutors was the alleged use of the encrypted messaging application "ByLock", which the Turkish authorities insisted was employed by members of the Gülen movement. Independent experts later contested the reliability of this evidence, noting that many users had been falsely identified. Despite this, Kılıç spent over fourteen months in pre-trial detention before being released on bail.

His trial continued for several years, with prosecutors pressing charges that were widely considered baseless and politically motivated. In 2020, he was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, though appeals were lodged and international pressure mounted. Amnesty International and numerous other organisations campaigned vigorously on his behalf, arguing that his prosecution represented a clear assault on civil society.

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The case of Taner Kılıç highlighted the extent to which Turkey was prepared to criminalise even the most peaceful defenders of human rights. It also exposed the fragility of legal safeguards when courts operate under political pressure. While INTERPOL mechanisms were not formally invoked in his situation, the global attention his case attracted demonstrated the growing awareness of how authoritarian states might exploit both domestic law and international tools to stifle dissent.

Ekrem İmamoğlu

Ekrem İmamoğlu, the Mayor of Istanbul and one of the most prominent figures in Turkey’s opposition, became the highest-profile example of Ankara’s readiness to use the law as a weapon against elected officials. Since his 2019 victory, which ended decades of Justice and Development Party (AKP) control over the country’s largest city, İmamoğlu has been subjected to a relentless campaign of judicial harassment, political obstacles, and, ultimately, detention.

In March 2025, İmamoğlu was detained on sweeping charges including corruption, bribery, extortion, money laundering, and even alleged links to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). Four days later, on 23 March, a judge ordered his formal arrest, and he was transferred to Marmara Prison, where he remained in pre-trial detention. In the same week, Istanbul University revoked his degree, citing supposed irregularities in his

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transfer, a move that could disqualify him from running in national elections.

The arrest sparked mass protests across Turkey. Tens of thousands of demonstrators filled the streets of Istanbul and other major cities, denouncing the charges as a politically motivated attack on democratic legitimacy. International condemnation was immediate. The European Union, the Council of Europe, and Human Rights Watch all criticised the proceedings, describing them as an attempt to sideline a major opposition figure through “lawfare”.

Despite being behind bars, İmamoğlu was confirmed as the Republican People’s Party (CHP) candidate for the presidency. In the March 2025 primary, he received overwhelming support, with more than 1.6 million party members casting votes in his favour, alongside millions of “solidarity ballots” from the wider opposition. This development turned his imprisonment into not only a domestic crisis but also an international symbol of Turkey’s contested democracy.

The broader crackdown extended to over one hundred municipal officials and opposition figures, some of whom were accused of terrorism-related offences. Reports suggested that Ankara was considering internationalising these cases, raising concerns about the potential misuse of INTERPOL mechanisms against opposition leaders. While no confirmed Red Notice has been issued against İmamoğlu himself, the

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mere possibility underlined the risk of global policing tools being drawn into Turkey's internal power struggle.

The case of Ekrem İmamoğlu illustrates the most acute example of the criminalisation of electoral victories in contemporary Turkey. It reveals how judicial processes can be manipulated to destabilise political opponents, suppress local governance, and send a message of intimidation to the broader electorate. For observers both within Turkey and abroad, İmamoğlu's ordeal has become a defining test of whether democratic legitimacy can withstand authoritarian control.

The Politics Behind Law and Justice

The case studies examined in this chapter expose a broader pattern of politicisation within Turkey's legal and judicial landscape. From the selective prosecution of businessmen and journalists to the detention of municipal officials and the Mayor of Istanbul, the judiciary has increasingly served as an instrument of political strategy rather than impartial adjudication. Domestic trials, often based on tenuous or fabricated evidence, have been used to silence dissent and to disqualify opposition figures from public life.

Alongside these internal practices, Turkey has repeatedly sought to extend its reach abroad through extradition requests and, in some cases, appeals to INTERPOL. These actions demonstrate how domestic lawfare is projected onto the international stage, turning legal frameworks into tools

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for transnational repression. Although not every request has succeeded, the very act of submitting politically motivated cases reveals the depth of judicial politicisation and its export beyond Turkey's borders.

International responses—from the rulings of British and Swedish courts to condemnations by European institutions—have highlighted the importance of judicial independence as a safeguard. Yet the breadth of Ankara's campaign underscores how fragile these safeguards can be when faced with sustained authoritarian pressure.

Ultimately, the examples discussed show how Turkey's justice system has been systematically politicised: dissent is criminalised, electoral victories are delegitimised, and requests for extradition become extensions of domestic political battles. Unless robust scrutiny is maintained both inside and outside Turkey, the risk remains that law will continue to serve as an instrument of power rather than a guarantee of justice.

Chapter 4

Hunted in the Sunshine

Arrest and Detention in Turkey

What follows is more than a mere document—it is a record of targeted injustice...

What at first appeared to be a routine summons by telephone was, in truth, the opening move of a carefully orchestrated operation. The caller requested “an explanation” — a benign phrase that belied the intent behind it. On arrival, the individual found that the meeting had been staged; the tone shifted from formal civility to an unmistakable exercise in control. It quickly became apparent that the stated allegations—framed in the broad and elastic language of “acts against national security”—were not contingent on concrete conduct within Turkey but had been calibrated with a view to securing extradition.

Inside the police station, the environment confirmed the pretext. Two men, identified by those present as agents linked to the security apparatus of another state, were in attendance. Their presence altered the tenor of proceedings: abusive language, personal threats and references to “taking you to Iran” were used to intimidate and humiliate. Those remarks, made in the confines of an official facility, communicated a chilling message: the detainee was not merely under investigation, but effectively exposed to transnational pressure and reprisal.

Questions posed during interrogation bore little relation to the ostensible subject of the summons. Instead of seeking to establish facts about local criminality, interrogators demanded details about supposed collaborations with Turkish opposition groups and about political activities that did not exist. The detainee’s work — a book written in Persian about abuses in another country — was treated as incriminating evidence, despite containing no reference to Turkish politics or security. The absurdity of the charge underscored the instrumental logic at play: political expression and independent research could be reframed as threats when convenient to those who held power.

Violence occurred. Contrary to any expectation that a formal detention would adhere to procedural civility, the detainee was struck during the period in custody. The physical assault was both shocking and purposeful: a tactic to break resistance and to convey vulnerability. When the

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detainee's condition deteriorated — rapid heartbeat, acute panic and a state of medical distress — an ambulance was called. Paramedics recorded a pulse approaching 130 beats per minute and advised urgent transfer to hospital. The station chief refused authorisation, however, and warned that any insistence on transfer would be treated as resistance, with further punitive consequences. He explicitly said that there were insufficient officers to escort the detainee and that, if the detainee pressed the issue, the situation would be made harder.

This behaviour — the orchestrated summons, the presence of foreign security operatives within a domestic police facility, the readiness to manufacture political association from unrelated research, the use of physical force, and the denial of medical care — reveals a system in which the instruments of law enforcement are redirected to achieve political ends. It also illustrates how extradition can be the objective from the outset: the domestic process is arranged to create a record, real or fabricated, that can be presented to cooperating authorities abroad. In such a setting, rights that should be automatic are treated as negotiable, and the detained body becomes an arena for displays of power that extend well beyond the individual case.

Legal Battles and Extradition Pressure

Following the first interventions by defence lawyers, the prosecutor formally requested clarification from the Turkish security directorate. The

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reply came in the form of an official letter that asserted, without evidence, that the detainee had acted “against the national security of Turkey”. The strangeness of the claim was obvious: the only activity under scrutiny was the writing of a book in Persian about human rights abuses in Iran, supported by videos and photographs as documentation. Nevertheless, the prosecutor accepted the statement uncritically, and four days after the initial arrest he confirmed the detention on that basis alone.

At that stage no formal extradition request had been lodged by Iran. Yet the authorities referred to a Red Notice issued through INTERPOL and sought to use it as justification for potential transfer. The contradiction was stark: an international policing tool was being elevated above due process, with neither a court hearing nor the presence of the accused or their lawyer. In practice, the prosecutor issued decisions independently, in coordination with the security directorate and the migration authority.

