In Pursuit of Rights-Based Peace Journalism on Television:

The 'Syria' Agenda

6 January-6 February 2026

Prof. Dr. Nazan Haydari

IPS İLETİŞİM VAKFI

This study was carried out with the support of Civil Rights Defenders (CRD). The IPS Communication Foundation is solely responsible for its content, which does not necessarily reflect the views of Civil Rights Defenders.

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Contents

Abbreviations 5
Tables 6
Executive Summary 7

1. Introduction 11

1.1. Why television? 14
1.2. Why news bulletins and discussion programmes? 17
1.3. Why these six channels? 18
1.4. Military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava) 20

2. Rights-based peace journalism 23

3. Method and dataset 27

3.1. Dataset 27
3.2. Summarify quantitative data analysis (Appendix 1) 29
3.3. Discourse analysis of rights-based peace journalism 29
3.4. Semi-structured interviews 30

4. What the quantitative data tells us 31

4.1. Quantitative assessments by channel 32
4.2. Quantitative assessment of topics concerning the Kurdish issue 38

5. Channel-specific editorial frames and discursive shifts 45

5.1. CNN Türk: Security, state authority, and controlled integration 46
5.2. atv: Sustaining security discourse through 'inevitable' operations, victory, and integration 52
5.3. NOW TV: Limited agenda and security discourse 57
5.4. Sözcü TV: Between technical reporting and a security frame 62
5.5. Halk TV: Shifting editorial frame and audiovisual dramatisation 67
5.6. İlke TV: Reporting centred on Kurdish identity, rights-based and negotiation-focused .. 73

6. Discourse analysis of rights-based peace journalism 79

6.1. Naming political geography: 'Rojava' and 'North and East Syria' 79
6.2. Framing of attacks 81
6.3. Framing of peace and resolution 82
6.4. Source diversity and the speaking space afforded to rights-holders 83
6.5. Coverage of the 'hair-braiding' (kezî) protest 85
6.6. The 'flag-lowering' incident: Symbolic violence, collective blame, and the limits of the peace process 87

7. Conditions for rights-based peace journalism in Turkey 90

7.1. Structural conditions: Ownership, regulation, and market pressure 92
7.2. Institutional operations: Editorial frame and working conditions 95
7.3. Journalistic practice: Verification, sourcing, naming, and audiovisual ethics 97
7.4. Strategies for rights-based peace journalism developed within given constraints 99

8. Overall assessment 102

9. Recommendations for rights-based peace journalism 105

References 108
News reports and contextual sources 109
Appendix 1 – Summarify quantitative data analysis methods 110

KISALTMALAR

US	United States
AKP	Justice and Development Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
CNN	Cable News Network
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
DEM Party	Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party
EMEA	Europe, Middle East and Africa (Avrupa, Orta Doğu ve Afrika)
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KJ	Character generator (on-screen caption/lower-third)
LLM	Large Language Model
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers' Party)
RAG	Retrieval-Augmented Generation
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
RTÜK	Radio and Television Supreme Council
SDG	Syrian Democratic Forces
SOHR	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel (People's Protection Units)
YPJ	Yekîneyên Parastina Jin (Women's Protection Units)

Tables

Table 1. Military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava), 6 January–6 February 2026
Table 2. Notes on the peace process in Turkey
Table 3. Distribution of the dataset by channel and programme format
Table 4. Comparison of channels across selected discourse dimensions
Table 5. Number of days with high-intensity discourse by channel
Table 6. Discourse anomalies around the 20 January flag-lowering incident
Table 7. Relationship between chronological quantitative patterns and qualitative analysis
Table 8. Channel-based topic clusters
Table 9. Concentration in selected discourse dimensions
Table 10. Naming and othering
Table 11. Differences between news bulletins and discussion programmes
Table 12. Sentences concerning the Kurdish issue before and after 20 January
Table 13. Periodic discourse profile of sentences concerning the Kurdish issue
Table 14. Difference in the rate of problematic sentences concerning Kurdish issues after the 30 January agreement
Table 15. Use of "Rojava" and "North and East Syria" by channel
Table 16. Channels' use of sources and "speaking space"
Table 17. News framing relating to the "hair-braiding" protests
Table 18. Distribution of broadcast segments on the "flag-lowering" incident by channel and programme type (20–23 January 2026)
Table 19. News framing relating to the "flag-lowering" incident
Table 20. Conditions for Rights-Based Peace Journalism in Turkey

Executive Summary

This report examines how military and political developments in "Syria" were covered on television in Turkey between 6 January and 6 February 2026, drawing on the rights-based peace journalism perspective set out in the Peace Journalism Handbook (1).
It analyses news bulletins and discussion programmes on six channels — CNN Türk, atv, İlke TV, Sözcü TV, Halk TV and NOW TV — through the key turning points of the period, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis is based on a dataset of 225,460 sentences drawn from 303 news bulletins and discussion programmes.

Key turning points:

- The attacks in Aleppo on 6 January
- The ceasefire agreement of 18 January
- The "flag-lowering" incident on 20 January
- The hair-braiding (kezî) protests on 21 January
- The protest held in Istanbul on 24 January against attacks by forces affiliated with Syria's transitional government on North and East Syria (Rojava)
- The agreement reached between the Damascus administration and the SDF on 30 January

The period analysed also coincided with the renewed peace talks aimed at resolving the Kurdish issue in Turkey. This makes it particularly significant for examining the structural characteristics and constraints of Turkey's television media, as well as the ways different broadcasters approach the Kurdish issue.

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(1) Alankuş, Sevda (2016). *Peace Journalism Handbook*. Istanbul: IPS Communication Foundation Publications.

Findings

Military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava) were framed on television predominantly through the language of security and war.

- Security and war discourse intensified when the Kurdish issue came into focus.
- After the 18 January ceasefire agreement between Syrian Transitional President Ahmed al-Sharaa and SDF Commander-in-Chief Mazloum Abdi, war-oriented language briefly receded and negotiation-oriented language increased. This shift lasted only two days.
- With the 20 January incident reported in the media as the "flag-lowering" incident, broadcasters returned to polarising and othering discourse, and hate speech increased. The episode illustrates how easily the language of negotiation can be abandoned at the first rupture when it is treated not as an editorial commitment but as a temporary, reactive response to external events.
- Protests often fell outside established conventions of newsworthiness. Most channels ignored both the hair-braiding (kezî) protests and the marches in Istanbul against attacks by forces affiliated with Syria's transitional government on North and East Syria (Rojava).
- CNN Türk and atv reproduced official discourse through a polarising approach throughout the period. CNN Türk did so systematically and directly, while atv adopted a more implicit approach framed around "inevitability" and "necessity". CNN Türk's narrative on "Syria" was built around security, central state authority, and Turkey's border security.

- NOW TV devoted less coverage to Syria than CNN Türk and atv, and relied on a narrow range of official sources. Rather than sustaining an uninterrupted military narrative, it adopted a security-oriented editorial approach that intensified at specific turning points; its visual narrative reinforced that continuity.
- Sözcü TV generally treated events as a process made up of military developments on the ground and diplomatic contacts. Although its discourse shifted over time, its core editorial frame remained centred on security, central state authority and Turkey's regional concerns.
- Halk TV showed the greatest editorial inconsistency. On the one hand, it sometimes offered a solution-oriented approach; on the other, it also produced some of the most problematic discourse. Its coverage did not reduce developments in Syria solely to military operations and security policy: at times it also included negotiations, prospects for a political solution and diplomatic developments, as well as protests and civic action. Yet the tension between its textual narrative and audiovisual dramatisation produced a shifting and contradictory discourse map.
- İlke TV came closest to a rights-based peace journalism profile. In its coverage of the "Syria" agenda, it centred Kurdish identity and adopted a rights-based, negotiation-focused approach. During ceasefires and agreements, it brought issues such as linguistic and cultural rights, citizenship, local security, political representation and constitutional guarantees into the discussion alongside military developments. The relationship between İlke TV's editorial line and its stated commitment to a rights-based approach is particularly significant for the practice of rights-based peace journalism.

Overall,

- The period from 6 January to 6 February shows that most broadcasters did not have an editorial approach committed to adopting and sustaining the language of negotiation and peace. Brief moments of negotiation-centred reporting or peace discourse remained reactive and instrumental responses to external events. A genuinely internalised peace discourse that can be sustained not only during agreements but also in moments of crisis becomes possible only when the core principles of rights-based journalism are consciously adopted as editorial policy.

This study is intended as a guide for editors and reporters on the practice of peace journalism.

1. Introduction

This report examines, from the perspective of rights-based peace journalism, how television channels in Turkey framed military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava) between 6 January and 6 February 2026. The period begins with the attacks in Aleppo on 6 January (2) and covers an intense sequence of developments: the clashes in eastern Aleppo on 13 January (3); tensions on 17 January between the SDF and groups east of the Euphrates (4); the ceasefire agreement of 18 January (5); the "flag-lowering" incident on 20 January (6); the hair-braiding (kezî) protests on 21 January (7); the 24 January protest in Istanbul against attacks on North and East Syria (Rojava) by forces affiliated with Syria's transitional government (8); and the 30 January agreement between the Damascus administration and the SDF.

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(2) bianet. "News tagged with the 6 January Aleppo attacks." Retrieved 25 June 2026.

(3) bianet (16 January 2026). "International Coalition forces deploy to eastern Aleppo."

(4) bianet. "Syrian army begins entering Dayr Hafir."

(5) bianet (18 January 2026). "SDF and Damascus agree on ceasefire and integration."

(6) bianet (23 January 2026). "What happened in Nusaybin on 20 January?"

(7) bianet (n.d.). "News tagged with the hair-braiding protest." Retrieved 25 June 2026.

(8) bianet (24 January 2026). "Police intervene in the Rojava protest in Istanbul."

The period analysed:

- coincided with the renewed peace process aimed at resolving the Kurdish issue in Turkey (9);
- offers an opportunity to examine the structural characteristics and constraints of Turkey's media environment and how news is selected, framed and communicated; and
- is particularly important for understanding how different television channels approach the Kurdish issue conceptually and discursively.

The attacks that began in Aleppo on 6 January and the "crisis" moments that followed also highlight a distinction central to peace journalism: the difference between a channel resorting to sudden, reactive discourse and making a deliberate editorial choice about how to frame events.

In the Peace Journalism Handbook, Sevda Alankuş defines rights-based peace journalism as an other-centred form of rights-based journalism grounded in feminist epistemology and ethics (10). For the journalist, the comfort of saying "I reported the story accurately and fairly" is not enough. Alankuş describes peace journalism as a practice produced with a sustained sense of responsibility towards those left outside the scope of representation — a form of ongoing unease. Choosing the language and practice of peace journalism is also a political choice. Reading the findings of this report through this framework helps clarify the difference between "good journalism" and "peace journalism". What distinguishes peace journalism is not simply technical improvement, but the answer it gives to the question of whose voice reaches the screen and whose voice is structurally excluded.

(9) bianet. "What happened in the peace process in 2025?"

(10) Alankuş, Sevda (2016). Peace Journalism Handbook. Istanbul: IPS Communication Foundation Publications.

Working from this framework, the report traces the practices of peace journalism across news bulletins and discussion programmes on six television channels — CNN Türk, Halk TV, NOW TV, Sözcü TV, atv and İlke TV — through a multi-layered combination of quantitative and qualitative methods applied to their coverage of North and East Syria (Rojava).

The analysis is based on a dataset compiled by Summarify (11) from the relevant channels during the period under review. In the first stage, Summarify conducted keyword and discourse-intensity analysis, sentiment analysis, detection of offensive language and hate speech, topic modelling and RAG-assisted contextual analysis. In the second stage, these analyses and the dataset's interactive interface were used to conduct a discourse analysis from a rights-based peace journalism perspective.

Turkey provides an important case for considering the extent to which peace journalism is possible. The obstacles to peace journalism in Turkey go well beyond the structural problems of "mainstream" journalism: the media's historical inability to operate independently of economic, political and military power; the transformation of media ownership, accelerating from the mid-2000s onwards, that has linked ownership structures directly to political power; and a public sphere fragmented by ethnic, cultural, and political polarisation. Judicial pressure further deepens this picture — including the instrumentalisation of anti-terror and disinformation legislation against journalists, severe sanctions imposed by RTÜK, and the economic weakening of independent media (12). Turkey's fall to the 163rd place out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index can be read as a concrete indicator of these structural constraints (13).

(11) Summarify is an R&D company specialising in Turkish natural-language processing, established with support from TÜBİTAK BİGG.

(12) International Press Institute (IPI). (2025). Systemic Siege of Independent Journalism in Turkey

(13) Reporters Without Borders (RSF). (2026). World Press Freedom Index: Turkey.

Digitalisation and the news-production and news-consumption mechanisms that have developed with it add another layer to this picture. Algorithmic changes that significantly affect audience access for media described as independent or alternative, declining international funding and the chilling effect created by the draft "foreign influence agent" legislation continue to constrain journalistic practice through both external pressure and self-censorship.

1.1. Why television?

Despite the rise of digital media, television retains a powerful position in Turkey in setting the political agenda and shaping how periods of crisis are understood (14). Its influence becomes even more pronounced during crises and in conflict reporting.

At the same time, the impact of television news is no longer limited to the moment of broadcast, live ratings or television audiences. Clips from main news bulletins and discussion programmes circulate on YouTube, social media and messaging apps; headlines, images and concepts are repeated across platforms, creating a wider discursive field. Analysing television journalism therefore also means examining the primary sites of production that feed digital circulation networks.

Television is also a medium in which text, image and sound produce meaning together. The relationship — whether one of alignment or contradiction — between spoken narration, the words and expressions chosen and what the images show can produce very different maps of meaning.

(14) According to RTÜK's 2024 Mediametre Media Use Habits Survey, 91.9% of respondents described television as a reliable source for news, placing it ahead of other news media.

A presenter's tone of voice, the emphasis of a voice-over, on-screen captions, maps, the sequencing of images and the repetition of the same footage all shape how a story is perceived. A script that appears inclusive can take on a much harsher meaning when paired with dramatic delivery, rapid editing and repeated conflict footage. Similarly, when a political development is narrated in a tabloid-like voice-over, its structural and rights-based dimensions can be pushed into the background.

In coverage of Syria, images of tanks, drones, armed actors, explosions, tunnels and military maps do more than provide information from the field. They can become part of a narrative that presents conflict as inevitable and military solutions as natural. Conversely, showing civilian life, displacement and problems of access to health care and water does not automatically make coverage rights-based. If civilians are presented only as suffering bodies and passive victims to be watched, without space for their voices and demands, visual visibility does not make them rights-holders.