The situation escalated further when, without publicity or explanation, Turkish nationality was stripped from the detainee. This extraordinary measure was not accompanied by any judicial reasoning and served only to facilitate removal from the country. Such steps revealed the extent to which the case was managed not as a legal matter but as a political arrangement.

It was equally clear that this approach was not confined to a single individual. At the same time, a broader pattern emerged: critics across

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Turkey saw their citizenship or residence permits revoked, many were detained, and some were extradited to Iran. The timing coincided with a high-profile visit by Iran's foreign minister to Ankara, during which meetings also took place between Iranian and Turkish security officials and representatives of INTERPOL. The convergence of these events underscored the political character of the proceedings and the vulnerability of legal protections when diplomacy and security interests were at stake.

As the proceedings advanced, the lack of transparency became even more pronounced. Hearings were conducted in absentia, with neither the accused nor legal counsel permitted to attend. The prosecutor operated effectively in isolation, issuing determinations as though the process were a private administrative exercise rather than a judicial proceeding. Defence submissions were ignored, motions were set aside without explanation, and evidence produced by the authorities was accepted without scrutiny.

This approach was not a reflection of evidentiary strength but of political convenience. By excluding both the accused and their representative, the prosecutor ensured that no challenge could be raised to the narrative supplied by the security services. The alignment between the prosecution, the security directorate, and the migration authority created a closed loop in which decisions were made, ratified, and enforced without any external oversight.

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Particularly striking was the discovery that nationality had been revoked without due process. Citizenship, which should be a fundamental legal status, was annulled in secret and without judicial reasoning. The deprivation of nationality served as an additional instrument of control, stripping the individual not only of procedural rights but also of the very legal identity needed to resist removal.

Such measures were not applied in isolation. Reports emerged of other critics and dissidents who, during the same period, faced revocation of citizenship or residency, leading either to detention or to extradition. These cases did not arise organically but coincided with high-level diplomatic exchanges between Ankara and Tehran, including meetings of security officials and INTERPOL representatives. The pattern confirmed that legal instruments were being adapted to serve political alliances, rather than the rule of law.

What the hearings revealed most clearly was the fragility of judicial independence when prosecutors act in concert with political and security agencies. A book documenting abuses in Iran was reframed as an attack on Turkey's national security. A Red Notice, never intended to supplant domestic due process, was treated as the central legal basis for detention. And the revocation of nationality was deployed not as a matter of law, but as a matter of expediency. The combination of these measures illustrated the full spectrum of politicisation within Turkey's legal framework.

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After forty-six days in custody, marked by four ambulance transfers to hospital and seven further transfers under the authority of the migration directorate, the case reached an extraordinary resolution. With evidence mounting that the detainee faced a death sentence if returned to Iran, and with fears growing that international media and higher courts in Turkey would expose the flaws in the process, the prosecutor abruptly offered conditional release. It soon became apparent that this was not a judicial act in the conventional sense but a transaction: officials from the gendarmerie and the migration directorate had demanded bribes in exchange for freedom, and when a formal complaint was lodged through legal counsel, the prosecutor intervened. The condition for release was the withdrawal of the complaint in its entirety and without the possibility of reinstatement. The detainee agreed under duress, and upon simultaneously retracting the complaint, was released. The outcome was less an act of justice than a negotiated exchange — one that revealed both the vulnerability of the individual and the systemic corruption underpinning the institutions involved.

Psychological and Social Consequences

The aftermath of detention did not end with physical release. The scars left by forty-six days of uncertainty, intimidation, and humiliation persisted long after the cell doors were opened. Panic attacks, accelerated heart rate, and lingering anxiety became constant reminders of the fragile line between liberty and captivity. The knowledge that one's body could

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be confined, struck, or denied medical treatment at the discretion of officials instilled a permanent awareness of vulnerability.

The physical consequences were equally severe. Seventeen kilogrammes of weight had been lost during detention, the result of inadequate nutrition and unhygienic conditions. A growth had developed in the throat, requiring immediate hospitalisation in Istanbul upon release. Surgery was performed, followed by months of painful aftercare in which infections within the digestive tract and other internal complications were repeatedly treated with laser procedures—twice a week for nearly three months. What should have been routine health was transformed into a long recovery shaped directly by the circumstances of detention.

Family ties were also deliberately severed. Throughout the entire period in custody, no visits from relatives were permitted, despite the legal entitlement of every detainee to see family members. This denial compounded the sense of isolation, depriving both the detainee and loved ones of the reassurance that human contact can provide. For the family, weeks of enforced silence created profound anguish; for the detainee, the absence of familiar voices and faces deepened the psychological toll of confinement.

The psychological impact extended beyond the individual. Family members endured weeks of fear, uncertain whether their loved one would ever return. Rumours of extradition, whispered threats of execution in

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Iran, and the absence of reliable information compounded the sense of despair. The stigma of detention also carried social consequences: neighbours, acquaintances, and colleagues viewed the arrest through the distorted lens provided by official accusations of “terrorism” and “national security offences”.

Isolation was not merely physical but also social. Legal uncertainty and the risk of renewed proceedings created a climate in which normal life became impossible. Employment, education, and ordinary civic participation were overshadowed by the threat of surveillance and further harassment. Even after release, visits to hospitals, police stations, and migration offices carried echoes of coercion, as if freedom itself had become conditional.

The broader message was unmistakable: dissent, research, or criticism—even when directed at a foreign regime—could be reframed as a domestic threat. This realisation left an enduring psychological imprint, instilling both caution and resolve. Caution, because the reach of politicised justice proved capable of crossing borders and silencing voices; resolve, because surviving the ordeal highlighted the importance of documenting and exposing the misuse of law.

In social terms, the experience revealed how detention reverberates outward, affecting families, communities, and networks of solidarity. Support came from unexpected places—human rights organisations,

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colleagues abroad, and individuals who recognised the injustice—but the damage to trust in institutions remained profound. What was lost during those weeks was not only time, but a measure of confidence in the possibility of impartial justice within a system where law had been redefined as an instrument of control.

Judicial Recognition and Renewed Harassment

At first, release itself was illusory. The migration directorate ordered relocation to a provincial town six hours from Istanbul, separating the individual from family and imposing a form of controlled exile. It was a reminder that “freedom” was conditional, subject to surveillance and designed to isolate.

The story did not end with release. A year later, the case was brought before Turkey’s High Court, where judges delivered an unequivocal ruling. The detention was declared unlawful, the proceedings were deemed politically tainted, and the individual was found not guilty of any act against the national security of Turkey. The judgment went further: it affirmed that deportation to Iran would be unlawful, particularly in view of the death sentence awaiting the detainee there, and it confirmed that no person who holds or has ever held Turkish nationality can be deported under any circumstances. The ruling was final, binding, and not open to appeal.

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Yet in practice, the obstacles continued. Access to property and administrative systems in Turkey was only partially restored, and the security services, together with the migration directorate, engaged in systematic obstruction. Even the right of a six-year-old child to attend school was denied, despite the guarantees of international law and the clear provisions of Turkish legislation. Education, a fundamental right regardless of background or residency status, became a casualty of retaliation. The child's repeated tears—asking why all friends could attend school while she could not—were a cruel reminder that punishment extended beyond the accused to the family, undermining the very notion of human rights in a state that claimed to uphold them.

After a year, the family sought relief in a simple act: a short trip abroad to allow the child a change of environment. At Istanbul airport, passports were stamped as usual, but moments later security officers intervened. The detainee was arrested and told: “You have left Turkey; you have deported yourself. Now we will send you to Iran.” Hours of uncertainty followed until a lawyer arrived and, by invoking the High Court ruling, secured release. Yet freedom came at a price: a five-year deportation order was imposed on the entire family.

Subsequent court filings revealed an even harsher reality. While the family had been told the deportation was limited to five years, documents submitted by the migration directorate showed that the measure was in fact permanent for the principal detainee. The chilling words of the airport

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officer—“Leave this country and never return; it is not safe for you here”—took on new weight when, ten days after departure, an email arrived from INTERPOL to legal counsel. It confirmed that the family's Turkish passports had been entered into the INTERPOL database as “lost or stolen”, rendering them invalid, even though the documents were intact and in hand.

This extraordinary manoeuvre, carried out by the Turkish security services and the interior ministry, eliminated any possibility of return. It demonstrated in stark terms how even the binding decision of the High Court could be neutralised by administrative and political power. In practice, the independence of the judiciary was rendered meaningless, as executive agencies colluded with international policing channels to erase the rights that the court had sought to protect.

The conclusion was unavoidable: the façade of legality masked a system where security interests overrode judicial rulings, and where citizenship itself could be erased at will. The parallel with Iran was unmistakable. In both states, courts were subordinated to political authority, rights were contingent upon loyalty, and institutions that should have safeguarded justice were instead harnessed as instruments of control.

Transnational Intimidation and Ongoing Threats

Settlement in a state with strong protections for free expression did not bring the closure that might have been expected. After applying for

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asylum and establishing residence abroad, the individual wrote a book recounting the forty-six days of custody — a factual account, supported by photographs and medical documentation, describing conditions in detention and instances of racist and abusive conduct by security and migration officials. Rather than silence the story, publication acted as a catalyst for a new phase of pressure.

Threats and harassment began, initially directed at legal counsel and subsequently aimed at friends and associates remaining in the country of origin. Unsettling calls arrived from numbers that appeared irregular; callers claiming to be ultra-nationalists made explicit threats, insisting they could fabricate criminal cases through links to local companies and ensure re-arrest and prosecution upon any return. On several occasions the tone of the threats invoked the spectre of international policing: “We can have a Red Notice placed against you,” one caller said — a warning that carried the implied authority of someone with access to, or knowledge of, state channels.

Taken together, the pattern was chilling. The author and their circle reasonably judged that the harassment could not be dismissed as random intimidation; rather, it bore the hallmarks of a coordinated campaign intended to intimidate, disrupt livelihoods, and sever ties. Family members were repeatedly subjected to threats, and anonymous callers claimed knowledge of the family’s movements and plans. The pressure

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escalated to the point where relocation inside the host state became necessary for reasons of safety.

These developments underscored a grim reality: even physical relocation to a jurisdiction priding itself on human-rights protections did not guarantee immunity from transnational pressure. The interplay between domestic security services, migration control, and informal networks of nationalists meant that critics could be pursued across borders — not merely through legal instruments but through targeted campaigns of harassment and fear. The invocation of INTERPOL-style measures, whether suggested or threatened, served to amplify the psychological impact by turning international mechanisms into an additional layer of menace.

Yet the response was also resolute. Despite repeated intimidations and the material cost of relocation, the individual continued to document and publish the account. The aim was not revenge but prevention: a commitment to exposing patterns of abuse in the hope that shining a light on them might deter similar practices and protect other families from comparable harm. The persistence of testimony — corroborated by medical records, witness statements and contemporaneous documentation — became in itself a form of defence against erasure.

This entire chapter is supported by documentary evidence, including official correspondence from the Turkish judiciary, letters from Turkish

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and Iranian police, internal communications with INTERPOL, emails received from INTERPOL, certified and translated medical records, and verified court judgments, alongside many other materials. All of these documents can be made available, upon request, to recognised human rights organisations and competent human rights tribunals. The individual concerned stands ready to provide full documentation and to give testimony in complete detail.

The experience documented in this chapter illustrates how detention, legal proceedings, and intimidation were not isolated events but parts of a wider structure of politicised justice. From arbitrary arrest and coercive trials to the stripping of nationality, denial of education for a child, and even threats pursued across borders, the pattern was consistent: law was weaponised as a tool of power rather than a safeguard of rights. Yet the testimony also demonstrates resilience, supported by evidence and verified records, ensuring that the abuses cannot be erased. In the next chapter, the voices of other victims will reveal that these experiences are not singular but part of a broader chorus of individuals subjected to the same machinery of repression.

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Chapter 5

Voices of the Victims

From Law to Lived Experience

Behind every treaty, every Red Notice, and every extradition request lies a human life profoundly altered by the machinery of politicised justice. Statistics can describe the scope of abuse, and legal analysis can expose the flaws of international cooperation, but neither can fully convey the human cost. This chapter brings forward the voices of those who have lived under the shadow of politically motivated policing — journalists, lawyers, students, and ordinary citizens whose only “crime” was to dissent, to speak, or to belong to the wrong political group.

For these individuals, persecution does not end with the courtroom. It follows them into airports where they are arrested without warning, into banks where accounts are frozen, and into their children’s schools where enrolment is denied. Families fracture under the pressure, reputations are

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shattered by the stigma of being branded a “terrorist,” and even freedom of movement — one of the most basic elements of human dignity — becomes conditional.

The purpose of this chapter is to shift the lens from systems to stories. Through documented testimonies, verified by court rulings, medical records, and reports from international organisations, this section illustrates how abuse of INTERPOL’s mechanisms and extradition treaties manifests in lived experience. The cases presented here are not isolated incidents; they form a pattern that exposes the depth of transnational repression and its devastating human consequences.

Testimonies and Lived Realities

The voices of those who have endured politically motivated Red Notices and extradition requests form the most compelling evidence of how international policing mechanisms can be weaponised. Behind every legal filing lies a human being whose life has been profoundly disrupted. These testimonies are not abstract accounts; they are lived realities marked by detention, family separation, reputational harm, and psychological trauma.

One recurring theme is the experience of sudden arrest. Individuals travelling for work or family reasons have been intercepted at airports, often with no prior warning. In some cases, they were detained overnight in police cells; in others, they were held for weeks while courts considered

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Turkey’s extradition request. Even when released, the stigma of being publicly branded as an “international fugitive” followed them, casting a shadow over employment opportunities, community standing, and personal relationships.

Equally damaging is the uncertainty. Victims describe years spent in legal limbo, unable to plan for the future, fearing renewed attempts at extradition. The emotional toll extends to their families, particularly children, who often cannot understand why their parents are subject to such measures. Wives, husbands, and parents carry the financial and emotional burden of prolonged proceedings, while communities fracture under the weight of suspicion.

These stories reveal that the misuse of Red Notices and extradition is not a technical or procedural matter; it is a deeply human one. Each account underscores how the manipulation of international policing erodes trust not only in legal systems but also in the very idea of justice. The voices of victims remind us that the struggle is not confined to courtrooms or treaties—it is lived in the daily anxieties, sacrifices, and resilience of those targeted.

Psychological and Social Consequences

The psychological burden borne by those subjected to politically motivated Red Notices is often heavier than the legal consequences themselves. Many victims describe an enduring sense of anxiety, triggered

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by the knowledge that they can be detained at any moment. Routine activities—boarding a plane, applying for a bank account, even attending a community event—become overshadowed by the fear that their names may resurface in an international database. This constant vigilance erodes mental health, producing insomnia, panic attacks, and in some cases clinical depression.

Families too suffer acutely. Children grow up under the shadow of uncertainty, witnessing their parents' stress and living with the possibility that one day a loved one may not return home. In several cases documented by human rights organisations, children of targeted dissidents faced bullying or ostracism in school, as the stigma of their parents' alleged "criminality" seeped into everyday social life. Spouses are often left to manage households alone, carrying both financial responsibilities and the emotional labour of keeping families intact during prolonged legal battles.

The social consequences are no less severe. Communities frequently distance themselves from individuals branded as fugitives, fearing association could bring unwanted scrutiny. Careers are derailed, professional licences suspended, and reputations irreparably damaged. Even when courts ultimately dismiss the charges as politically motivated, the damage to social standing and trust cannot easily be repaired. Victims

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often describe themselves as “socially exiled,” excluded not by borders but by stigma and suspicion.

Such experiences demonstrate that politically motivated misuse of INTERPOL is not only an abuse of law—it is an attack on human dignity. It transforms ordinary citizens into outcasts, isolates families, and corrodes the bonds of community. These are not collateral effects; they are central to the strategy of authoritarian regimes, which rely on fear, shame, and social dislocation to silence their critics both at home and abroad.