Television's audiovisual form and technical production processes also shape journalistic practice in distinct ways. The pressure of live broadcasting, competition around breaking news and the search for dramatic footage can lead to unverified information entering circulation or official statements being adopted too quickly. The prospect of sanctions, job loss or an institutional backlash can also influence which issues presenters, reporters and guests raise, what questions they ask and which expressions they avoid. On television, therefore, self-censorship may become visible not only through the omission of a story, but also through softened questions, footage left unused, actors left unnamed and a turn towards official statements.

Examining journalism in an audiovisual environment takes the assessment of peace journalism beyond the words used. It also raises questions about which images make moments of crisis and conflict visible and from what emotional position viewers are addressed. The repeated use of violent imagery can make military solutions appear inevitable; restricting images of civilians to moments of suffering and victimhood can turn people into passive victims to be watched rather than speaking rights-holders. Audiovisual analysis makes visible these framing decisions — and the points of alignment or contradiction between text and image — that cannot be seen in the script alone.

Television's audiovisual form does not only constrain peace journalism; it also creates possibilities. Giving direct space to civilian testimony, showing how conflict affects everyday life, allowing different communities to appear in their own words, and explaining historical context through maps, archive material and field footage can help audiences understand conflict beyond military developments. The aim is not to strip news of emotion altogether. The central question is whether image and sound are being used to amplify fear, anger and revenge, or to make the consequences and structural causes of violence, as well as possibilities for resolution, more understandable. Peace journalism on television therefore requires ethical and editorial responsibility across the entire production chain, not only in the reporter's script.

1.2. Why news bulletins and discussion programmes?

Main news bulletins and discussion programmes constitute two complementary but distinct discursive spaces, shaped by different production conditions and forms of narration. Main news bulletins show how events are selected and first named within the daily news flow. Which development is treated as newsworthy, whose statement is sought, which image is selected and what headline is used all reveal the bulletin's editorial frame. The presenter, voice-over, live reporter links, field footage and on-screen text work together to construct that frame.

Discussion programmes offer longer airtime and the possibility of bringing together different voices and perspectives, giving them the potential to explore events in greater depth. The format also makes visible which forms of expertise are prioritised and who is left out. The presenter or moderator is not merely someone who gives people the floor: through questions, guest selection and interventions in the flow of the programme, they also have the power to define the frame of the debate. A long discussion programme with many guests is not necessarily pluralistic. The same security frame can be reproduced in greater detail through retired military officers and diplomats, selected academics and journalists, as well as visual devices such as maps. The presence of opposing views does not necessarily mean those views are integrated equally into the narrative.

The same channel can display markedly different discursive patterns and peace-journalism practices across these two formats. An event presented briefly and dramatically in the main bulletin may be explored in depth in a discussion programme; conversely, a development reported in measured terms in the bulletin may harden into a polarising frame through commentary in a studio discussion.

1.3. Why these six channels?

The six channels analysed — CNN Türk, Halk TV, NOW TV, Sözcü TV, atv and İlke TV — represent different patterns of ownership and editorial positioning within Turkey's national media landscape (15).

According to Reporters Without Borders' 2026 World Press Freedom Index, around 90% of national media outlets in Turkey operate under direct or indirect government control (16). This structural reality provides a starting point for considering the extent to which differences in discourse stem from ownership relations and the extent to which they reflect individual editorial choices.

CNN Türk, generally considered close to the government, broadcasts under a Warner Bros. Discovery EMEA licence within Demirören Holding. The Reuters Institute's 2024 report records that CNN Türk allocated disproportionately more airtime to the government during the 2023 election period (17).

atv is part of the Kalyon/Turkuvaz Media Group. Kalyon Holding's involvement in major public tenders, including Istanbul Airport, can be seen as a concrete example of the relationship between media ownership and political power.

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(15) For data on media ownership in Turkey, see the Media Ownership Monitor (MOM), updated in 2021; bianet Media Monitoring reports; Sinem Aydınlı (3 January 2026), "Turkey's unchanged media ownership structure and deepening political control", Independent Communication Network; and Sinem Aydınlı (January 2026), "Concentrated ownership, fragile trust and audience disengagement: Key actors assess the future of media in Turkey", bianet and Mediacentar Sarajevo.

(16) Reporters Without Borders (RSF). (2026). *World Press Freedom Index: Turkey*.

(17) Yanatma, S. (2024). "Turkey." In N. Newman, R. Fletcher, R. Robertson, E. T. Arguedas & R. K. Nielsen (eds.), Digital News Report 2024, pp. 112–113. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

NOW TV's international ownership structure under Walt Disney Company EMEA may place it in a relatively more resilient position in the face of government pressure.

Halk TV, which was founded by the CHP in 2005 and is commonly located within the "opposition" media bloc, continues to describe its line as secular and opposition-oriented despite a change in ownership in 2011.
Sözcü TV, operating under Switzerland-based BEME Media A.G., is generally associated with a secular-Kemalist opposition discourse.

İlke TV presents the profile closest to rights-based peace journalism. In its coverage of the "Syria" agenda, it centres Kurdish identity and adopts a rights-based, negotiation-focused approach.

1.4. Military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava)

Table 1. Military and political developments in North and East Syria (Rojava), 6 January–6 February 2026

Date	Event	Description
6 January 2026	Attacks begin in Aleppo	Forces affiliated with the Syrian transitional government had besieged the predominantly Kurdish Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh neighbourhoods of Aleppo since 27 December 2025. Intense clashes began in the area on 6 January.
9 January 2026	Ahmed al-Sharaa-Barzani phone call (18)	Syrian Transitional President Ahmed al-Sharaa called Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) President Masoud Barzani.
11 January 2026	Attack on Kurdish neighbourhoods (19)	The Kurdish neighbourhoods in northern Aleppo came under intense attack for six days.
13 January 2026	Military build-up and displacement in eastern Aleppo countryside	Forces affiliated with the Syrian transitional government declared the Deyr Hafir-Maskana line, controlled by the SDF, a "closed military zone" on 13 January and deployed forces to the area. Civilians began fleeing.
17 January 2026	Tensions between the SDF and groups east of the Euphrates	SDF General Commander Mazloum Abdi said, "We will reposition our forces in the conflict zones east of the Euphrates." Forces affiliated with the Syrian transitional government deployed to Dayr Hafir as the SDF began withdrawing.
18 January 2026	Ceasefire and integration (20)	A 14-point "ceasefire and integration" agreement was signed between Syrian Transitional President Ahmed al-Sharaa and SDF General Commander Mazloum Abdi.
19 January 2026	Mazloum Abdi-al-Sharaa meeting	Mazloum Abdi met al-Sharaa in Damascus to discuss the details and implementation of the agreement.

Tarih	Olay	Açıklama
20 January 2026	"Flag-lowering" incident	During the "Rojava" protests along the Nusaybin-Qamişlo border, protesters on the Syrian side lowered a Turkey flag at the former customs area. Footage of a citizen who had been detained and subjected to torture at a different location on the Turkey side of the border was circulated on social media with the claim that he was "the person who lowered the flag."
21 January 2026	"Hair-braiding" (kezî) protests	During the continuing attacks in North and East Syria (Rojava), protests began after a man affiliated with the transitional government forces displayed on video a braid he said belonged to a YPJ woman he had killed.
24 January 2026	Protest in Istanbul	A protest was held in Istanbul against attacks on North and East Syria (Rojava) by forces affiliated with the Syrian transitional government.
26 January 2026	Clashes in the Kobanî and Hasakah countryside	On Sunday night (25 January), forces affiliated with the transitional government and armed groups acting alongside them targeted the villages of Harab al-Ashq and Jalabiya in the Kobanî countryside with heavy weapons.
30 January 2026	Agreement between the Damascus administration and the SDF	The Damascus administration and the SDF reached new arrangements for implementing the 18 January agreement, based on a deal reached on 29 January and announced publicly in outline on 30 January.

(18) bianet. (9 January 2026). Al-Sharaa calls Barzani: "We guarantee all rights of Kurds."
(19) bianet. (12 January 2026). SOHR: Serious rights violations in Aleppo's Kurdish neighbourhoods.
(20) bianet. (18 January 2026). "Ceasefire and integration" agreement between the SDF and Damascus.

Table 2. Notes on the peace process in Turkey

On 1 October 2024, Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chair Devlet Bahçeli walked over to the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) benches at the opening of the new legislative year of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and shook hands with Co-Chair Tuncer Bakırhan and DEM Party MPs. The gesture was interpreted as the first step towards a new resolution process. On 12 October, President and Justice and Development Party (AKP) Chair Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described it as a "positive and meaningful" development. In the first months of 2025, the DEM Party İmralı Delegation held meetings with Abdullah Öcalan and met with political parties. On 27 February, Öcalan's "Call for Peace and a Democratic Society" was announced. Öcalan said the PKK should dissolve itself and lay down arms, while stressing that this required recognition of the democratic-political and legal dimensions of the process. The PKK subsequently declared a ceasefire and said it would comply with the call. On 11 July, at a disarmament ceremony in Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, a group of PKK members, including Bese Hozat, burned their weapons. Erdoğan then announced that a parliamentary commission would be established. On 5 August, the "National Solidarity, Fraternity and Democracy Commission" was formed; because the İYİ Party did not appoint members, the commission began work with 48 members. Between August and December, the commission heard 134 people and organisations, including ministries, public institutions, bar associations, rights organisations, trade unions, academics and representatives of different sections of society. On 24 November, three commission members from the AKP, MHP and DEM Party met Abdullah Öcalan in İmralı. The commission completed its hearings on 4 December and began drafting its final report. The report was adopted on 18 February 2026. The process then moved to the legislative stage. Under the Peace and Democratic Society Process, the "Bill on Strengthening National Solidarity and Social Integration", commonly referred to as the "framework law", was submitted to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 5 August, enacted on 10 August and published in the Official Gazette on 18 August. The National Solidarity and Integration Coordination Board established under the law held its first meeting on 24 August under the chairmanship of Vice President Cevdet Yılmaz. The board established four subcommissions covering judicial and legal affairs; monitoring and identification; social cohesion and integration; and disarmament and strategic coordination.

2. Rights-based peace journalism

The historical background to the debate on peace journalism goes back to Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge's 1965 study of news values. Their work questioned the criteria through which media give prominence to conflict, violence, negativity, and elite actors. Galtung's later distinction between negative and positive peace provided the conceptual basis for thinking about how peace itself is defined. Negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence and armed conflict, while positive peace also requires the elimination of structural forms of violence such as poverty, discrimination, inequality, and rights violations (21).

Lynch and McGoldrick (22) later applied these concepts to journalistic practice. They defined peace journalism as the set of choices editors and reporters make about which events to cover, which sources to consult and how to frame them. The key point is that journalism is a matter of choice, and that creating space for conflict resolution is part of journalistic practice. This approach does not reduce conflict to a struggle between two sides, military advances or a winner–loser binary. It gives priority to the historical and structural causes of conflict, different social actors and possibilities for non-violent resolution.

(21) Galtung, J. (1976). "Three Approaches to Peace." In Peace, War and Defence: Essays in Peace Research, Vol. II. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlers.

(22) Lynch, J. & McGoldrick, A. (2005). Peace Journalism. Stroud: Hawthorn Press.

Sevda Alankuş brings peace journalism together with feminist epistemology and rights-based journalism in proposing the conceptual framework of "rights-based peace journalism". This approach requires tensions and conflicts to be addressed from a rights-based perspective, non-violent avenues for resolution to be made visible, and journalists to assume ethical responsibility for the consequences of news production. In this sense, peace journalism is not defined as a technical method of news writing or simply as "good journalism". Particularly in societies marked by strong political and social polarisation, such as Turkey, it proposes a dynamic journalistic practice that involves taking a political and ethical position in favour of peace.

Building on Galtung's concept of positive peace, rights-based peace journalism does not understand peace merely as the absence of war or direct violence. Peace is treated as a condition of "just peace" in which structural and cultural violence is reduced, the rights of different identities are guaranteed and social justice is secured. Peace journalism therefore extends beyond armed conflict to include inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, language, religion, sect, and class.

Feminist epistemology challenges the conventional journalistic assumption that knowledge can be produced from a neutral, placeless and unlocated position. The institution a journalist works for, the sources they can access, the language they use and the political environment in which they operate all shape news production. Rendering these influences invisible can result in the knowledge of dominant sources being treated as neutral and self-evidently true, while the accounts of women, civilians and marginalized communities are seen as subjective or in need of additional verification.

The feminist epistemological critique also challenges the masculine approach normalised within conventional codes of journalistic ethics and the claim to "objectivity". It makes visible the relationship between othering and gender. Women and marginalized communities may be visible in the news only as victims, missing people, the injured or groups spoken about; yet visibility of this kind does not make them rights-holders. Being a rights-holder requires being able to speak through one's own experience, knowledge and political demands. A journalist's responsibility therefore goes beyond the conventional professional reassurance of having "reported the story accurately and fairly". It includes following the consequences of reporting within unequal power relations, sustaining responsibility towards excluded parties and refusing to treat a subject as a single, isolated news moment.

Within this framework, rights-based peace journalism:

- **Involves a political and ethical choice in favour of peace.** This does not mean endorsing every action of one party to a conflict. It means keeping a critical distance from narratives that present violence as inevitable or turn particular communities into legitimate targets.
- **Centres positive peace.** It prioritises keeping structural forms of violence — including poverty, discrimination, inequality, and rights violations — continuously visible on the news agenda.
- **Is grounded in feminist epistemology and ethics.** It asks who produces knowledge, under what conditions and within which relations of power. It also questions the masculine approach normalised in conventional journalistic ethics.
- **Proposes an "other-centred" journalistic practice.** It gives priority to ensuring that marginalized communities appear in the news not merely as people spoken about, but as rights-holders able to speak through their own knowledge and demands.

- **Emphasises the journalist's responsibility.** The comfort of saying "I reported the story accurately and fairly" is not enough. Journalists should act with a continuing sense of responsibility towards those excluded from dominant discourse — with a form of ongoing unease about whether choices of language, images, headlines and sources reproduce violence, intensify polarisation, or narrow the possibilities for non-violent resolution.

War journalism, positioned at the opposite end of this spectrum, tends to construct conflict through binaries of winner and loser, advance and retreat, victory and defeat. It focuses on the visible consequences of violence and on military developments, while pushing historical causes, structural inequalities and different social actors into the background. It treats official and military sources as privileged sites of knowledge and reinforces the divide between "us" and "them". Peace, in turn, may be represented less as a process of negotiation, rights and social reconciliation than as an outcome produced by one side's defeat, disarmament or subordination to central authority.