Judicial and Human Rights Oversight

The role of European courts and international human rights bodies has been decisive in constraining the misuse of extradition treaties and INTERPOL notices by Turkey. In several landmark judgments, courts in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Sweden have concluded that extradition requests from Ankara were politically motivated and incompatible with the principles of justice. By refusing to comply, these courts reaffirmed that obligations under human rights law take precedence over political convenience.

One illustrative case came before the Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, where judges ruled that evidence presented by Turkey against a prominent businessman lacked credibility and was inseparable from Ankara's campaign against dissent. Similarly, the Swedish Supreme Court

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rejected an extradition request against a senior journalist, emphasising that compliance would expose him to persecution and an unfair trial. In both examples, the judiciary demonstrated its independence by ensuring that international legal cooperation could not be turned into an instrument of authoritarian repression.

The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has provided an additional layer of protection. Repeatedly, the Court has ruled that extradition to Turkey in cases involving political charges would breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. These rulings carry binding authority on all Council of Europe member states, reinforcing the principle that human rights must outweigh treaty obligations when the two are in conflict.

Civil society organisations have complemented this judicial scrutiny. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Fair Trials have systematically documented Turkey's misuse of INTERPOL mechanisms, publishing detailed reports and engaging with parliaments across Europe. Their advocacy has not only raised awareness of the victims' plight but has also placed sustained pressure on INTERPOL to improve transparency and strengthen its review mechanisms.

Together, judicial oversight and human rights advocacy have created a fragile but essential counterweight to Turkey's strategy. While they

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cannot prevent politically motivated requests from being filed, they can ensure that such requests are met with rigorous scrutiny, public exposure, and, where necessary, outright rejection. The combined effect has been to shield individuals from unjust transfer, to preserve the credibility of international legal cooperation, and to signal to authoritarian governments that their misuse of global institutions will not go unchallenged.

Conclusion

The testimonies, psychological scars, and judicial findings documented in this chapter converge upon a single truth: the victims of Turkey's misuse of INTERPOL and extradition treaties are not isolated cases, but the visible outcome of a systemic pattern. The stories of individuals silenced through arrests, stripped of nationality, or forced into prolonged legal battles demonstrate how political repression is projected across borders.

European courts and international human rights organisations have played a crucial role in exposing this abuse, refusing extradition requests that would have condemned dissidents to persecution, and pressing for reforms within INTERPOL. Yet their interventions, however decisive, remain reactive rather than preventive. Victims continue to endure months or years of uncertainty, reputational damage, and fractured lives before justice is finally delivered.

The voices presented here are therefore more than accounts of personal suffering; they are warnings to the international community. They reveal

how fragile international policing becomes when entrusted to states that manipulate law for political ends. They also highlight the urgent responsibility of INTERPOL, the Council of Europe, and the United Nations to safeguard the integrity of transnational justice. Without stronger oversight and meaningful reforms, the cycle of arrests, Red Notices, and contested extradition requests will persist — and with it, the erosion of trust in international law itself.



Chapter 6

INTERPOL after the Coup Attempt

Statistics and Patterns of Requests

The attempted coup of July 2016 marked a decisive turning point in Turkey's use of INTERPOL's mechanisms. Before that date, Turkish Red Notice requests were relatively modest in number and largely concerned ordinary criminal offences such as fraud, narcotics, or organised crime. Statistical data drawn from INTERPOL's public records and reports presented to European parliaments demonstrate that, in the wake of the coup attempt, the volume of Turkish requests rose dramatically. Civil society organisations documented hundreds of new cases in which journalists, academics, business figures, and dissidents were suddenly listed as international fugitives.

The shift in character was unmistakable. Whereas earlier requests had been tied to specific criminal acts, those issued after 2016 increasingly

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relied on vague or politicised allegations such as “membership of a terrorist organisation” or “crimes against state security.” In numerous cases, the individuals targeted were residing abroad lawfully, some with pending asylum claims in Europe, yet they nonetheless faced arrest or travel restrictions as a direct consequence of politically motivated notices. This escalation signified not merely a quantitative increase but a qualitative transformation, whereby INTERPOL was repurposed from an instrument of policing into an extension of domestic political agendas.

Research by international watchdogs, including Fair Trials and Human Rights Watch, confirmed this trajectory, noting that Turkey had become one of the most active users of the Red Notice system in the post-2016 era. In certain years, Turkish filings ranked among the highest worldwide, even though national crime rates and population size did not justify such figures. Analysts concluded that the surge could not be explained by ordinary policing requirements but was directly linked to the government’s campaign against perceived opponents following the coup attempt.

The statistics themselves are revealing. Between 2016 and 2020, Turkey submitted thousands of Red Notice requests, compared with only a few hundred in earlier years. The majority were not connected to traditional criminality but to allegations of political dissent, including supposed affiliation with the Gülen movement or Kurdish organisations. In this way,

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the mechanisms of INTERPOL were harnessed to blur the distinction between legitimate law enforcement and political suppression, effectively exporting domestic conflicts onto the international stage.

For those affected, the repercussions were immediate and severe. International travel became perilous, bank accounts were frozen in some jurisdictions, and professional careers were disrupted without warning. Families were divided when one member was detained abroad, even briefly, while others endured the uncertainty of possible arrest. What appeared on paper as a surge in requests translated in practice into broken lives and curtailed freedoms.

Perhaps the most striking element of this campaign was the revocation of nationality. Even individuals born in Turkey to Turkish parents and grandparents were stripped of their citizenship. Such measures demonstrated that legal identity itself had been rendered conditional on political loyalty. Nationality, which should embody a protective bond between state and citizen, was instead deployed as a disciplinary instrument, reminding entire families that their status could be erased overnight if they were deemed disloyal.

Recent developments have reinforced the same pattern. In September 2025, Hasan Mutlu, the mayor of Istanbul’s Bayrampaşa district, was detained along with forty-seven municipal officials in a wide-ranging corruption probe. The allegations of bribery, fraud, embezzlement, and

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bid-rigging were firmly denied by Mutlu and his colleagues, who described the charges as politically engineered to weaken the opposition.

The arrest of Istanbul's elected mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu, provided an even starker illustration. More than 1,400 people, including students and journalists, were detained for joining protests or expressing dissent online. Many were held solely for sharing slogans or criticising the government, underscoring how accusations linked to “state security” or “public order” had become routine devices for silencing political opponents.

International observers, including parliamentary committees in Europe, have concluded that Turkey is among the most consistent abusers of INTERPOL's notice system. Thousands of Red Notices have been filed in recent years, particularly against individuals accused of ties to the Gülen movement or Kurdish organisations, often without credible supporting evidence. Taken together, these developments reveal a broader strategy: mass arrests at home combined with expansive misuse of international policing abroad, forming a single architecture of repression that transcends borders.

In sum, the statistical surge in Turkey's Red Notice requests after 2016 reveals far more than administrative enthusiasm; it exposes a systematic politicisation of international policing. The combination of inflated numbers, vague charges, and the targeting of citizens and officials alike demonstrates that the Red Notice system was harnessed not to pursue

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justice but to extend domestic repression across borders. This context is essential for understanding the growing importance of the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF), whose role in reviewing and challenging such notices became increasingly critical.

The Role of the CCF

The Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF) occupies a unique position within the organisation. It is the only body empowered to review individual complaints and to determine whether a Red Notice or diffusion complies with INTERPOL's Constitution and its rules on data processing. In theory, the CCF acts as the safeguard against political misuse, ensuring that the organisation remains neutral and does not become a tool for the pursuit of political or discriminatory objectives.

Following the coup attempt of 2016, the CCF found itself inundated with petitions from individuals targeted by Turkish requests. Journalists, academics, business leaders, and opposition figures turned to the Commission as their last resort, often after experiencing detention abroad or restrictions on their movement. The sharp increase in applications from Turkey's critics placed the CCF at the centre of a profound institutional test: could it withstand the pressure exerted by a member state determined to bend INTERPOL to its domestic agenda?