This theoretical framework underpins the assessment of television broadcasts in this report. Editorial choice on television is not expressed only through the words used in a script. The tone of the presenter and voice-over, the selection and repetition of footage, on-screen captions and lower-thirds, maps, editing, programme format and the speaking space afforded to sources all work together to produce meaning. A script that appears measured can acquire a harsher frame through dramatic narration, repeated conflict footage or on-screen captions such as "treacherous attack", "heavy blow to the organisation" and "elimination".

The quantitative and qualitative findings in this report therefore do more than show which words channels use and how often. They also examine who uses those words, whether the broadcaster maintains distance from the speech it relays, which actors are recognised as legitimate sources of knowledge, and whether the language of peace can be sustained in moments of crisis. Rights-based peace journalism is thus treated not simply as conciliatory language used when conflict is absent, but as an editorial continuity capable of preserving rights-holders, critical distance and the possibility of non-violent resolution even when tensions rise.

3. Method and dataset

The study covers main news bulletins and discussion programmes broadcast on CNN Türk, atv, NOW TV, Halk TV, Sözcü TV and İlke TV between 6 January and 6 February 2026. The dataset consists of 225,460 sentences from 303 broadcasts collected from the channels' official YouTube accounts and transcribed using automatic captions. The research process included the creation of a news-text dataset, labelling, thematic modelling, keyword analysis, discourse analysis from a rights-based peace journalism perspective, and in-depth interviews with reporters and news editors from television channels.

3.1. Dataset

The channels are not represented equally in the research dataset (Table 3). Halk TV and İlke TV together account for more than half of all sentences in the dataset, while NOW TV and atv together make up around 10%. These shares provide an indication of how prominently the Syria agenda featured on each channel during the period examined.

Table 3. Distribution of the dataset by channel and programme format

Channel	Programme types	Sentences	Broadcasts	Avg. sentences / broadcast	Share of dataset (%)
Halk TV	Main News, Sansürsüz, Gökmen Karadağ ile Açıkça	58.394	51	1.145	25.9%
İlke TV	Main News, Konuşma Zamanı, Medya Zamanı	57.756	84	688	25.6%
CNN Türk	Main News, Tarafsız Bölge	46.605	42	1.110	20.7%
Sözcü TV	Main News, Karşı Karşıya, Türkiye'nin Sözü	40.065	58	691	17.8%
NOW TV	Main News, Filtresiz, 30 Dakika	12.412	37	336	5.5%
atv	Main News, Weekend Main News	10.228	31	330	4.5%
Total		**225.460**	**303**	**744**	**100.0%**

The average number of sentences per broadcast also provides an indication of format: Halk TV and CNN Türk tend to have longer programmes, while NOW TV and atv have shorter ones. This distinction supports the qualitative reading that discussion programmes offer greater potential to develop context, whereas official sources and centralised narratives can more easily dominate shorter main-news formats.

3.2. Summarify quantitative data analysis *(Appendix 1)*

Each sentence in the dataset was labelled across six different discourse dimensions using a large language model (LLM). The quantitative analysis was not treated as an independent assessment capable of definitively classifying problematic statements; it was used as a screening tool to guide the qualitative analysis. Automated labels were therefore not treated as research findings in their own right. During the qualitative analysis, each statement was reassessed in terms of who made it, whether it was presented in the channel's own voice or attributed to a source, and the context in which it appeared within the broadcast.

3.3. Discourse analysis of rights-based peace journalism

The qualitative discourse analysis focused on key turning points including the 6 January attacks in Aleppo, the 18 January ceasefire, the 20 January flag incident, the 21 January hair-braiding protests, the 24 January protest in Istanbul, the 26 January clashes in the rural areas of Kobanî and Hasakah, and the 30 January agreement. Broadcasts were compared in terms of terminology, source diversity, the speaking space afforded to rights-holders, contextualisation of the conflict, possibilities for non-violent resolution, gender, the use of images and sound, and editorial responses in moments of crisis. Differences between the production and presentation conditions of main news bulletins and discussion programmes were also taken into account.

3.4. Semi-structured interviews

As another stage of the research, anonymous semi-structured interviews were conducted with reporters and news editors working at a range of television channels, including broadcasters not covered by the quantitative and discourse analyses.

The interviews explored journalists' professional experience and understanding of journalism; how newsworthiness is determined; the editorial stages a story passes through before reaching the screen; choices concerning language, sources, images and guests; editorial priorities; differences between main news bulletins and discussion programmes; production processes; oversight mechanisms; and working conditions.

The interviews were not used as a source for validating the discourse analysis of channel output. Rather, they were used to understand the structural, institutional and professional conditions that constrain rights-based peace journalism in Turkey and those that make it possible. The findings are discussed thematically in the section on the conditions for rights-based peace journalism in Turkey.

4. What the quantitative data tell us

This section uses the study's quantitative data to present an overall picture of the broadcasts. The channel-based quantitative assessment examines selected discourse dimensions and changes over time. The quantitative assessment of topics concerning the Kurdish issue looks at change through measures including naming, polarisation, othering, negative sentiment and hate speech.

How should this section be read?

The quantitative data presented here are not a substitute for the channel analyses. Rather, the distributions provide a starting point for identifying the data patterns associated with the rights-based peace journalism discourse analysis of naming, source hierarchies, turning points and programme formats.

Selected quantitative findings

- **Change over time:** Security, negotiation and polarising language shift in response to key turning points.

- **Differences between channels:** The same event can activate different discourse dimensions on different channels.

KEY LIMITATION: Rates of "negative sentiment" and "sentences labelled in at least one dimension" do not directly indicate an ethical breach or a failure of peace journalism. A sentence criticising violence, for example, may also receive a negative-sentiment label.

METHOD NOTE: The labels in the data report were generated at sentence level using a large language model. All quantitative findings should therefore be interpreted together with the qualitative analysis.

4.1. Quantitative assessments by channel

4.1.1. Comparison of channels across selected discourse dimensions

Rates of negative sentiment, polarising language and sentences labelled in at least one dimension reveal some differences between the channels, but they cannot on their own explain editorial approaches.

- **Notable rates:** NOW TV ranks high for negative sentiment and polarising language, while Halk TV also records a comparatively high polarising-language rate.
- **Similar rates:** The fact that İlke TV, CNN Türk and Sözcü TV have similar overall proportions of labelled sentences raises the possibility that comparable quantitative levels may emerge from very different editorial practices.
- **Differences hidden by aggregate rates:** Source selection, naming, the position of the speaker and the place of rights-holders in the story are not visible in aggregate figures.

LIMITATION: Table 4 does not categorise channels as either "adopting peace journalism" or "opposing peace journalism". Negative-sentiment rates may be shaped by the nature of the conflict, the selected news segments, and the limited ability of automated labelling to read context.

Table 4. Comparison of channels across selected discourses

Channel	Negative sentiment	Polarising language	Sentences flagged on at least one dimension
CNN Türk	28.9%	11.6%	33.3%
Halk TV	38.3%	22.5%	43.2%
NOW TV	55.1%	24.8%	58.7%
Sözcü TV	28.7%	12.9%	32.2%
atv	44.4%	8.6%	45.9%
İlke TV	29.7%	14.4%	32.3%

4.1.2. Number of high-intensity days by channel

The number of peak days shows how many days a channel deviated markedly from its own usual discourse levels during the period under review. It measures fluctuation within each channel rather than comparing absolute rates across channels.

- **NOW TV:** Its larger number of high-intensity days may be related to its shorter broadcast format, in which changes in the agenda and the selection of news segments can produce faster day-to-day shifts in rates.
- **İlke TV:** Its lower number of high-intensity days may indicate greater stability in its discourse over the period.

Table 5. Number of days with high-intensity discourse by channel

Channel	Number of peak days
NOW TV	10
Halk TV	8
CNN Türk	6
Sözcü TV	6
atv	5
İlke TV	4

4.1.3. Concentration of discourse around coverage of the 20 January "flag-lowering" incident

The event reported in the media as the "flag-lowering" incident on 20 January created a shared discursive rupture across most channels, although the dimension in which discourse intensified varied from one broadcaster to another.

- **atv:** Negative, offensive and polarising language intensified.
- **CNN Türk:** Polarising language became more prominent.
- **Halk TV:** Othering increased.
- **Sözcü TV:** Offensive and polarising language became more pronounced in the days following a rise in hate speech.

SAMPLE NOTE: Daily rates are based on sentence sets of different sizes. Anomalies on NOW TV and atv are calculated from days with roughly 200–300 sentences, while some anomalies on Sözcü TV are based on days with more than 1,000 sentences.

Table 6. Discourse anomalies around the 20 January flag-lowering incident

Channel	Date	Anomaly axis	Daily rate	N
CNN Türk	21 January	Polarising language	25.2%	648
Halk TV	20 January	Hate speech / othering	2.7% / 5.5%	595
Halk TV	21 January	Othering	6.4%	624
NOW TV	21 January	Hate speech	2.4%	207
Sözcü TV	20 January	Hate speech	2.4%	1.209
Sözcü TV	21 January	Hate speech	2.7%	1.557
Sözcü TV	22 January	Offensive language / polarisation	16.9% / 24.4%	266
atv	20 January	Negative sentiment / offensive language / polarisation	56.3% / 16.8% / 21.3%	268
İlke TV	20-22 January	No anomaly in the peak-day table	-	-

4.1.4. Qualitative counterparts of chronological quantitative patterns

Chronological data show that the language of peace and security are not fixed characteristics of a channel; they change alongside military and diplomatic developments on the ground.

- **6–13 January:** Security, operations and organisation-related language increased with the attacks in Aleppo.
- **18–19 January:** Political and negotiation-related vocabulary became more visible following the ceasefire.

- **20–22 January:** Polarising and othering dimensions intensified again around the "flag-lowering" incident.
- **21–24 January:** There was a brief increase in the conflict/violence category. The hair-braiding action and related protests received only limited visibility in channel agendas.
- **After 30 January:** Overall discourse intensity partially declined following the agreement, although the security frame did not disappear altogether.

KEY FINDING: In many broadcasts, the language of peace journalism appears not as a lasting editorial principle but as a temporary discursive space opened by the diplomatic agenda. The quantitative data show when that space expands and contracts.

Table 7. Relationship between chronological quantitative patterns and qualitative analysis

The table summarises changes across keyword and period comparisons alongside the report's key turning points.

Period	Quantitative pattern	Relationship to qualitative analysis
6-13 January	Rise in security/operation and terror/organisation language	Halep çatışmalarının askerî hareketlilik, kontrol ve tehdit üzerinden kurulması
18-19 January	Shift towards political/negotiation language	Ceasefire and contacts make diplomatic vocabulary more visible
20-22 January	Clustering of anomalies in polarisation, hate and othering	The flag incident interrupts the brief turn towards diplomatic language
21-24 January	Short-term rise in the conflict/violence cluster; differences between channels on protest days	Hair-braiding actions and protests become selectively visible
After 30 January	Partial decline in overall discourse intensity	Language shifts back towards diplomacy following the agreement, without the security frame disappearing entirely

4.1.5. Channel-based topic clusters: Within which broader agenda does Syria appear?

Channel-based topic clusters generated through BERTopic show that Syria is associated with different broader agenda clusters across the channels.

- **CNN Türk:** Defence and foreign policy
- **NOW TV:** PKK and the peace process
- **Sözcü TV:** Conflicts
- **İlke TV:** Kurdish neighbourhoods
- **Halk TV and atv:** Syria does not appear among the three largest topic clusters.

LIMITATION: This finding does not show Syria's exact share of broadcast time or of all sentences. Topics were modelled separately for each channel and the table does not include topic percentages. BERTopic therefore answers the question "Within which broader agenda frame was Syria placed?" rather than "How prominently did Syria feature on the agenda?"

Table 8. BERTopic: Within which broader agenda does Syria appear?

The BERTopic analysis shows that the Syria issue is associated with different topic clusters within each channel's broader news agenda. The table provides a comparative overview of the broader agenda areas in which Syria is positioned.

Channel	How Syria appears in BERTopic	Plain-language interpretation
CNN Türk	Defence/foreign policy, judicial processes, leadership news	Syria is situated within security and interstate politics.
Halk TV	Courts/judiciary, MHP/early election, violent incidents, ceasefire	Court/judiciary and domestic-politics clusters appear more dominant. Syria is not among the top three clusters.
NOW TV	PKK/Syria peace process (811 sentences), political debates	Syria is discussed together with resolution-process debates in Turkey.

Channel	How Syria appears in BERTopic	Plain-language interpretation
Sözcü TV	Syria/Turkey relations, diplomatic conflicts	Military developments and conflict framing come to the fore.
atv	Snow/weather, traffic, TV programme announcements, terrorism/ceasefire	Weather, traffic and programme announcements appear more dominant.
İlke TV	Syria and conflicts, peace and society, Kurdish neighbourhoods	A frame linked to local society and the Kurdish issue emerges.

READING NOTE: These findings do not indicate Syria's exact share of broadcast time or of all sentences. Topics were modelled separately for each channel and the data presented do not include topic percentages. The table therefore answers the question "Within which broader agenda frame was Syria placed?" rather than "How prominently did Syria feature on the agenda?"

4.2. Quantitative assessment of topics concerning the Kurdish issue

The selected quantitative findings show that what matters is not only how visible the Kurdish issue is in television discourse, but also how it is named and within which contexts it becomes visible.

Even where overall channel averages appear relatively low, polarisation, othering and hate speech can increase sharply in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue.

As detailed below, discourse also moves in different directions between main news bulletins and discussion programmes, before and after 20 January, and following the 30 January agreement.

4.2.1. Concentration in selected discourse dimensions in coverage of the Kurdish issue

- **atv:** In sentences concerning the Kurdish issue, polarisation rises to 57.3% and othering to 50.3%.
- **CNN Türk:** Polarisation and othering increase markedly.
- **Hate speech:** While the overall rate is around 1%, it reaches 6.8–9.6% in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue on CNN Türk, NOW TV and Halk TV.

INTERPRETATION: Low overall averages can conceal concentrations around a particular identity or subject. On atv and CNN Türk in particular, the Kurdish issue forms a distinct field of security and antagonism that is obscured by overall discourse averages.

Table 9. Concentration in selected discourse dimensions

It brings together comparable examples of polarising language, othering and hate speech, contrasting overall rates with the rates found in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue.

Channel	Dimension	Overall	Kurdish issue	Change
atv	Polarisation	8.6%	57.3%	6,7x
atv	Othering	3.5%	50.3%	14,4x
CNN Türk	Polarisation	11.6%	37.7%	3,2x
CNN Türk	Othering	4.5%	27.2%	6,0x
CNN Türk	Hate speech	1.0%	9,6%	9,6x
NOW TV	Hate speech	1.0%	9,5%	9,5x
Halk TV	Hate speech	0.9%	6,8%	7,6x

4.2.2. Naming and othering

- **CNN Türk and atv:** Targets of othering are constructed mainly through organisation names and terminology associated with "terror".
- **İlke TV:** The word "Kurds" appears frequently.
- **Key distinction:** The same quantitative label does not necessarily perform the same discursive function across channels.

INTERPRETATION: A high target count for the word "Kurds" on İlke TV does not, in itself, indicate othering. The frequency of the term may reflect more direct naming of Kurds, the reporting of statements that are being criticised, or efforts to make anti-Kurdish discourse visible. Target terms therefore need to be examined together with who is speaking and the distance the channel maintains from the words it reports.

Table 10. Naming and othering

Othering rates in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue, the most frequent target expressions and dominant naming patterns across three channels

Channel	Targeting / othering in Kurdish-issue sentences	Most frequent expressions	Dominant naming pattern
CNN Türk	22.5%	SDF (51); YPG (49); "terrorist organisation" (39)	Organisation names and security language
atv	32,2%	Kurds (373); Kurd (64); Kurds' (42)	Direct naming of the ethnic identity
İlke TV	32,6%	"terrorist organisation" (14); PKK/YPG (12); "terrorists" (10)	Security and threat language

4.2.3. Differences between main news bulletins and discussion programmes in coverage of the Kurdish issue

- **Halk TV and NOW TV:** The proportion of labelled sentences concerning the Kurdish issue is markedly higher in main news bulletins than in discussion programmes.
- **İlke TV:** Discussion programmes devote more space to the Kurdish issue.
- **atv:** No comparison between formats can be made because a discussion-programme value is not reported.

INTERPRETATION: The findings support the qualitative assessment that short, centralised main-news narratives can produce more definitive forms of naming, while discussion programmes may offer more space for context and different viewpoints. Visibility and the quality of discourse are not the same measure.

Table 11. Differences between news bulletins and discussion programmes

Channel	Measure	Main news	Discussion	Difference
Halk TV	Problematic rate in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue	56,2%	39,0%	Main news +17.2
NOW TV	Problematic rate in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue	64,2%	45,2%	Main news +19.0
atv	Polarisation in sentences concerning the Kurdish issue	57,3%	Not reported	Main-news value is very high
İlke TV	Share of Kurdish-issue sentences within broadcasts	8,4%	10,5%	Discussion +2.1

4.2.4. Sentences concerning the Kurdish issue before and after the 20 January "flag-lowering" incident

- **Halk TV:** The only channel on which all three discourse dimensions increase together.
- **CNN Türk and NOW TV:** Polarisation increases while othering declines.
- **Sözcü TV and İlke TV:** All three dimensions decline.
- **atv:** Polarisation and othering decline while negative sentiment rises.

INTERPRETATION: The "flag-lowering" incident does not affect all channels in the same direction. The national-security frame is constructed through different discourse dimensions on different channels, a divergence that cannot be captured by a single aggregate rate.

Table 12. Sentences concerning the Kurdish issue before and after 20 January

Percentage change in polarisation, othering and negative sentiment before and after the "flag-lowering" incident

Channel	Polarisation	Othering	Negative sentiment
Halk TV	+10,0	+7,2	+11,1
CNN Türk	+4,0	−0,1	−6,5
NOW TV	+2,7	−5,1	+3,1
Sözcü TV	−6,7	−3,9	−5,3
atv	−7,8	−16,6	+9,2
İlke TV	−4,8	−4,1	−3,9

4.2.5. Periodic discourse profile of sentences concerning the Kurdish issue

- **20–30 January:** The share of sentences concerning the Kurdish issue rises to 6.6% of the dataset, while hate speech rises to 7.6%.
- **After 30 January:** The overall problematic rate falls from 48.7% to 31.8%; polarisation, othering and hate speech also decline.
- **Relationship to the agenda:** The period of highest intensity coincides with the "flag-lowering" incident, the hair-braiding actions and the protests appearing within the same news cycle.

INTERPRETATION: The decline following the agreement suggests that the diplomatic development softened the language, but this change was not distributed evenly across channels. It therefore needs to be assessed alongside the qualitative analysis.

Table 13. Periodic discourse profile of sentences concerning the Kurdish issue

Period	N	Share of dataset	Problematic	Polarisation	Othering	Hate speech
6-20 January	4.853	5,0%	46,9%	30,9%	20,0%	6,4%
20-30 January	4.545	6,6%	48,7%	31,6%	18,4%	7,6%
After 30 January	1.993	3,4%	31,8%	21,5%	14,6%	4,3%

4.2.6. Discourse intensity in the problematic-sentence rate after the 30 January agreement

- **İlke TV:** The problematic-sentence rate falls by 23.4 percentage points.
- **Halk TV:** The rate falls by 19.1 percentage points.
- **CNN Türk:** With a change of just 1.9 percentage points, the rate remains almost unchanged.

INTERPRETATION: The declines on İlke TV and Halk TV may be associated with the agreement opening more space for the language of negotiation and political resolution. The continuity on CNN Türk, meanwhile, supports the qualitative finding that Kurdish-related issues continued to be framed through security and integration even after the agreement.

Table 14. Difference in the rate of problematic sentences concerning Kurdish issues after the 30 January agreement

Channel	Problematic rate before agreement	Problematic rate after agreement	Change (pp)
İlke TV	49,8%	26,4%	–23,4
Halk TV	56,0%	36,9%	–19,1
CNN Türk	54,8%	52,9%	–1,9

5. Channel-specific editorial frames and discursive shifts

This section examines, channel by channel, how developments in North and East Syria were reported across the six broadcasters. Rather than treating each channel's general editorial line as a fixed category, the analysis looks at how that line was sustained or altered in response to different developments. The attacks in Aleppo, the 18 January ceasefire, the incident reported in the media as the "flag-lowering" on 20 January, the hair-braiding actions and protests, and the 30 January agreement are the principal turning points through which these shifts can be traced.

For each channel, the analysis considers terminology, sources, the speaking space afforded to civilian and political actors, security and negotiation frames, and audiovisual narration. Differences between main news bulletins and discussion programmes are also treated as part of the channel's editorial approach. The tables in this section summarise these elements comparatively, while sample statements and broadcast excerpts show how the same words can acquire different meanings in different contexts.

5.1. CNN Türk: Security, state authority and controlled integration

CNN Türk's narrative on Syria is built around security, central state authority and Turkey's border security. The SDF and YPG are regularly used together, described as a "terrorist organisation" and frequently linked to the PKK. Resolution is defined in terms of ending the armed structure and integrating the SDF into the Syrian state. Diplomatic language increases during periods of ceasefire and agreement, but without altering this core frame.

The channel relies heavily on the Turkish and Syrian authorities, security institutions, military experts and field reporters as sources. Ana Haber at times presents events as a live war narrative built around footage from the field, real-time updates, official statements and military developments. Tarafsız Bölge expands the same approach through maps, field connections and expert commentary. The format changes, but the security-centred editorial orientation remains intact.

The Aleppo attacks: Audiovisual war narrative and the legitimisation of military intervention

From its opening sentence, Ana Haber defines the development as an operation by the Syrian army against the PKK-YPG presence. Military activity, kamikaze drones and information about territorial control are foregrounded. Tarafsız Bölge expands the same security frame with maps, field connections and expert commentary. Although the programmes differ in form, the underlying assumptions — that the SDF/YPG is a terrorist organisation and that central state authority is the primary reference point — remain unchanged.

> Dear viewers, at 1.30 pm today the Syrian army launched an operation against the PKK-YPG presence in Aleppo. As the Syrian army struck YPG positions, the terrorist organisation attacked the army and civilians with kamikaze drones.
>
> *Fulya Öztürk, presenter – CNN Türk Ana Haber, 8 January, 00:00*

> The Syrian army has launched an operation to end the terrorist presence in the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh neighbourhoods of Aleppo, which are controlled by the terrorist organisation YPG.
>
> *Fulya Öztürk, presenter – CNN Türk Ana Haber, 8 January, 11:53*

Ceasefire: An elimination frame sustained within diplomatic developments

Ana Haber presents the ceasefire and the 14-point agreement as a new diplomatic stage, while continuing to describe the YPG as a "terrorist organisation". On Tarafsız Bölge, the agreement is interpreted through the elimination of the SDF, individual integration and Kandil's influence. Conflict-oriented language therefore recedes to some extent, but negotiation is framed as a means of dissolving the organisation within the state structure.

> Dear viewers, yesterday a 14-point agreement was signed between Syria and the terrorist organisation YPG, and a ceasefire was declared in the country. So what happens after the agreement?
>
> *Fulya Öztürk, presenter – CNN Türk Ana Haber, 19 January, 00:00*

> Now the SDF spokesperson has made a statement. […] 'Either an honourable life or an honourable death.' […] The hawkish wing of the PKK has spoken. This is Kandil's voice.
>
> *Ahmet Hakan, moderator – Tarafsız Bölge, 20 January, 83:53–84:16*

The "flag-lowering" incident: Condemnation and punishment in the presenter's language

At the point where the discourse hardens most sharply, Fulya Öztürk describes the incident as a "provocation" and a "despicable attack"; Ahmet Hakan similarly incorporates the phrase "despicable attack on the flag" directly into his question. Reactions from local Kurdish citizens are used to separate the perpetrators from Kurdish identity, but this distinction is constructed within a framework of loyalty to the flag and national unity.

> I had pointed to the possibility of precisely this kind of provocation. Because [...] it is, unfortunately, the kind of despicable attack we are all too familiar with.
>
> *Fulya Öztürk, presenter – CNN Türk Ana Haber, 20 January, 03:29*

> A very despicable incident also took place there. There was a provocation against the Turkish flag. [...] After yesterday's despicable attack on the flag, is there calm now?
>
> *Ahmet Hakan, moderator – Tarafsız Bölge, 22 January, 65:34–66:08*

Agreement: From military operations to controlled integration

Following the 30 January agreement, the language of operations and elimination gives way to references to a "ceasefire", "gradual integration" and "ending the de facto division". The shift is framed less as recognition of the SDF as a legitimate and equal political actor than as its subordination to the central state. In other words, the mechanism changes from military pressure to controlled integration. "Terrorist organisation", "state authority" and "Turkey's security priorities" remain the enduring axes of the discourse.

> A comprehensive agreement has been reached between the Syrian state and the terrorist organisation YPG/SDF, providing for a ceasefire and gradual integration.
>
> *CNN Türk Ana Haber, 30 January, 00:54*

> The most significant step yet towards ending the de facto division…
>
> *CNN Türk Ana Haber, 30 January, 06:36*

The hair-braiding protests: Bringing a symbol of solidarity into a terrorism frame

The hair-braiding action is not treated as a newsworthy subject in its own right. Instead, the protest is linked to the themes of "threat", "provocation" and "terror", and instrumentalised to reinforce other discourses and create opposition; it is invoked even in contexts unrelated to the protest itself. On Ana Haber, hair-braiding and banner actions are set against the Diyarbakır Mothers' struggle against the PKK. Tarafsız Bölge, meanwhile, turns the action into a dismissive discussion of "support for PKK women" and a "fashion".

> What did DEM Party officials do? Through hair-braiding, hanging banners, calling people onto the streets and so on, they tried to stir up the public and provoke them. Thankfully, our people showed common sense.
>
> *CNN Türk Ana Haber, 2 February 2026*

> First of all, we were in the Terror-Free Turkey process launched under the leadership of our President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Dear viewers, at the point reached in the Terror-Free Turkey process, one of the heaviest blows dealt to the terrorist organisation came from the Diyarbakır Mothers. The mothers whose children had been abducted by the terrorist organisation PKK mounted an unprecedented resistance. Dozens of them rescued their children from the hands of terror.
>
> *Ana Haber, 2 February, 01:16:45*

> You know how lately hair-braiding has become fashionable in support of PKK women. Since Hakan brother's hair is braided too, people might misunderstand... I braid my hair this way out of respect and love for Turkish history.
>
> *Tarafsız Bölge, 27 January 2026*

5.2. atv: Sustaining security discourse through 'inevitable' operations, victory and integration

atv treats the establishment of a central state authority in Syria and Turkey's security objectives as part of the same trajectory. Military interventions are presented as necessary and inevitable, while ceasefires and agreements are interpreted through the retreat of the SDF/YPG and its incorporation under state control. Although the discourse of elimination shifts towards integration over the period, the security frame remains intact.

The Presidency, government, MHP, ministries, the Syrian authorities and military sources make up the channel's primary source base. The channel does not have a regular discussion programme in the sample. Commentary is built directly into Ana Haber through presenter introductions, voice-over and editing, leaving little separation between news reporting and political evaluation.

The Aleppo attacks: Making military operations appear inevitable

atv Ana Haber constructs the Aleppo attacks as the necessary outcome of preceding developments. The PKK, YPG and SDF are named as part of a single organisational structure; phrases such as "refusing to learn", "legitimate target" and "left with few options" make military intervention appear inevitable. Field footage, narratives about weapons and drones, and official statements reinforce one another. Kurdish-majority neighbourhoods appear as spaces in which Syria's unitary structure is being tested.

> You could actually see today coming from what happened in Aleppo yesterday. [...] Once the terrorists also went on the attack in Aleppo, the Damascus administration was left with few options.
>
> *Cem Öğretir (sunucu) — ATV Ana Haber, 8 Ocak, 00:09–00:31*

> Despite the warnings, the Damascus administration has launched an operation in Aleppo against PKK and YPG elements that refuse to learn.
>
> *atv Ana Haber, 8 January, 01:37*

Ceasefire: A narrative of victory and elimination

The ceasefire and the 14-point agreement are presented less as a diplomatic compromise than as Turkey's positions being realised on the ground and as the defeat of the YPG/SDF. Words such as "fled", "backed down", "total defeat" and "elimination" shape the interpretation of the agreement. Turkey's and Syria's objectives are presented as aligned. The Presidency, cabinet, Syrian authorities and military developments dominate the source hierarchy.