Case reviews demonstrated recurring flaws in Turkey's filings. Notices were frequently based on sweeping allegations such as “membership of a

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terrorist organisation” without specific evidence, or they relied on criminal provisions that conflated peaceful political dissent with terrorism. The CCF repeatedly determined that such notices were non-compliant, ordering their deletion from INTERPOL’s databases. Yet the cycle was relentless: as fast as some notices were removed, new ones were filed, perpetuating a system of harassment through procedural repetition.

The shortcomings of the Commission are not abstract; they are lived in the experiences of those who wait. One such case illustrates the frustration vividly. For almost two years, the individual concerned has had a petition pending before the CCF, challenging a politically motivated notice. Each time legal counsel has enquired, the response has been the same: that the Commission lacks sufficient staff or resources, and that the file remains under consideration. No substantive answer has been forthcoming, leaving the applicant in a state of protracted uncertainty. This prolonged silence exemplifies the structural weaknesses of a body that, while intended to provide remedies, can in practice leave applicants suspended in limbo, exposed to ongoing risks without the protection of a timely decision.

International observers noted both the strengths and the limits of the Commission’s work. On the one hand, the CCF provided a crucial avenue of redress, giving individuals a legal mechanism to challenge politically motivated persecution. On the other hand, its limited resources and the confidential nature of its proceedings meant that decisions could take

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months or years, during which time the individual remained at risk of arrest or reputational damage. In this sense, the CCF was both a guardian and a bottleneck: indispensable, yet insufficient to counterbalance the scale of abuse.

In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the CCF became both a symbol of resistance to political abuse and a reminder of institutional fragility. It offered a vital avenue for challenging unjust notices, yet its limited capacity left many applicants stranded in prolonged uncertainty. The Turkish cases revealed not only the Commission’s importance but also its limits: a body designed to protect individuals from political misuse was itself overwhelmed, under-resourced, and at times paralysed. This tension set the stage for broader international debates on how to confront systematic abuse, a discussion taken up in the next section.

International Responses

The dramatic increase in Turkish Red Notice requests after 2016 did not go unnoticed by the international community. European governments, parliamentary committees, and human rights organisations began to scrutinise the pattern of abuse, noting that the Red Notice system was being exploited to extend domestic repression across borders. Reports by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament raised concerns that INTERPOL’s neutrality was being

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undermined, and that individuals lawfully residing in Europe were being subjected to arbitrary arrest at the request of Ankara.

Several European courts responded decisively. In a series of judgments, national courts in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom refused extradition requests based on Turkish Red Notices, ruling that the allegations were politically motivated and lacked credible evidence. These courts emphasised that compliance with such requests would contravene the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly the prohibitions against torture and unlawful detention. The judicial pushback highlighted the crucial role of domestic courts in shielding individuals from the misuse of international policing instruments.

International NGOs played an equally important role. Fair Trials launched campaigns to highlight cases of wrongful detention linked to Turkish requests, while Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch published detailed reports exposing the scale of politically motivated prosecutions. These organisations documented the human cost of the misuse, giving voice to victims who had been arrested at airports, separated from their families, or forced to live under constant fear of re-arrest. Their advocacy placed sustained pressure on INTERPOL to strengthen its review mechanisms and increase transparency.

The international response was not uniform, however. Some states with close political or economic ties to Turkey continued to detain individuals

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on the basis of Turkish Red Notices, often citing obligations under bilateral agreements. This inconsistency revealed the fragile balance between international policing cooperation and the duty to protect human rights. It also underlined the need for a more coherent and principled approach within INTERPOL and among its member states, one that prioritises legal safeguards over political expediency.

Taken together, the surge in Turkish requests, the strained capacity of the CCF, and the uneven responses of states reveal both the resilience and fragility of the international system. On the one hand, courts and watchdogs demonstrated that safeguards can work; on the other, the persistence of politically motivated arrests showed that the protection of rights remains precarious. The lessons of the post-2016 era underline the urgency of reform: without stronger oversight, greater transparency, and consistent international solidarity, the risk that INTERPOL will be bent to political ends remains ever present.

Chapter 7

Comparative Analysis – Iran and Turkey

Similarities

A comparative perspective on Iran and Turkey reveals two regimes employing different methods yet guided by strikingly similar objectives: the suppression of dissent and the projection of domestic control beyond national borders. Both states have turned to INTERPOL, not primarily as a policing instrument, but as an auxiliary tool in their campaigns against political opponents. While their legal frameworks and international treaties differ, the underlying strategy is the same: to manipulate international cooperation in ways that serve authoritarian interests rather than the rule of law.

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The pattern of coordination between Iran and Turkey illustrates a broader reality: both regimes have learned to disguise political persecution under the appearance of legal process. In both states, accusations of “terrorism” or “threats to national security” are used not as narrowly defined legal categories but as elastic tools to capture virtually any form of dissent. Journalists who investigate corruption, lawyers who defend political prisoners, and even ordinary citizens who criticise government policy on social media may find themselves categorised under these labels.

Another shared feature is the deliberate erosion of judicial independence. In Iran, revolutionary courts operate as extensions of security agencies, issuing decisions in the absence of due process. In Turkey, the mass purges of judges and prosecutors after 2016 severely compromised the autonomy of the judiciary, enabling politically motivated prosecutions to proceed unchecked. In both contexts, courts have become instruments of governance rather than guardians of justice.

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Both regimes also exploit international cooperation to pursue exiles. While Iran has long been constrained by the absence of extradition treaties with Europe, it has sought to bypass this obstacle by leveraging Turkey's more extensive legal framework and treaty obligations. Turkey, in turn, has not hesitated to accommodate Iran's demands when they align with its own interests, allowing Iranian security services to mask their reach behind Turkish institutions. This symbiosis illustrates a convergence of methods: Iran supplies the political rationale, Turkey provides the procedural pathway, and together they create a transnational apparatus of intimidation.

These parallels demonstrate that the similarities between Iran and Turkey are not accidental but structural. Both states employ law as a weapon rather than a safeguard, redefine citizenship as conditional upon loyalty, and attempt to turn INTERPOL and international cooperation into extensions of their domestic repression. Their strategies reveal an authoritarian logic that transcends borders, positioning dissent not as a right to be protected but as a threat to be eliminated.

Differences

Despite their convergences, Iran and Turkey diverge in the tools available to them and in the scope of their international reach. Iran's capacity to manipulate extradition processes is structurally limited. The Islamic Republic has no extradition treaties with the European Union and

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maintains only a handful of bilateral agreements, often with states that themselves lack robust human rights protections. As a result, Iranian Red Notices are more likely to be scrutinised and rejected by European courts, which are alert to the regime's record of torture, summary trials, and the death penalty. Iran's efforts to weaponise INTERPOL have therefore been constrained by its diplomatic isolation and by the scepticism of judicial authorities abroad.

Turkey, by contrast, possesses an extensive legal infrastructure that grants it far greater leverage. As a signatory to the 1957 European Convention on Extradition and numerous bilateral agreements, Ankara can issue requests that appear prima facie legitimate under international law. Its membership in regional organisations and its longstanding partnerships with European states provide a veneer of trust that Iran cannot command. Consequently, Turkish Red Notices and extradition requests, even when politically motivated, enter foreign legal systems with a presumption of legitimacy that dissidents must then labour to overturn.

The contrast also extends to the treatment of nationality. In Iran, nationality is rarely revoked; repression is enacted primarily through imprisonment, forced confessions, and the denial of civil rights. In Turkey, however, the post-2016 purges have extended to the arbitrary revocation of citizenship. Individuals born to Turkish parents, and even those with several generations of Turkish ancestry, have found their nationality annulled on allegations of disloyalty. This practice strips

opponents not only of their rights but of their very legal identity, a tactic that magnifies the reach of state control by rendering dissenters stateless and vulnerable to international arrest.

Together, these differences highlight a troubling reality. Iran's attempts are constrained but persistent, relying on cooperation with states like Turkey to bypass its own isolation. Turkey's efforts are broader and more systematic, using its legal obligations and treaty networks to cloak political prosecutions in the language of law. In both cases, however, the result converges: the erosion of international norms and the exposure of dissidents to transnational repression.

The Role of European Courts in Constraining Abuse

Against the backdrop of Iran's limitations and Turkey's expansive reach, European courts have emerged as a decisive counterweight. In both contexts, national judiciaries across Europe have refused to serve as instruments of transnational repression. Their rulings demonstrate that while authoritarian states can manipulate international cooperation mechanisms, the ultimate safeguard lies in independent judicial oversight.

In cases linked to Iranian requests, courts have consistently recognised the risks of torture, unfair trials, and execution. Extradition has been denied on the basis that compliance would breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. Judges have underscored that no diplomatic

assurances could mitigate the systemic risk posed by Iran's judicial and penal system. This consistent jurisprudence has effectively nullified Tehran's ability to secure extradition from Europe.

Turkey's position has been more complex. As a member of the Council of Europe and a state party to the European Convention on Extradition, its requests initially carry a presumption of legality. Yet European courts have increasingly pierced this façade, identifying politically motivated prosecutions, mass trials, and violations of due process. Courts in Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have rejected Turkish extradition requests on grounds that they constitute disguised political offences. In doing so, they reaffirmed that obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights supersede treaty commitments when the two are in conflict.

These judicial interventions not only protect individuals but also set critical precedents. They signal to authoritarian states that European legal systems will not blindly enforce requests that undermine fundamental rights. They also reinforce the principle that international police cooperation must remain subordinate to human rights obligations. Without these rulings, dissidents risked becoming bargaining chips in diplomatic relations; with them, courts have carved out a space where law serves as a shield rather than a weapon.

Conclusion

The comparison between Iran and Turkey underscores a paradox of modern international policing. Iran's reach is curtailed by isolation but persists through determination and proxy strategies; Turkey's influence is amplified by treaties and institutional access, yet tainted by its systematic abuse of those very mechanisms. Both regimes reveal how authoritarian states exploit the letter of law while betraying its spirit, transforming instruments of cooperation into weapons of repression. The decisive interventions of European courts highlight that safeguards remain possible, but they also expose the fragility of a system that relies on judicial courage rather than structural guarantees. Unless reforms are undertaken, the line between law enforcement and political persecution will remain dangerously blurred.

Chapter 8

Pathways to Reform

Transparency proposals

The first and most immediate pathway to reform lies in transparency. INTERPOL's systems have long been criticised for their opacity, with decisions on the circulation or removal of Red Notices taking place behind closed doors. Victims frequently learn of their status only at border crossings, and even after filing a complaint with the CCF, they receive little information about the progress or substance of the review. This lack of visibility breeds mistrust, enabling authoritarian states to manipulate the system without scrutiny and leaving victims uncertain of their legal position.

Greater transparency could take several practical forms. INTERPOL should be obliged to publish anonymised data on the number of Red Notices issued, challenged, and deleted each year, broken down by

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member state. Clear public reporting would expose patterns of misuse and create a deterrent effect, as states aware that their practices are being monitored are less likely to abuse the system. Transparency should also extend to the notification process: individuals targeted by a Red Notice must be informed promptly and provided with access to the evidence submitted by the requesting state. Without this, the right to mount an effective defence remains illusory.

Moreover, transparency is not merely procedural; it is also normative. Public access to information signals that INTERPOL's legitimacy depends on accountability. By demonstrating that it is not beholden to the political agendas of its most active users, the organisation can restore confidence among states, courts, and human rights defenders. In an era when authoritarian regimes are adept at cloaking repression in legal form, only a commitment to openness can prevent the institution from being co-opted into injustice.

Strengthening the Role of the CCF

The Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF) is the principal safeguard against political misuse, yet its capacity is chronically inadequate. Designed as a part-time, quasi-judicial body with limited staff, it cannot cope with the volume of applications generated by authoritarian practices. Delays lasting months or even years are commonplace, leaving applicants in limbo while their notices remain active. For many, the mere

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passage of time translates into prolonged detention, reputational harm, and continued exposure to risk.

Strengthening the CCF requires both structural and procedural reforms. Structurally, the Commission must be transformed into a full-time body with sufficient judges, legal experts, and administrative staff. Its budget should be independent of political bargaining, guaranteed by mandatory contributions earmarked for oversight functions. Procedurally, deadlines for the review of complaints must be introduced, ensuring that no individual is left without a timely decision. Interim relief measures should also be made available, allowing the suspension of a Red Notice while a case is under review.

Equally important is the question of transparency. At present, the CCF operates with strict confidentiality, publishing only anonymised summaries of its decisions. While confidentiality protects sensitive data, excessive secrecy undermines trust. The Commission should be obliged to publish detailed reasoning in each case, redacting only where necessary to protect personal safety. This would not only clarify the standards being applied but also deter states from filing abusive requests, knowing that their actions will be subject to public scrutiny.

By strengthening the CCF in these ways, INTERPOL can demonstrate a genuine commitment to human rights. An empowered Commission would transform the complaint mechanism from a symbolic safeguard into a

substantive remedy, ensuring that victims of politically motivated persecution are not abandoned to silence and delay.

Compensation for Victims

A further pathway to reform must address the question of remedy. At present, victims of abusive Red Notices may succeed in having their data deleted, but they receive no compensation for the harm endured. Months of unlawful detention, loss of employment, reputational damage, and psychological trauma are simply written off as collateral consequences of a flawed system. This absence of restitution entrenches injustice, signalling to authoritarian states that there is little cost attached to their misconduct.

Compensation should therefore be recognised as an essential element of accountability. Member states that file notices subsequently declared abusive by the CCF or national courts should bear financial responsibility for the damage inflicted. A compensation fund, financed by mandatory contributions from member states and administered independently, could provide redress for those wrongfully targeted. Such a mechanism would not only repair individual harm but would also create a deterrent effect, discouraging states from submitting politically motivated requests.

Beyond financial remedies, symbolic recognition matters. Victims must have access to formal statements clearing their names and acknowledging

the injustice they suffered. For journalists, academics, or business leaders whose reputations have been tarnished, such declarations are as important as monetary awards. They help restore credibility, rebuild careers, and affirm the principle that law should protect rather than persecute.

The provision of compensation would mark a decisive step towards transforming INTERPOL from a passive facilitator of requests into an active guarantor of justice. Without it, the system risks perpetuating harm, leaving victims to shoulder the burden of abuses that the organisation had the power—but not the will—to prevent.

The Role of International Institutions

Reform cannot be left to INTERPOL alone. As an organisation of 196 member states, its capacity for self-correction is limited by political dynamics. International institutions therefore have a crucial role to play in reinforcing accountability and embedding safeguards against abuse. The United Nations, the Council of Europe, and regional human rights courts are particularly well placed to scrutinise patterns of misuse and to set binding standards that constrain authoritarian practices.

The United Nations Human Rights Council could be mandated to include the misuse of INTERPOL mechanisms in its periodic reviews of member states. Similarly, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) must ensure that asylum seekers are not jeopardised by politically motivated notices, recognising that refugee protection and

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international policing are intertwined. Within Europe, the European Court of Human Rights has already acted as a bulwark, ruling that extradition based on abusive Red Notices violates fundamental rights. Expanding such jurisprudence would provide a legal shield not only for individuals but also for the integrity of international law.

Civil society institutions also matter. NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Fair Trials have been indispensable in documenting abuses and pressing for reform. Their ability to mobilise public opinion and to provide expert testimony ensures that debates around INTERPOL do not remain confined to technical or diplomatic circles but reflect the lived experiences of victims. Cooperation between these NGOs and intergovernmental bodies could institutionalise reform efforts, transforming isolated campaigns into systemic change.

Ultimately, embedding the role of international institutions ensures that the reform of INTERPOL does not depend solely on the goodwill of its member states. By introducing external oversight, linking police cooperation with human rights obligations, and empowering civil society to hold governments to account, the international community can prevent INTERPOL from becoming an instrument of authoritarian convenience.