> As of yesterday, the positions Turkey has been putting forward at the table on Syria for many years were fully realised on the ground.
>
> *Cem Öğretir, presenter — atv Ana Haber, 19 January, 00:10*

> An agreement has been signed with the Damascus administration. [...] The leaders of the YPG terrorist organisation based in Syria will have to leave the country, and the terrorists will be completely eliminated.
>
> *atv Ana Haber narration — 19 January, 02:28*

The "flag-lowering" incident: A hardening discourse of national unity and punishment

The "flag-lowering" incident leads the bulletin and is described as a "provocation" from the very first sentence. Erdoğan, Bahçeli, ministries, AKP representatives and veterans become the main sources of the narrative. Phrases such as "dirty hands", "traitors", "the harshest punishment" and "may their hands be broken" recur throughout the news flow. The distinction between Kurds and the organisation is established through Erdoğan's statement; neither the DEM Party's own statement nor the reasons given by protesters at the border appear as independent sources.

> Today's headline is the flag provocation in Nusaybin and the reactions it drew from the political world.
>
> *Cem Öğretir, presenter – atv Ana Haber, 21 January, 00:10*

> An attack on the flag is an attack on all 86 million of us, on our entire nation. This will in no way go unpunished.
>
> *AKP statement carried on atv Ana Haber – 21 January, 05:11*

Agreement: From a victory narrative to integration under state control

After 30 January, the language of "operation" and "complete elimination" shifts to "gradual" and "genuine integration". Yet the agreement is praised not as recognition of the SDF as an equal political actor, but through the transfer of military and administrative structures to the Syrian state. While atv reports the technical provisions of the agreement, it continues to describe the SDF as the "Syrian branch of the PKK" and as a "structure occupying the regions". "Turkey's contribution", "territorial integrity" and "central state control" remain the period's unchanged benchmarks.

> The terrorists, now confined to Kobanî, Hasakah and Qamishli in Syria, have reached an agreement with the Damascus administration. The SDF, the Syrian branch of the terrorist organisation PKK, will be gradually integrated into Syria.
>
> ATV Ana Haber sunumu – 31 Ocak, 04:27

> In Syria, which is taking firm steps towards securing its territorial integrity through Turkey's efforts, [...] the new integration agreement between Damascus and the SDF is entering into force.
>
> *atv Ana Haber narration – 2 February, 04:05*

5.3. NOW TV: Limited agenda and security discourse

NOW TV gives more limited coverage to developments in Syria, concentrating largely on key turning points. Stories are constructed mainly through official statements, diplomatic contacts and security developments. The SDF is described as the "Syrian branch of the PKK", while the conditions of integration are foregrounded during periods of ceasefire and agreement. The Turkish and Syrian authorities, the US, political party leaders and security experts are the main sources. Statements from opposition parties are included at times, but the underlying discourse and approach remain stable. Ana Haber is brief and event-focused. Orta Sayfa appears to offer more context, but does not fundamentally alter the core security frame.

The Aleppo attacks: An official security frame in a short news format

With the lower-third "Terrorist organisation violates Aleppo ceasefire", Ana Haber frames the conflict around the SDF's failure to comply with the agreement and its attacks on civilians; it describes the SDF as the "Syrian branch of the PKK" and foregrounds information about operations, tanks, armoured units, evacuations and territorial control. Orta Sayfa similarly places responsibility on the SDF. Lower-thirds such as "Full support from Ankara for Damascus striking the SDF" or "DEM backs the SDF, Ankara backs Damascus" reflect the broader frame.

> Now we'll turn to the economy [...] but first let's take a look around at what is happening. Because clashes continue between the Syrian army and the SDF. There is uncertainty over the ceasefire in Aleppo, and an operation could begin at any moment.
>
> *Selçuk Tepeli, presenter – NOW Ana Haber, 9 January, 11:33*

> Will Turkey enter the operation? [...] At this stage, that does not appear likely. Because [...] Turkey is one of the parties, but it is not the only party. Many countries are watching this closely.
>
> *Nevşin Mengü, commentator – Orta Sayfa, 9 January, 24:19–24:32*

Ceasefire: Between a positive development and distrust of the SDF

NOW TV presents the ceasefire and the 14-point agreement as a positive development for Syria and Turkey. Yet under the lower-third "SDF uncertainty in Syria", it sustains a narrative in which the SDF is failing to implement the agreement, trying to buy time and insisting on autonomy and collective integration.

> Yesterday, reports that an agreement had been reached between the Damascus administration and the SDF appeared in the media and were also covered by us. Today, disagreement has already emerged from the agreement.
>
> *Selçuk Tepeli, presenter — NOW Ana Haber, 20 January, 00:34*

> I had a phone call with my brother Ahmed al-Sharaa;
> I congratulated him on the agreement and the operation.
>
> *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan — statement carried on NOW Ana Haber, 20 January, 00:50*

The "flag-lowering" incident: A national-security frame within plural reactions

The "flag-lowering" incident leads the 21 January Ana Haber and is reported using expressions including "treacherous attack", "dirty hands" and "the flag is our honour". Statements by Erdoğan and Bahçeli set the emotional tone of the report; demonstrations and police intervention are incorporated into the security narrative. Statements from the CHP, İYİ Party and DEM Party are placed side by side within a shared frame of condemnation. The hashtag #mutlaka ("without fail") remains on screen throughout the report.

> Today's hashtag is 'without fail'. [...] Let's turn to our first story. President Erdoğan said: 'The dirty hands reaching for our flag will without fail be held to account.
>
> *Selçuk Tepeli, presenter, quoting Erdoğan — NOW Ana Haber, 21 January, 00:04–00:28*

> On the Nusaybin–Qamishli border line, a Zionist and imperialist plot has been put into action and our red flag has been dishonourably lowered. [...] It is clear that the co-chairs of the DEM Party [...] bear primary responsibility for the lowering of the Turkish flag.
>
> *Devlet Bahçeli — statement carried on NOW Ana Haber, 21 January, 01:11–01:18*

Agreement: From military operations to the conditions of integration

After 30 January, the language of operations recedes and the "gradual integration" of military and administrative structures, brigade–division arrangements and command relationships come to the fore. Ana Haber reports the agreement through official statements and political reactions in Turkey. Orta Sayfa discusses whether the arrangement amounts to disarmament and what it means for the process in Turkey. The discourse therefore moves from elimination towards controlled integration, while the description of the SDF as an extension of the PKK and the central-state criterion remain in place.

> Well, they've reached an agreement. As you know, the SDF and the Damascus administration reach an agreement about once a week. The SDF has accepted integration. But now look at the conditions. What does any of this have to do with it?
>
> *Selçuk Tepeli, presenter — NOW Ana Haber, 30 January, 00:20*

> For one thing, the division to be established will be a division of the Syrian army; it will not be independent of the army. [...] The chain of command will be with the Syrian army.
>
> *Murat Yetkin, commentator — Orta Sayfa, 30 January, 90:47–90:58*

5.4. Sözcü TV: Between technical reporting and a security frame

Sözcü TV approaches developments in Syria through military movements, diplomatic contacts and Turkey's security concerns. Detailed maps, information from the field and technical explanations create an impression of distance and neutrality, yet the construction of the SDF/YPG as a threat and the primacy accorded to central state authority remain consistent. Official sources, reporters, security experts and politicians are central to the narrative. Images of civilian casualties and displacement are used to reinforce the positioning of the SDF as a "terrorist organisation". While Ana Haber constructs the security frame more directly, discussion programmes appear to broaden the historical and political context but ultimately remain within the same security axis.

The Aleppo clashes: Constructing the threat profile through technical and visual language

On Sözcü TV, the security frame is built through language and images together. Ana Haber uses the description "the organisation cornered". In the discussion programme, metaphors such as "time to cleanse and purify", "a boil" and "holding hostage" circulate without challenge. Images of tunnel networks, mortar positions, tank deployments and drones being shot down are presented as visual evidence of the SDF/YPG's threat capacity. Technical and historical detail therefore serves less to create critical distance than to legitimise military intervention.

> The cornered organisation has begun bombing hospitals and civilians.
>
> *Ana Haber, 8 January, 03:16*

> It is now time for these two neighbourhoods to be cleansed and purified. [...] They are sitting there like a boil. I mean, you have taken those two neighbourhoods hostage.
>
> *Guest commentary on Türkiye'nin Sözü, 7 January, 67:41–69:53*

> You know how we say 'terrorist positions', how we say the terrorist organisation is deployed there [...] Well then, you have to ask whose drones they are likely to be.
>
> *Moderator, Türkiye'nin Sözü, 7 January, 113:47*

Ceasefire: Explaining the 'organisation' frame and controlled integration

In broadcasts from 18–20 January, the ceasefire is presented less as a mutual compromise than as an arrangement produced by the Syrian army's advance and the SDF's loss of territory. Maps, oil fields, border crossings and the transfer of military structures are foregrounded. The SDF–YPG–PKK relationship is expressed in increasingly definitive terms. Discussion programmes introduce distinctions between Kurds and the organisation and raise the issue of rights, but the main axis of debate remains security, the unitary state and the dismantling of the armed structure.

> eferred to the Kurdish presence there, the Kurdish people, the Kurdish community and so on. Now people are quite openly talking about 'the organisation'.
>
> *Weekend Ana Haber presenter, 18 January, 06:36*

> Our interlocutor is not terror being accepted as an authority; it is the Kurdish people, Kurdish people themselves, our Kurdish brothers and sisters.
>
> *Guest commentary on Filtresiz 30 Dakika, 18 January, 22:11*

The "flag-lowering" incident: A discourse of 'national reaction'

Ana Haber describes the incident as an "attack" and a "provocation", with the presenter speaking in the channel's own collective voice. Expressions such as "dirty hands", "traitors" and "despicable attack" reinforce a discourse of "national unity" and punishment. The distinction between the SDF, YPG and PKK narrows further. Although Karşı Karşıya discusses some of the anger underlying the incident, it also reproduces exclusionary language. DEM Party representatives appear mainly in relation to responsibility, silence and expectations that they respond.

> We will continue to put ourselves on the line against attacks on our flag. Today we begin with the flag.
>
> *Ana Haber presenter — 21 January, 01:44*

> Provocateurs are already everywhere — and then there's the flag. To be fair, they issued a statement about the flag immediately; that is a separate matter.
>
> *Erol Mütercimler — Karşı Karşıya, 49:24*

New agreement: A turn towards diplomacy within the security frame

After 30 January, the highly charged language of the "flag-lowering" period recedes; the provisions of the agreement, the timetable for integration and the transfer of institutions come to the fore. Statements by Mazloum Abdi and the DEM Party are carried, but this broader source base does not change the underlying frame. The SDF is presented simultaneously as "the interlocutor with which Damascus has signed an agreement" and as a "security threat linked to the YPG and PKK". The success of the agreement is assessed in terms of "central state authority", "Turkey's conditions" and "the future of PKK cadres".

> Following the ceasefire and integration agreement between the Damascus administration and the SDF, whose backbone is formed by the YPG, Ankara has clarified its position.
>
> *Weekend Ana Haber narration, 1 February, 68:55*

> So here is the question — the question viewers will ask most: What happened to the PKK members there?
>
> *İpek Özbey, moderator — Karşı Karşıya, 3 February, 89:21*

5.5. Halk TV: Shifting editorial frame and audiovisual dramatisation

Throughout the period, Halk TV sustains a tension between its textual and visual discourse. It gives more space than most mainstream channels to statements by the SDF, Kurdish demands concerning status and citizenship, and links to the peace process in Turkey. Alongside official statements, its source base includes SDF representatives, the DEM Party, experts and a range of political actors. Yet dramatic voice-over and repeated footage can harden the narrative even where the written script is more measured. The Ana Haber Bülteni and Açıkça can establish a broader political context, while Sansürsüz reports breaking developments primarily through official statements and military information. The channel's editorial approach therefore varies according to programme format and the position adopted by the presenter.

The Aleppo clashes: A security frame

Halk TV covers the Aleppo clashes alongside military developments, diplomatic contacts and the peace process in Turkey. The label "terror" appears mainly in statements from official sources; in the channel's own narration, phrases such as "SDF forces" and "Kurdish-majority neighbourhoods" are more prominent. Açıkça connects developments to the resolution process in Turkey and reports DEM Party criticism of the government. Civilians are visible, but are represented mainly through evacuation, siege and the consequences of conflict.

> Who counts as a terrorist in the picture emerging from Syria varies considerably depending on the actor.
>
> *Weekend Ana Haber presenter — 10 January, 17:23*

> Of course, this conflict closely concerns Turkey as well… These are developments that could also affect the fate of the resolution process in Turkey — what happens to it, whether it continues or ends.
>
> *Gökmen Karadağ, moderator — Açıkça, 8 January, 00:53*

Ceasefire: Military balance and negotiation

The broadcasts of 18–20 January do not construct the ceasefire through a single frame. Sansürsüz treats the agreement against the backdrop of the Syrian army's advance and the SDF's loss of territory; the phrase "cleared of the YPG" lends a positive meaning to military elimination, while the ceasefire is presented as the natural outcome of that advance. In Ana Haber Bülteni and other commentary, by contrast, the SDF's narrowing room for negotiation is accompanied by brief references to Kurds' local-security, linguistic and citizenship rights, as well as questions about implementation of the agreement.

> In short, the Syrian Democratic Forces appear to have emerged today from a negotiating table with fewer options than they would have had at the beginning of January.
>
> *Ana Haber narration — 19 January, 12:50*

> Very critical, very important points have been brought under the control of the Syrian army and cleared of the YPG. And of course, a ceasefire followed.
>
> *Sinem Fıstıkoğlu, presenter — Sansürsüz, 18 January, 00:31*

The "flag-lowering" incident: A nationalist opening and contextualising political tension

The language of Ana Haber hardens noticeably. The bulletin opens with a presenter's statement drawing a direct link between the flag and the indivisibility of the country, and the incident is described as a "provocation". Official statements using expressions such as "terror sympathiser", "treacherous attack" and "punishment" are relayed. The bulletin also includes the DEM Party's statement rejecting disrespect towards the flag and the CHP's emphasis on fraternity. Açıkça discusses the incident within the context of MHP–DEM Party tensions and the banned rally, and presents opposing claims by political actors over whether the SDF represents Kurds.

> Once a flag has been raised, it does not come down again. Nor will this country ever be divided simply because some people want it to be. That is why we say 'indivisible', and that is where we begin.
>
> *Ana Haber presenter — 21 January, 00:07*

> MHP Chair Devlet Bahçeli said, 'The SDF is a terrorist organisation'... Tuncer Bakırhan, meanwhile, said that 'the SDF represents the Kurds in Syria'.
>
> *Gökmen Karadağ, moderator — Açıkça, 22 January, 19:14*

Hair-braiding: The tension between making the protest visible and dramatic language

The channel frames the hair-braiding protests as a reaction. It covers Amedspor's solidarity video, the Turkish Football Federation's description of it as "ideological", the fine imposed on the club and the detention of a nurse who participated in the protest. At the same time, dramatic voice-over and repeated footage of the severed braid turn both the protest and the violence behind it into a dramatic narrative. The footage functions simultaneously as evidence and as spectacle. Images of the severed braid repeatedly appear amid videos of women braiding their hair. The issue does not feature in the discussion programmes included in the sample.