Conclusion

Reform must address not only procedure but also structure. The CCF cannot remain financially dependent on INTERPOL while being expected

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to scrutinise the very organisation that funds it. Either the Commission must be provided with a fully independent budget, secured through mandatory contributions earmarked exclusively for oversight, or an entirely separate institution should be established to review politically sensitive cases. Only by severing financial and institutional dependency can impartiality be guaranteed.

The broader lesson is that INTERPOL's credibility rests on its ability to resist capture by authoritarian states. Transparency, a stronger CCF, compensation for victims, and the engagement of international institutions together form a framework of reform that can restore confidence. Without such changes, the organisation risks further erosion of trust and the continuation of abuses that transform instruments of cooperation into tools of repression.

Chapter 9

Beyond Ankara and Tehran

Global Lessons and Future Challenges

Authoritarian Patterns Across Borders

The patterns observed in Iran and Turkey are not isolated phenomena but part of a broader authoritarian toolkit now deployed across multiple jurisdictions. Russia has long been one of the most prolific users of INTERPOL's systems, repeatedly attempting to pursue political exiles, opposition leaders, and business figures through Red Notices that courts in Europe and North America have found to be abusive. Similarly, China has utilised the organisation to target dissidents and members of ethnic minorities abroad, often under the guise of economic crimes or security threats. These examples illustrate a transnational strategy: the repurposing of international policing mechanisms to legitimise the suppression of political opposition.

What unites these practices is the manipulation of legal language to cloak persecution in procedural legitimacy. Just as Turkey frames its opponents as “terrorists” and Iran brands them as threats to “national security,” other authoritarian states invoke charges of corruption, fraud, or extremism to justify their pursuit. The terminology differs, but the method is the same: to transform instruments of cooperation into extensions of domestic repression. In each case, the international framework designed to facilitate justice becomes entangled in the machinery of authoritarian control.

The Expanding Geography of Repression

The misuse of INTERPOL is no longer confined to a handful of notorious cases but has spread across regions, reflecting a wider geography of repression. In parts of Eastern Europe, governments facing internal opposition have resorted to international policing mechanisms to pursue critics who have fled abroad. In Central Asia, dissidents, journalists, and human rights defenders frequently find themselves subject to Red Notices issued under vague allegations of extremism or corruption. Even in parts of Africa and Latin America, political leaders have sought to manipulate cross-border legal tools to neutralise opponents or silence investigative voices.

This diffusion of tactics reveals the global appeal of a strategy that weaponises cooperation while undermining trust in international institutions. Authoritarian governments observe how others exploit

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INTERPOL with limited consequences, and they replicate these methods, confident that opacity and procedural complexity will shield them from accountability. The result is a domino effect: each successful abuse emboldens further attempts, eroding the credibility of the system as a whole.

What emerges is not merely a series of isolated abuses but a structural challenge to the international legal order. If unchecked, the expanding geography of repression risks normalising the idea that international policing mechanisms are legitimate tools of political control. This normalisation threatens not only dissidents and exiles but also the stability of international cooperation itself, as trust among member states corrodes under the weight of politicisation.

Challenges for the International Order

The spread of politically motivated abuse poses a profound challenge to the international order. At its core, INTERPOL was designed to facilitate cooperation against ordinary crime, yet it now finds itself entangled in disputes that undermine its neutrality and credibility. When authoritarian states succeed in exploiting its mechanisms, the damage extends beyond individual victims. Trust between member states is corroded, the legitimacy of judicial cooperation is weakened, and the very notion of impartial law enforcement across borders is called into question.

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A central difficulty lies in the asymmetry of incentives. For authoritarian governments, the political benefits of silencing opponents abroad are immediate and tangible. For the international community, the costs of reform are diffuse, often requiring diplomatic confrontation and institutional change that many states are reluctant to pursue. This imbalance allows misuse to flourish, as abusive requests face little more than delayed reviews or isolated judicial refusals.

The challenge also extends to the principle of sovereignty. States jealously guard their control over policing and judicial matters, making them hesitant to accept binding external oversight. Yet without such oversight, INTERPOL remains vulnerable to capture by those who see cooperation as a tool of repression. The international order is thus confronted with a dilemma: either accept erosion through politicisation or embrace reforms that impose accountability even on powerful member states.

The trajectory of this dilemma will shape not only the future of INTERPOL but also the credibility of international law. A system unable to protect dissidents and prevent abuse risks becoming complicit in authoritarian repression, undermining the very values it was created to serve.

Towards Volume III

The trajectory traced in this volume leads inexorably beyond the borders of Iran and Turkey. The patterns of authoritarian misuse, once thought to

be confined to a handful of states, have revealed themselves as part of a global challenge to the integrity of international policing. From Moscow to Beijing, and across regions in Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the same techniques recur: the criminalisation of dissent, the manipulation of legal categories, and the repurposing of cooperation mechanisms as instruments of political control.

These developments demand a broader inquiry. The lessons learned from Ankara and Tehran are indispensable, but they are not sufficient. To understand the full scope of the problem, attention must shift to the global stage, where authoritarian practices intersect, reinforce one another, and adapt to new contexts. The next volume in the Operation Redlist series will therefore expand its focus, examining how regimes across continents exploit INTERPOL and related mechanisms, and what reforms are necessary to preserve the credibility of international law.

By looking outward, Volume III will confront the central question: can a system built on trust survive in an age where trust is systematically betrayed? The answer will determine not only the future of INTERPOL but also the prospects of international cooperation itself.

Chapter 10

Our Human Responsibility

Conclusion

The chapters of this volume have traced a troubling pattern: the systematic abuse of INTERPOL by authoritarian states to pursue dissent, silence opposition, and extend repression beyond their borders. In Iran, the absence of treaties has not prevented attempts at transnational persecution, while in Turkey, legal access and institutional reach have magnified the danger. The result is a dual threat: the erosion of international law and the betrayal of those who seek justice and protection in foreign jurisdictions.

The warning is clear. Unless reforms are undertaken, INTERPOL risks further capture by political agendas. Its neutrality, once taken for granted, will remain under siege, and the very trust on which international cooperation depends will continue to fracture. Courts, NGOs, and courageous individuals have provided essential resistance, yet structural

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safeguards remain absent. The lesson from Ankara and Tehran is that authoritarian states will not hesitate to exploit every weakness in the system — and that the cost is borne not only by victims but by the credibility of global governance itself.

This book marks only one stage in a larger inquiry. Volume III of *Operation Redlist* will expand the analysis beyond Ankara and Tehran, exploring how regimes across continents — from Russia to China, and beyond — deploy similar tactics, adapt them to new contexts, and challenge the very foundations of international policing. The question it will confront is stark: can the rule of law survive the age of authoritarian globalisation?

Call to Action:

The responsibility now lies with the international community. Policymakers must insist on transparency, reform the CCF, and guarantee compensation for victims. Courts must remain vigilant, refusing to legitimise politically motivated prosecutions. Civil society must continue to expose abuses and demand accountability. And ordinary citizens must understand that the erosion of international law anywhere endangers justice everywhere.

The pathway is difficult but unavoidable. INTERPOL must choose whether to remain a servant of justice or to slide further into complicity with repression. The voices of victims, the vigilance of courts, and the

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persistence of civil society can ensure that it chooses rightly. The time for reform is not tomorrow — it is now.

If INTERPOL truly remains committed to the basic tenets embodied in Articles 2 and 3 of its Constitution — above all neutrality and the prohibition on any intervention of a political, military, religious or racial character — then mere exhortation is no longer enough. The organisation must pair greater transparency with concrete consequences for member states that systematically weaponise its mechanisms. This should include the suspension of access to INTERPOL channels for offending agencies, public censure and naming of repeat abusers, referral of serial cases to the General Assembly or Executive Committee for review, financial or operational conditionality on cooperation, and the regular publication of detailed, state-by-state reports on abusive requests. In short, if INTERPOL honours its founding principles it must be prepared to punish transgressions; failure to do so will be read as tacit complicity, whereas decisive enforcement would be the first step towards restoring institutional credibility.