> A jihadist in Syria cut off the braid of a woman from the SDF who had been killed in the fighting. That was what prompted the reaction. Amedspor responded to this act against women with a hair-braiding video.
>
> *Ana Haber narration – 30 January, 09:41*

> The nurse who took part in the hair-braiding protest has been detained.
>
> *Ana Haber narration – 26 January, 66:23*

New agreement: Diplomacy, rights and questions of implementation

After 30 January, the discourse becomes more diplomatic. The SDF appears not only as a security threat, but also as an interlocutor that has reached an agreement with the Damascus administration and is explaining its implementation. Ana Haber reports the provisions of the agreement, Mazloum Abdi's statements, local administration, the status of military units, civil and educational rights and the return of displaced people. Sansürsüz explains the development through its military and diplomatic consequences, while Açıkça addresses what the reconciliation in Syria means for the peace process and the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Maps and troop numbers show that the military frame remains present, but the agreement is not defined solely as the elimination of the SDF.

> A second agreement has arrived. It has been announced that the SDF and the Damascus administration have now reached an understanding and agreement on integration... Following the agreement, SDF Commander Mazloum Abdi spoke to the local press.
>
> *Weekend Ana Haber presenter — 31 January, 17:35*

> If the objective is as important and valuable as social peace, responsibility cannot be left to any one party — not the DEM Party, not the MHP, and not the AKP.
>
> *Weekend Ana Haber presenter — 31 January, 64:26*

5.6. İlke TV: Reporting centred on Kurdish identity, rights-based and negotiation-focused

İlke TV covers developments in Syria together with Kurds' political status, cultural rights, local-government demands and civilian security. It uses "Rojava", "North and East Syria" and "Autonomous Administration" as deliberate editorial terms. Ceasefires and agreements are assessed not only in terms of military integration, but also through rights and the future of negotiations.

Alongside the Damascus administration and the Turkish government, the channel uses the SDF, DEM Party, Kurdish political actors, women, rights organisations and journalists from the region as sources. Ana Haber presents events and alleged rights violations in a regular news flow, while Konuşma Zamanı and Medya Zamanı discuss terminology, media discourse and possibilities for negotiation. Although the programmes differ in format, the rights- and negotiation-centred orientation is largely sustained.

The Aleppo clashes: Kurdish neighbourhoods, civilian rights and media criticism

İlke TV describes the developments in Aleppo as "attacks on Kurdish neighbourhoods". It explains the historical, cultural and demographic character of Sheikh Maqsoud, Ashrafieh and Bani Zaid, and reports civilian deaths, damage to hospitals, displacement and alleged violations of law. Alongside statements by the Damascus administration and the SDF, it includes the DEM Party, Kurdish political actors, rights organisations and United Nations sources. Konuşma Zamanı links the conflict to the resolution process in Turkey and the possibility of negotiations. Medya Zamanı, meanwhile, criticises headlines in other newspapers such as "legitimate target" and "Damascus has run out of patience", bringing the media's one-sided framing into the discussion.

> Aleppo is under siege, dear İlke TV viewers. Attacks by the Damascus transitional government on Kurdish neighbourhoods in Aleppo are continuing, and what is happening there is a humanitarian tragedy, almost like a declaration of war.
>
> *Dilek Odabaş, moderator — Konuşma Zamanı, 8 January, 00:34*

> There is a problem of disinformation in this coverage. The reporting is one-sided. When we read these stories, we only learn what is happening from information coming from a single side
>
> *Ercüment Akdeniz, moderator — Medya Zamanı, 9 January, 34:22*

Ceasefire: Rights and negotiation under military pressure

The ceasefire is not narrated solely through military advances or the SDF's retreat. Alongside provisions on military and administrative integration, Ana Haber gives detailed attention to Kurdish linguistic, cultural and citizenship rights, local security and political representation. Mazloum Abdi, the Damascus administration, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, international actors and political parties in Turkey all appear in the coverage. Medya Zamanı openly questions pro-government newspapers' frame of "Syria being cleared of terror". Konuşma Zamanı emphasises stopping the fighting and preserving the ground for dialogue and negotiation. The ceasefire is presented not as surrender but as a fragile negotiating space in which rights and constitutional guarantees are at stake.

> The agreement emphasises that Decree No. 13, regulating Kurds' linguistic, cultural and citizenship rights, will be implemented.
>
> *Ana Haber narration — 20 January, 13:42*

> They are running headlines saying 'Syria is being cleared of terror'. What is happening there, dear viewers, is an attack on Kurds.
>
> *Medya Zamanı narration — 18 January, 02:26*

The "flag-lowering" incident: Context and rights violations against nationalist blame

İlke TV does not report the "flag-lowering" incident on the same day, but several days later. It describes the event as a "provocation" and draws a distinction between respect for the flag and the collective blame directed at the DEM Party. Konuşma Zamanı questions the portrayal of the delegation travelling to Qamishli and its call for negotiations as "sabotage". Ana Haber and Medya Zamanı report that D.K., who was linked to the incident, was not in fact charged with lowering the flag; they also cover allegations of severe violence in custody, medical reports and discrepancies between official records and the footage. The emphasis therefore falls less on the flag as an instrument of nationalist mobilisation than on uncertainty over the perpetrator and the rights of the protesters.

> They keep insisting that this provocation was carried out by the DEM Party and organising reactions against the party on that basis. Even going to Qamishli is being criminalised. Why should someone acting as an envoy to restore dialogue and negotiations be considered sabotage?
>
> *Dilek Odabaş, moderator — Konuşma Zamanı, 22 January, 67:46*

> It has emerged that D.K., who was linked to the flag-lowering incident, was not charged with any offence in relation to that allegation.
>
> *Medya Zamanı narration — 24 January, 20:06*

The hair-braiding (kezî) protests: Women's solidarity and the right to protest

İlke TV treats hair-braiding as a form of women's solidarity and protest against the cutting of a murdered Kurdish woman's braid. Konuşma Zamanı discusses the action's meaning as a protest against an ISIS mentality, the targeting of women and the detentions that followed. Medya Zamanı questions the discrepancy between the punishment imposed on Amedspor and the penalty for racist and sexist chants targeting Leyla Zana at a Bursaspor match; allegations concerning the nurse's detention, freedom of expression, ill-treatment and impunity are reported through rights organisations. Women appear as political subjects of the campaign, marking a clear departure from the security and organisational-link frames seen on other channels. Alongside individual hair-braiding videos are images that lend themselves to a feminist reading, including collective braiding and a father braiding his daughter's hair.

> In Syria, in north-eastern Syria, the hair of a Kurdish woman who had been killed was cut off. The kezî — hair-braiding — campaign began against that mentality. Why is it that in Turkey, even protesting the ISIS mentality means that when the issue is Kurds, one is expected to side with ISIS?
>
> *Dilek Odabaş, moderator — Konuşma Zamanı, 29 January, 47:21*

> The penalty imposed over the hair-braiding video… The same disciplinary board had fined Bursaspor 16,000 lira for racist, sexist and discriminatory abuse directed at Leyla Zana. Isn't this an obvious double standard?
>
> *Moderator — Medya Zamanı, 30 January, 27:27*

New agreement: From security to political and collective rights

After 30 January, the agreement was not reduced to military and administrative integration. Ana Haber follows its implementation alongside the siege of Kobanî, shortages of medicine and essential supplies, and demands concerning local administration and political representation. The SDF and Mazloum Abdi are described as legitimate negotiating actors; the terms "Rojava", "North and East Syria" and "Autonomous Administration" are used. Konuşma Zamanı discusses whether the agreement secures Kurdish rights and points to gaps concerning decentralisation and constitutional guarantees. The agreement is treated not as a final settlement but as a process dependent on preserving the ceasefire and sustaining political negotiations, and is linked reciprocally to the peace process in Turkey.

> What kind of model is on the table in Syria when it comes to security, administrative structures and civil rights?
>
> *Dilek Odabaş, moderator – Konuşma Zamanı, 30 January, 01:50*

> The Syria issue concerns Turkey not only in terms of security, but also in terms of its own domestic peace, democratic position and regional dynamics. Turkey should therefore invest in peace within Syria and stand with the rights of its peoples.
>
> *Tuncer Bakırhan, DEM Party Co-Chair – Ana Haber, 5 February, 26:27*

6. Discourse analysis of rights-based peace journalism

From the perspective of rights-based peace journalism, the key question is not only whether broadcasts report the military course of the conflict and the peace process, but which actors their narratives recognise as legitimate political subjects. It matters which sources are treated as authorised producers of knowledge, whether civilians and local communities are able to speak directly, whether protests enter the news agenda, and how much space is given to demands for non-violent solutions. Because television is an audiovisual medium, on-screen captions, footage selection and repetition, the tone of voice-over and programme format are also important components of discourse.

6.1. Naming political geography: "Rojava" and "North and East Syria"

How the geography is named becomes a crucial indicator of a channel's editorial frame and of how it understands the political character of the social world. Different terms — "Rojava", "North and East Syria", "Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria", "northern Syria", "SDF-controlled territory" or simply "the area where the terrorist organisation is present" — can effectively determine the standpoint from which the story is told.

Forms of naming other than "Rojava" avoid using "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" for a geography historically referred to as Kurdistan and described through directions in Kurdish, thereby disregarding the directional terminology used by Kurds themselves.

"Rojava" means "west" in Kurdish. Here, direction is defined not according to Syria's own geography, but according to the Kurdish political and historical imagination of Kurdistan as divided into four parts.

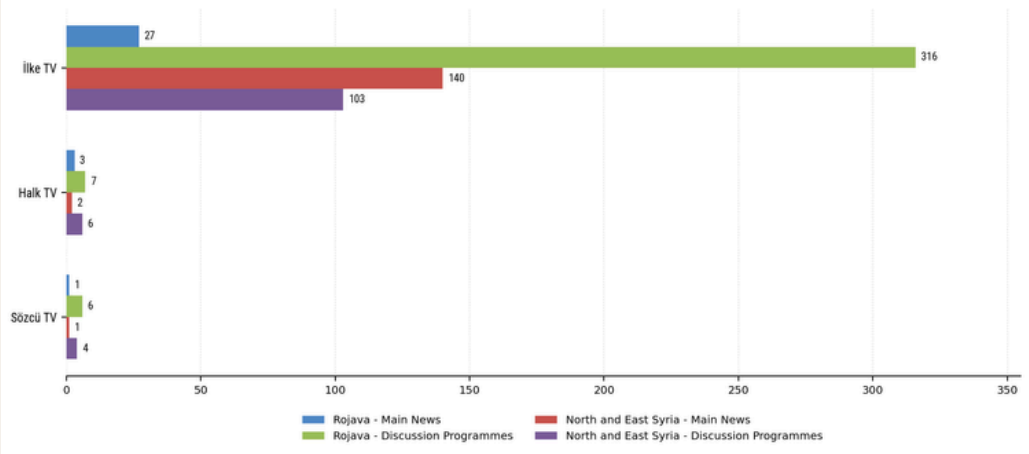
Bln this usage, Bakur/North refers to the Kurdish geography within Turkey, Başûr/South to that within Iraq, Rojhilat/East to that within Iran, and Rojava/West to that within Syria. "North and East Syria", by contrast, uses a different geographical point of reference, defining the region by its position within Syria; it also refers not only to Kurdish identity but to a broader, multi-identity geography governed by the administration.

"North and East Syria" is also a term consciously adopted by the self-administration after 2016 to include other communities such as Arabs, Armenians, Yazidis, Syriacs and Turkmens. It carries an official and administrative register and connects the region not to a single ethnic group but to a shared model of governance.

During the period examined, there is a striking distinction between İlke TV and the other channels in geographical naming (Table 15).

On İlke TV, "Rojava" and "North and East Syria" are constitutive concepts of the channel's news language. On the other channels they appear only rarely, generally as part of quoted statements judged newsworthy rather than as an editorial choice. The terms do not appear at all on atv and are used only a few times in direct quotations on CNN Türk and NOW TV. Their use also remains limited on Halk TV and Sözcü TV, both commonly described as opposition channels.

Table 15. Use of "Rojava" and "North and East Syria" by channel



A similar pattern can be seen in channels' choices between the names "Ayn al-Arab" and "Kobanî".

6.2. Framing attacks

The principal difference between the channels lies less in whether they report the military consequences of attacks than in the context within which those consequences are placed. Security-centred broadcasts explain violence through the establishment of state authority and the disarmament of the SDF, while giving limited space to historical causes, Kurdish demands concerning status and the experiences of local communities. More rights-based coverage, by contrast, places attacks alongside civilian casualties, displacement, access to basic services and questions of political representation.

In a significant portion of the broadcasts, attacks are presented not as the outcome of decisions by identifiable actors, but as part of military activity on the ground. Terms such as "clash", "operation", "advance" and "establishing control" can obscure both the actor carrying out the attack and the direction of violence. The SDF's actions, by contrast, are more explicitly described under the headings of threat, attack or terror. The actions of the parties are therefore not named according to the same criteria: one side is positioned as the force establishing security and order, while the other is cast as the element disrupting security.

This asymmetry is also visible in the naming of actors. The Damascus administration is generally described as the state, the army and central authority, while the SDF may be placed alongside the YPG, PKK and the phrase "terrorist organisation". This usage pushes the SDF's political demands, representative relationships and position within negotiations into the background. Even where a distinction is made between Kurds and armed organisations, Kurds' own voices and differing demands may remain limited.

6.3. Framing peace and resolution

The 18 January ceasefire and the agreement announced between the Damascus administration and the SDF on 30 January are two turning points at which the shift from military to diplomatic language becomes especially visible.

During periods of ceasefire and agreement, military terminology gives way to concepts such as agreement, negotiation and integration. Yet the use of diplomatic vocabulary does not automatically mean that developments are being framed through peace journalism. In a significant part of the coverage, agreements are explained not as the result of negotiations between two actors, but through the SDF being militarily cornered and accepting central authority. Peace is therefore associated less with addressing the causes of conflict than with one party's retreat.

Within this frame, resolution is defined largely in terms of disarmament, elimination and integration into the state. The SDF's political status, demands for local governance and Kurdish rights do not receive the same weight as core components of a settlement.

There is a partial shift in the naming of actors during periods of agreement. On the one hand, the SDF becomes visible as a party to the agreement and Mazloum Abdi as a negotiating actor; on the other, labels such as "terrorist organisation" and PKK/YPG continue to be used. Kurds' position within the peace process is likewise defined less through their own words and demands than through the SDF's disarmament or Turkey's security concerns.

The main difference between channels therefore lies not in whether they cover the agreement, but in how they define peace. In some broadcasts, peace is limited to the restoration of state authority and the dismantling of an armed structure. More rights-based coverage treats negotiation, political representation, local government, equal citizenship and the rebuilding of civilian life as parts of the settlement. From this perspective, peace is not simply the end of fighting, but a process of changing the conditions that produce violence and enabling affected communities to participate in the resolution process.

6.4. Source diversity and the speaking space afforded to rights-holders

From the perspective of rights-based peace journalism, source diversity does not mean mechanically giving equal airtime to the parties to a conflict. A journalist's responsibility is not limited to relaying a succession of different voices. It also involves asking whether those voices repeat the same dominant frame, which forms of knowledge are treated as inherently credible, and which experiences are repeatedly forced to prove themselves. In rights-based peace journalism, the journalist has a responsibility not to speak on behalf of the "other", but to create space in which people can speak in their own voices.

Table 16. Channels' use of sources and "speaking space"

Type of source and speaking space	Core approach	Channels
Official and security sources determine the narrative	State officials, official institutions and security sources do more than provide information: they also determine how an event is named and the context in which it is understood. Communities directly affected by the conflict largely remain the objects of official statements.	CNN Türk Atv NOW TV Sözcü TV
Security frame persists despite a diversity of experts	An apparently broad source pool is created through retired military officers, retired diplomats, selected academics, journalists and foreign-policy commentators. Yet depending on the channel's positioning, selected political figures often proceed from similar assumptions about threat, state authority and military necessity.	CNN Türk Sözcü TV
Different political statements combined within a common frame	Statements by government and opposition representatives are placed side by side, creating political source diversity. Yet when different statements are brought together under a shared frame of condemnation, national unity or security, political differences between the actors recede into the background. Source diversity can then function less to open up different interpretations of the event than to show that the dominant frame is backed by a broad political consensus.	NOW TV Halk TV Sözcü TV
Making speaking space for local actors and rights-holders	Kurdish political actors, local-government representatives, women, rights organisations and journalists directly connected to the region are used as sources. Alongside military developments, everyday life, rights violations, humanitarian needs and protests are treated as independent fields of information.	İlke TV; some Halk TV discussion programmes

6.5. Coverage of the "hair-braiding" (kezî) protest

The hair-braiding (kezî) protests began during the continuing attacks on North and East Syria after a man belonging to forces affiliated with the transitional government displayed on video the braid of a YPJ fighter he said he had killed. Women in different countries joined the action by sharing videos of themselves braiding their hair on social media. Also referred to by the Kurdish word *kezî*, the action became a form of embodied protest and solidarity against violence targeting women's bodies.

The hair-braiding action is not only about women's visibility. It also raises the question of whether knowledge produced through embodied experience is recognised as legitimate news. The different ways in which the action was covered make visible the hierarchy established between sources of knowledge. From a feminist epistemological perspective, the women involved are not simply people reacting to an event; they are actors who name the violence they experience and produce political knowledge about it.

Failing to cover the action excludes that knowledge altogether, while associating it with criminality or trivialising it invalidates the meaning women themselves give to their experience. Coverage that shows the action but lets dramatic imagery and voice-over dominate accepts the protest as newsworthy while shifting its meaning through spectacle and narration.

Table 17. News framing relating to the "hair-braiding" protests

Frame	Core approach	Channels
Invisibility	No coverage is given to the protest, the solidarity it generated or the sanctions imposed because of it. Violence against women's bodies and the protest developed in response remain outside the news agenda.	Atv NOW TV Sözcü TV
Instrumentalisation, association with crime and devaluation CNN Türk Ana Haber, 2 February 2026 Tarafsız Bölge, 27 January 2026	The protest is not reported as a news story, but is instrumentalised in a discussion programme to comment on other issues. It is associated with "terror", "provocation" and organisational affiliation. It is "tabloidised", and a distinction of legitimacy is drawn between women's movements.	CNN Türk
Putting the protest on the agenda, but shifting its meaning through images and sound Halk Ana Haber with Ece Üner	The protest and related sanctions receive extensive coverage; however, repeated footage of cut hair and a dramatic or tabloid-style voice-over foreground the striking nature of the incident rather than the women's objection. The video that prompted the protest is repeatedly shown amid clips of women braiding their hair in response.	Halk TV
Rights-based and feminist contextualisation Konuşma Zamanı, 22 January 2026 Medya Zamanı, 23 January 2026 Konuşma Zamanı, 29 January 2026 Medya Zamanı, 29 January 2026	The term "kezî" is used. The violence that prompted the protest is explained. Women, local actors and women's organisations are given space to speak. Detentions, investigations and institutional sanctions are reported. The protest is discussed in the context of women's solidarity, public memory and political participation. Solidarity videos by different groups, Kurdish music and collective dissent are included.	İlke TV

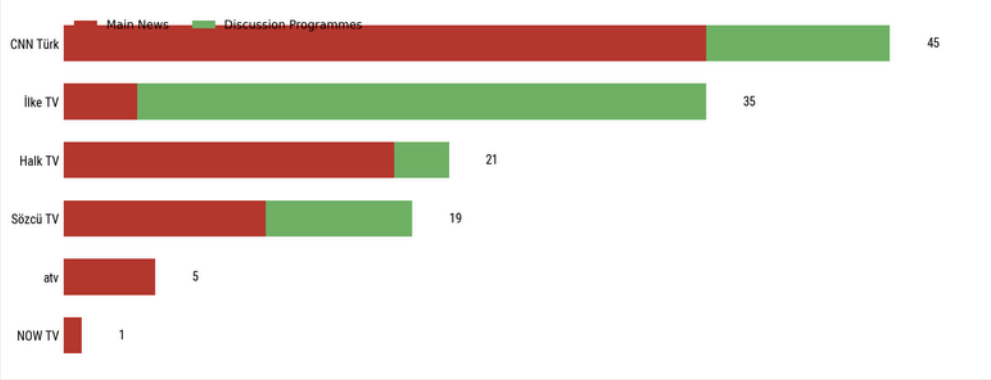
6.6. The "flag-lowering" incident: Symbolic violence, collective blame and the limits of the peace process

The "flag-lowering" incident took place during "Rojava" protests in the border area between Nusaybin in Mardin and Qamishli in north-eastern Syria, when protesters on the Syrian side lowered the Turkish flag at the former customs site. Footage of a citizen identified as D.K., who had been detained at a different location on the Turkish side of the border and subjected to torture, was later circulated on social media with the claim that he was "the person who lowered the flag". The fact that the incident occurred at a moment of rupture, while efforts to maintain de-escalation and diplomatic contacts in the region were continuing, makes the media response particularly significant.

A channel that had made at least some room for the language of negotiation during the ceasefire could quickly return to the discourse of security and punishment when confronted with a highly charged event involving a national and emotional symbol such as the "flag-lowering" incident. In such moments, word choice, on-screen labels, repeated images and voice-over can shape both the direction and scope of the public reaction. Repeatedly showing the moment the flag is lowered, slowing down or zooming in on the footage, reinforcing it with a harsh voice-over and pairing it with definitive on-screen captions all intensify the event's symbolic effect.

This confirms one of peace journalism's most important warnings: diplomatic developments can easily be eclipsed by provocative symbolic incidents. Conflict-sensitive journalism is required precisely at such moments, when maintaining — or returning to — the language of peace is most difficult.

Table 18. Distribution of broadcast segments on the "flag-lowering" incident by channel and programme type (20–23 January 2026)



NOTE: The figures indicate broadcast segments in which the flag incident was mentioned; they do not reflect the length or discursive weight of each segment. atv and NOW TV had no discussion programmes in the period examined.

The "flag-lowering" incident did not receive equal visibility across channels, and the distribution of that visibility between programme formats also varied. The predominance of main news coverage can favour a rapid, image-centred narrative organised around official reactions. Yet the length of a discussion programme or the number of speakers it includes does not, by itself, amount to pluralism.

The relationship between the main bulletin and the discussion programme may be more revealing of a channel's editorial approach. If the emotional and security-centred frame established in the main bulletin is sustained in the discussion programme, the event is moved beyond a one-day reaction and embedded in a more lasting political narrative. Conversely, when a discussion programme questions the certainties of the main bulletin, includes statements previously left out or reflects on the media's own role, it opens a different discursive space within the same channel. Table 18 indicates where this relationship can be examined, while Table 19 presents the qualitative discourse analysis.

Table 19. News framing relating to the "flag-lowering" incident

Frame	Core approach	Channels
Security, organisation and punishment frame CNN Türk Ana Haber, 20 January, 03:29 Tarafsız Bölge, 22 January, 65:34 atv Ana Haber, 21 January	The incident is reported using phrases such as "treacherous attack", "vile attack" and "supporters of the terrorist organisation". Uncertainty about the identity of the perpetrator and the circumstances of the incident recedes into the background, while demands for punishment come to the fore. atv describes it as "an attack on all 86 million [people]". Violent expressions such as "May their hands be broken" are also used.	CNN Türk atv
National unity and symbolic mobilisation Halk Ana Haber, 21 January NOW Ana Haber, 21 January Sözcü News, 21 January	A direct link is drawn between the lowering of the flag and the division of the homeland or a threat to the country's territorial integrity. Through expressions such as "#indivisible", "#absolutely", "look for another flag" and "the fate of anyone who lays a hand on the flag is clear", the channels participate in a discourse of national unity.	Sözcü TV Halk TV NOW TV
Limited space for counter-speech within the dominant frame Gökmen Karadağ ile Açıkça, 22 January	Security and national-unity discourse continues to define the overall frame. Giving space to DEM Party representatives' statements condemning the incident and saying "we have no problem with the flag" partly limits the direct attribution of the act to the party or to a broader political community.	Halk TV
Media criticism and process-oriented contextualisation Konuşma Zamanı, 22 January	The incident is described as a "provocation". Discussion focuses on its timing, how the media amplified it, why the DEM Party's statements condemning it were pushed into the background, and how the incident might affect the peace process. This was the channel that reported the incident latest, which may be interpreted editorially as an effort to verify the information before broadcasting it.	İlke TV

7. Conditions for Rights-Based Peace Journalism in Turkey

This section draws on anonymous interviews with reporters and news editors from different television channels to explore the conditions that constrain rights-based peace journalism and those that make it possible (Table 20). Rather than treating these interviews as a representative sample of television journalism in Turkey as a whole, we approach them as accounts of professional experience that offer a basis for reflecting on news production processes.

The interviews show that rights-based peace journalism depends not only on journalists' individual awareness or choice of language, but also on the interplay between structural conditions, institutional practices and everyday news production. At the structural level, economic and legal conditions set the limits of editorial independence. At the institutional level, shared principles, working conditions, oversight and accountability are shaped within these constraints. Journalism practice, in turn, gives concrete form to all these conditions through decisions about sources, verification, terminology, images, sound and editing.

For a journalist to challenge a problematic expression, refuse to report unverified information or propose a more inclusive range of sources is an essential professional stance. Yet such practices are difficult to sustain in news organisations where editorial interference is common, job security is weak, written principles are not consistently applied and decisions vary from one person to another.

Editorial independence, adequate staffing, regular in-house training, subject-area expertise, multi-stage verification, correction and editorial oversight, together with measures to protect journalists, can turn individual efforts and sensitivities into institutional safeguards. Rights-based peace journalism can therefore become a sustainable part of everyday journalism only when individual ethical commitments are supported by structural and institutional conditions.

Table 20. Conditions for Rights-Based Peace Journalism in Turkey

Level	Constraints	Enabling approaches
Structural	**Ownership and capital** — Editorial interference; advertising and other economic relationships influencing news decisions. **Political and regulatory pressure** — RTÜK sanctions, fines, programme suspensions and the threat of licence revocation; arrests and detentions; uncertainty over the criteria for sanctions. **Market and digital revenue pressures** — Ratings, YouTube views and pressure to produce low-cost content; expectations of politically polarised audiences. **Unequal access** — Unequal access to distribution and audience-measurement platforms; the economic decline of field reporting. **Audiovisual broadcasting** — Competition around breaking news and live coverage; incentives to use dramatic footage; uncertainty over sanctions during live broadcasts.	**Editorial autonomy** — Keeping news decisions separate from media ownership, advertising and digital revenue interests. **Predictable regulation** — Clear criteria for sanctions that do not generate uncertainty and self-censorship. **Equal access** — Equal access to distribution and audience-measurement systems for broadcasters. **Public interest** — Prioritising social impact and the public's right to information over ratings and viewing figures. **Audiovisual broadcasting** — Allocating resources to field reporting; establishing clear rules for live broadcasts; preserving context when television footage is recirculated on social media.
Institutional	**Editorial principles and decision-making —** Absence of written editorial guidelines; intervention by owners or managers in the selection of topics, stories and guests. **Working conditions —** Understaffing, low pay, precarity and high staff turnover. **Professional capacity —** Critical responsibilities assigned to inexperienced staff; limited subject-area specialisation and in-house training. **Sources and accountability —** A narrow pool of guests; dependence on news agencies and online content; lack of mechanisms for objections and corrections. **Disconnect between programmes —** Different editorial standards across news bulletins and discussion programmes; moderation and guest selection drifting away from shared principles. **Audiovisual production —** Lack of coordination between decisions on text, images, voice-over, captions and editing; reporters' framing being altered at later stages of production.	**Accuracy and transparency** — Putting accuracy before speed; distinguishing verified information from statements, testimony and claims; clearly communicating uncertainty to audiences. **Multiple-source verification** — Cross-checking official statements against information from the field; verifying the source, time and location of social-media content. **Editorial distance in terminology** — Respecting actors' self-identification; attributing contested labels to their sources and clearly distinguishing the channel's own voice from quoted or reported language. **A focus on rights and solutions** — Making civilian safety, migration, displacement, humanitarian assistance and international law visible; slowing down during breaking developments to provide historical context and explore possible solutions. **Editorial safeguards and corrections** — Institutional and legal support that does not leave journalists isolated; visibly correcting misinformation. **Audiovisual ethics** — Explaining the source and context of footage, limiting repetition and portraying civilians as people with voices and demands rather than passive victims.