Equally, if states that claim to uphold human rights — particularly European governments and the United Kingdom — are serious about those commitments, they must review the legal instruments that govern their cooperation with offending states. Bilateral and multilateral judicial and extradition treaties cannot remain unconditional in the face of systematic abuse. Where partner countries repeatedly weaponise mutual-

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assistance mechanisms to pursue political opponents, democracies should harden their treaties with robust human-rights conditionality: suspending judicial cooperation, introducing strict verification procedures, and, where necessary, temporarily or permanently suspending treaty-based cooperation. Such measures are not punitive for the sake of punishment; they are the practical application of a principle: that legal cooperation must not become a conduit for persecution. Democracies that truly value human rights must be prepared to make their legal frameworks reflect that priority, even if it means curtailing formal cooperation with states that fail fundamental human-rights tests.

What this book has laid bare is not a mere collection of isolated incidents.

It is a pattern—a structure—deliberately exploited by regimes like the Islamic Republic of Iran, using international institutions as tools of oppression beyond their borders.

We call this systematic operation—replicated by other authoritarian regimes as well:

“Operation Redlist.”

We Call On:

- **INTERPOL’s General Assembly and CCF to urgently implement robust safeguards against political abuse;**

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- **Democratic governments to scrutinize and suspend cooperation with regimes that systematically exploit Red Notices;**
- **Media and civil society to amplify the voices of those silenced by the misuse of this system;**
- **We also call upon regional and international courts to develop jurisprudence addressing politically motivated misuse of INTERPOL, and to ensure that no extradition is granted without independent judicial scrutiny.**
- **We additionally call upon both bodies to review and adopt the twenty-one reform proposals set forth in the previous chapter as a practical roadmap for restoring institutional integrity;**
- **And finally, **you—the reader—**to speak, write, share, and demand accountability.**

Additional Call to Action

We urge the formation and funding of an independent international task force composed of legal scholars, human rights advocates, and data transparency experts to:

- **Monitor politically motivated Red Notices in real time;**
- **Provide legal support to victims targeted by authoritarian regimes;**

- **Establish an open-access database documenting cases of INTERPOL abuse;**
- **And recommend policy reforms to international bodies and democratic states.**

Such a coordinated initiative can serve as a permanent watchdog, not only to deter future violations but also to empower those who stand on the front lines of justice with legal tools, institutional memory, and global solidarity.

“Because protecting justice requires more than awareness—it requires structure, persistence, and collective will.

Because silence is unintentionally complicity.

History will not judge us by what we intended—but by what we failed to prevent.

And in a world where authoritarian regimes are learning to speak the language of law to commit injustice, our refusal to respond is no longer an option.

Let this book be not the end of a conversation, but the beginning of a movement for real justice and the defence of human rights law.”

This book is the second volume of the Operation Redlist trilogy.

The forthcoming volume will continue this documentary and analytical series, aiming to raise broader global awareness and to prevent further violations of international human rights protections.

Volume III will focus on individuals who, despite living in countries that uphold human rights and freedom of expression, remain subject to harassment, persecution, and transnational repression by authoritarian regimes. It will examine how such states extend their reach into democratic societies, exploiting legal loopholes, diplomatic channels, and international policing systems to intimidate and silence dissent far beyond their borders.

Appendices

Documents, Letters, and Translations

In compiling this second volume, we relied not only on testimonies and first-hand experience but also on an extensive archive of official documents, correspondence, and certified records. These materials include court rulings, police letters from Turkey and Iran, internal communications with INTERPOL, emails received from the Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's Files (CCF), certified medical reports and translations, and numerous other legal documents.

None of these materials can be published here, as we do not possess explicit authorisation from the relevant parties. However, all documents referenced throughout this volume are fully available for submission upon formal request by recognised human rights institutions, impartial courts, or competent international organisations such as the United Nations or the European Parliament. The author has also confirmed his willingness to provide complete testimony, supported by full documentation, before any of these reputable bodies. The following list provides the main public references and sources used to independently verify and corroborate the narratives and analysis contained in this book:

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Closing Note

The appendices strengthen the factual foundation of this book. They ensure that the testimonies, case studies, and analyses are corroborated by recognised sources and verifiable records. They also provide a clear mechanism for independent verification: any legitimate institution can formally request the documents, and full cooperation will be provided.

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About the Author

Hope Paradise is not a public figure. There are no interviews, no social platforms, no personal spotlight—only a quiet, determined voice committed to documenting truth where others look away.

Hope Paradise is not one person—Hope Paradise is the voice of all victims of persecution, torture, harassment, and execution.

Over time, Hope Paradise became a witness—not to events firsthand, but to the stories of those who lived them. Survivors of torture, exile, arbitrary imprisonment, and systemic abuse entrusted their accounts to this author, not for fame or pity, but to ensure that their suffering would not be forgotten. Their voices, often ignored by official records, are preserved here with respect and precision.

Each narrative captured by Hope Paradise is more than just testimony. It is a fragment of history that might otherwise be erased. With deep compassion, careful verification, and an unwavering commitment to justice, Hope Paradise collects these fragments and gives them form—so that readers around the world may understand what it means to live under regimes that rule by fear.

This book, like others that may follow, is part of an evolving archive—not built by institutions, but grounded in memory, trust, verified testimony, and official documentation.

Hope Paradise writes not to provoke, but to reveal. Not to judge, but to document. And always, to remember.

Because truth, once spoken—even in whispers—cannot be silenced.

Hope Paradise once served for several years as a police officer in Iran. Yet, in choosing to support truth above all else, this professional identity was abandoned, together with the uniform that symbolised it. What remained was not an officer of the state, but a witness and recorder of injustice—committed to preserving the voices of victims and exposing the realities that regimes seek to conceal.

“Hope Paradise is a truth-seeker”

Hope Paradise is currently developing a series of forthcoming titles that continue her focus on exposing systematic injustice, state violence, and the global misuse of power. These upcoming books will delve deeper into real-life accounts of victims and survivors, blending legal analysis, investigative research, and first-hand testimony.

Published Work

- *Operation Redlist – Volume I: Hunted in the Shadows* – An investigative exposé revealing how authoritarian regimes exploit international law enforcement systems to target political dissidents abroad, combining legal analysis, witness testimony, and documented evidence.

- *46 Days of Captivity – Çankırı: The End of The World* – is a rare and unvarnished testimony from inside one of Turkey’s migrant detention centres—facilities that remain largely hidden from public scrutiny, yet are directly or indirectly funded and overseen by the European Union.

Among the forthcoming titles are:

- *Operation Redlist – Volume III: Hunted in the Name of Justice* – will focus on individuals who, despite living in countries that uphold human rights and protect freedom of expression, continue to face persecution, harassment, and transnational repression at the hands of authoritarian regime.
- *Hellish Nightmares Trilogy* – a three-volume investigation into gender-based repression, systemic abuse and torture.
- *The Devil’s Detention Centre* – an exposé on institutional torture and hidden detention centres in Iran.
- *From Rasoul Mosque to Cornerstone Church* – a personal and investigative journey across two worlds divided by faith, freedom, and political oppression.
- *Silent Executions* – an unflinching account of hidden state killings and the mechanisms used to erase them from public memory in Iran.

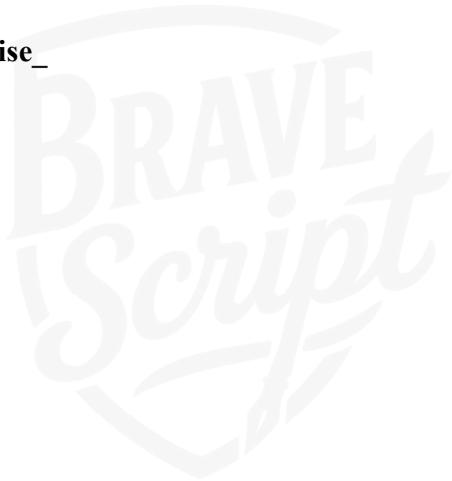
- *Seven Five Two* – a detailed reconstruction of the downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752.

Further details will be announced through official publishing channels:

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