Level	Constraints	Enabling approaches
Journalistic practice	**Speed and inadequate verification —** Pressure to be first; reliance on a single source; using phrases such as "it is claimed" as a substitute for verification. **Source hierarchy —** Reproducing official statements without scrutiny; broadcasting social-media footage without checking its location, date or source. **Terminology and security discourse —** Using different actors and identities interchangeably; presenting official labels in the channel's own voice. **Military-centred coverage —** Allowing military and diplomatic developments to overshadow civilians' experiences and rights claims. **Self-censorship and the risks of live broadcasting —** Journalists narrowing their choice of topics, sources, questions, images and language in anticipation of sanctions, job loss or an institutional backlash. **Audiovisual narrative —** Repeated use of military and violent imagery; dramatic voice-overs and definitive captions; reducing civilians to passive victims to be watched.	**Accuracy and transparency —** Prioritising accuracy over speed and clearly distinguishing verified facts, official statements, testimony and claims. **Multiple-source verification —** Cross-checking official accounts against field reporting and verifying the source, time and place of social-media material. **Editorial distance in terminology —** Respecting self-identification, attributing contested labels and distinguishing reported speech from the broadcaster's own language. **A focus on rights and solutions —** Bringing civilian safety, migration, displacement, humanitarian assistance and international law into the frame; slowing down during breaking developments to provide historical context and consider possibilities for resolution. **Editorial safeguards and corrections —** Institutional and legal support for journalists and visible corrections of false information. **Audiovisual ethics —** Providing the source and context of images, limiting repetition and representing civilians as speaking subjects with demands of their own.

7.1. Structural Conditions: Ownership, Regulation and Market Pressure

Media ownership and capital relations in Turkey shape news agendas, sources and the boundaries of what can be broadcast. Intervention in the choice of topics, guests or images can displace professional news values, while relationships with advertisers and other business interests can produce selective coverage. Labour struggles, poverty, environmental issues or rights violations involving a company, for example, may be assessed not primarily in terms of their social significance but through the organisation's economic relationships. As a result, some events receive less visibility, some actors are kept off screen and some stories are dropped altogether.

These economic structures do not produce identical outcomes across all broadcasters. While ties to large business groups can create direct or indirect channels for editorial interference, organisations operating with more limited resources may struggle to access distribution platforms, audience measurement systems, experienced staff and field reporting. Nor does an oppositional editorial stance automatically eliminate the pressures generated by ownership and market structures.

Ratings and digital viewing figures also shape both definitions of newsworthiness and modes of presentation. Sensational crime stories, confrontational debates and violent footage may remain on screen for extended periods because they are expected to attract audiences, while coverage of labour, women, migration and human rights is confined to a narrower space.

Short, "striking" clips taken from television broadcasts and recirculated on social media have themselves become a source of economic value. A presenter's comment, a caption or footage of a conflict stripped of its original context can reach a far wider audience than the full report, encouraging newsrooms to produce shorter, more dramatic and more definitive statements. Rights, labour and civilian-life stories often require more fieldwork and editorial labour, while sensational crime stories and confrontational studio debates can emerge as cheaper and less risky forms of content. Audience expectations can also translate into pressure to avoid showing certain political actors or to frame stories in ways that appeal to a channel's established audience.

Political and regulatory pressures further narrow the space for journalism. The administrative fines, programme and broadcast suspensions, and—in certain circumstances—licence revocations provided for under RTÜK regulations and Law No. 6112 on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Media Services do not exert an effect only when sanctions are actually imposed. They also lead journalists and managers to anticipate possible consequences.

When it is difficult to predict which word, image, slogan or comment may trigger a sanction, this uncertainty becomes embedded in everyday editorial decision-making.

The live nature of television broadcasting intensifies these pressures. Images of protests, slogans that may be heard during a live broadcast, terminology concerning prisons and on-screen captions are all assessed against the possibility of sanctions. Images showing police intervention at street demonstrations, for instance, are evaluated not only on the basis of news value but also in light of the risk of fines, broadcast suspensions or licensing consequences.

Self-censorship therefore does not operate solely by keeping a subject off air altogether. It may also take the form of cutting a live feed, muting sound, replacing footage, softening terminology, or briefing a reporter in advance.

These pressures do not always result in a story being abandoned entirely. Some channels replace potentially sanctionable language with more explanatory or legally defined terminology, make the source of a statement explicit or find another format through which to continue reporting the rights dimension of an event. Such strategies may prevent a story from disappearing altogether. At the same time, the fact that journalists must continually calculate which terms they can use according to the risk of sanctions reveals the boundaries of what can be said.

At the structural level, the conditions that enable rights-based peace journalism centre on editorial autonomy, predictable regulation and equal access. Clear boundaries between media ownership and economic interests on the one hand and editorial decision-making on the other; transparency of ownership; prioritising the public interest over ratings; and clear, accountable criteria for sanctions all expand journalists' room for manoeuvre. Equal access to distribution and audience-measurement systems, adequate resources for field reporting and greater economic sustainability can further strengthen these structural conditions.

7.2. Institutional Practices: Editorial Frameworks and Working Conditions

Editorial institutionalisation in Turkey does not follow a single model. Some media organisations operate according to explicit, publicly stated principles on racism, sexism, women, LGBTQI+ people and other rights issues. Elsewhere, the editorial language developed over the years, the editorial desk and the final review by the responsible editor play the decisive role. Where no written framework exists, experienced staff may shape language, source selection and verification through informal guidance and intervention.

Where written principles are repeatedly put into practice in everyday production, avoiding racist, sexist, polarising and discriminatory language becomes more than a matter of individual preference. Morning editorial meetings, specialist editors, news editors, voice-over, editing, graphics and broadcast management all become stages at which a shared editorial language is produced. Discussing mistakes within the newsroom, passing principles on to new staff and considering concrete criticism from audiences, journalists and academics at editorial meetings all help institutionalise these principles and make them sustainable. What matters, in other words, is not simply declaring ethical principles but embedding them throughout the production process.

Working conditions directly affect whether these principles can be put into practice. Understaffing, low pay, precarity, high staff turnover and reliance on interns can weaken institutional memory. Assigning critical editing, control-room or editorial responsibilities to inexperienced staff can increase the likelihood of errors. Limited numbers of reporters push newsrooms towards greater reliance on agencies, websites and other broadcasters. This reduces the time and resources available to reach those directly affected by an event, compare different sources and gather independent information from the field.

Unemployment, low levels of unionisation and fear of losing one's job also set limits on editorial dissent. A journalist seeking to stop a problematic expression from being used, prevent an unverified story from being aired or change a discriminatory frame may have to consider the possibility of repercussions within the organisation. In such circumstances, it may be possible only to soften the language without changing the story's underlying frame. Where there is an editorial board, an explicit corrections mechanism, collective decision-making and union protection, however, an individual objection can become part of an institutional review process.

The multi-stage nature of television news production also extends institutional responsibility beyond the reporter. A reporter's text and footage may be altered by editors, news editors, voice-over staff, video editors, graphics teams and broadcast management. Without shared oversight across these stages, a measured text can be hardened by a dramatic voice-over; a cautious statement can become a definitive claim in an on-screen caption; or repeated images can create a sense of threat absent from the original script. Where reporters cannot see the final product or challenge decisions concerning footage, captions or editing, their editorial influence over their own work is diminished.

Differences in production between news bulletins and discussion programmes also reveal the limits of a common editorial line. In news bulletins, text, images and captions are generally subject to more clearly defined editorial control. In discussion programmes, live broadcasting, a recurring pool of guests and the presenter's interventions can make the frame more fluid. Long, relatively low-cost programmes may repeatedly feature the same commentators, while topics and guest lists can be shaped by external editorial intervention, economic relationships and political positioning.

Coordination between specialist editors and reporters in different cities can strengthen independent news production. Having specialist editors in areas such as foreign policy, politics, gender and human rights, and building expertise-based relationships between field reporters and the newsroom, can improve both source diversity and verification. Including presenters, moderators, camera operators, video editors and graphics teams in rights-based journalism training also helps prevent responsibility from being placed solely on reporters.

Clear correction and right-of-reply mechanisms strengthen institutional accountability: objections from the people and organisations concerned can be considered, factual errors can be corrected visibly and, where the reporting is accurate, the editorial reasoning behind it can be defended. Legal advice and solidarity mechanisms that do not leave journalists alone in the face of legal risks, the right to raise editorial objections, adequate staffing and an approach that places reporters' safety ahead of getting the story are all important in turning individual rights-based ethical commitments into sustainable institutional practice.

7.3. Journalistic Practice: Verification, Sources, Terminology and Audiovisual Ethics

In everyday journalism, one of the central tensions is between speed and accuracy. The fact that another channel has already reported a development as breaking news, or that it is circulating widely on social media, does not necessarily mean that the information has been verified. Pressure to be first can result in meetings that never took place being reported as fact, incorrect dates and outcomes being circulated, or phrases such as "it is claimed" being used in place of actual verification.

During periods of crisis and conflict, information and images produced by parties to the conflict can circulate extremely quickly. Limited field reporting and dependence on news agencies and social media for information increase this risk.

Reporting on crises, wars, conflicts and security issues in Turkey can be said to operate within a powerful network of official sources. The Presidency, ministries, security institutions, political party officials and news agencies provide information quickly and regularly. Reaching local reporters, international agencies, civil society organisations or those directly affected, by contrast, requires more time and expertise.

In rights-based peace journalism, it therefore becomes essential to make clear to audiences the distinction between verified information, official statements, testimony, commentary and claims. For social-media footage, journalists generally need to check the account that first uploaded it, when and where it was recorded, whether it has circulated previously and whether independent verification is possible. When verification is not possible, uncertainty should not be concealed: what is known and what has yet to be verified should be stated explicitly. When inaccurate information is given during a live broadcast, it should be corrected without delay. Source diversity, moreover, means more than simply collecting comments from a range of different names.

A rights-based approach decides whether to describe an event as a "conflict" or an "attack" by considering what happened to civilian living spaces and the power relations between the parties. Terminology is therefore not simply a matter of sensitivity over individual words. It concerns which actors are granted the right to define themselves and which consequences for rights are incorporated into the interpretation of an event. Such an approach does not accept official discourse as the only legitimate form of naming.

Attributing contested terminology to its source makes visible the distance between a broadcaster's own voice and the statement it is reporting. Likewise, ceasefires and agreements should not be framed solely in terms of elimination, surrender or the restoration of central state authority; their implications for rights, negotiations and political participation also need to be made visible.

In moments of crisis, slowing down can itself become a concrete journalistic choice. When national symbols and security discourse generate intense emotions, resisting the impulse to repeat the first reaction or an immediate definitive judgement allows journalists to reassess the information, provide historical context and make other dimensions of an event visible.

Ethical issues specific to television become particularly apparent in the use of images, sound, captions and editing. A dramatic, angry or contemptuous tone from a presenter or voice-over, combined with definitive on-screen captions, can turn an otherwise measured report into a polarising one. In rights-based television journalism, journalists need to consider whether an image contributes information that is genuinely necessary to the story, whether it may harm a person's dignity or safety, whether it exposes a child's identity and whether repeated use of violent imagery risks normalising violence.

During live broadcasts, a rapid verification line between editors, the control room, reporters and presenters can make it possible to state openly what is not yet known and to issue corrections visibly when necessary.

7.4. Rights-Based Peace Journalism Strategies Developed Within Constraints

Structural and institutional constraints narrow journalists' room for manoeuvre, but do not eliminate it altogether. In everyday production, reporters can develop a range of strategies to keep an issue from disappearing from coverage altogether, limit the circulation of unverified information, and maintain a degree of distance from dominant discourse. These strategies may take the form of an explicit editorial objection, but they may also involve less visible interventions: making a small change to the text, identifying the source of a statement, withholding definitive judgement or limiting the use of particular images. Journalists' influence often lies less in transforming the entire frame of a story than in reducing the impact of a problematic frame or creating space within the story for an alternative reading.

One strategy is to attribute contested terminology to a specific source rather than adopting it in the channel's own voice. Instead of turning the terminology used in an official statement directly into the language of the report, journalists can make clear who is using it and distinguish between organisations, communities and identities.

A term considered institutionally or legally risky does not necessarily have to be abandoned altogether; it may instead be accompanied by an explanatory formulation. A region's self-designation and its official designation can be used side by side, or the political distinction between different names can be briefly explained. In this way, journalists can remain within institutional constraints while partly resisting the transformation of official discourse into the sole legitimate source of knowledge and terminology.

Another strategy is to make room for verification in the face of pressure for speed. Rather than immediately presenting every development as established fact, journalists can identify the source, leave unverified elements explicitly open and, where necessary, accept a delay in publication or broadcast. For social-media footage, this means checking the date, location and original uploader; official statements can be cross-checked against local reporters, international agencies and other sources.

During crises, instead of reproducing the initial emotional response, journalists can broaden the context through a follow-up feature, background story or expert analysis prepared the following day. Slowing down in this way does not mean allowing the story to disappear from the agenda. Rather, it can provide an effective way of reporting without surrendering entirely to the securitised and polarising frame established in the immediate aftermath of an event.

Source selection is another key area in which limited room for manoeuvre can be expanded. Even when the inclusion of an official statement cannot be avoided, a journalist can add local testimony, a statement from a rights organisation, or the words of someone directly affected by the event.

In discussion programmes where there is little control over guest selection, questions can be used to bring civilian consequences, inequalities of power, and possibilities for negotiation into the discussion. A presenter or moderator can partially expand the boundaries of the debate by challenging a guest's generalisation, asking for its source or drawing attention to the experience of another actor.

Strategies specific to television's audiovisual form can include not using certain footage at all, shortening it, blurring it or limiting its repetition. While a reporter may try to maintain measured language in the script, an editor can seek to prevent dramatic effects from being reintroduced during editing or in the control room by reviewing the final version and challenging decisions about images.

Definitive on-screen captions can be softened; claims can be clearly distinguished from verified information; and the emotional register of voice-overs can be reduced. Juxtaposing images of violence with footage of everyday life, civilian needs and calls for peace can also limit the dominance of military action over the narrative.

These practices do not suggest that journalists possess unlimited autonomy independent of the conditions in which they work. More often than not, they make it possible to use more careful language, draw on a wider range of sources and construct a less harmful visual narrative within an existing frame rather than transforming that frame altogether.

At times, individual and collective resignations also make visible the tensions between professional and personal priorities on the one hand and structural and institutional conditions on the other. The strategies described here should therefore not be understood as substitutes for structural and institutional safeguards. Rather, they are everyday professional interventions that seek to make room for information, context and rights-holders within an increasingly constrained news environment.

8. Overall Assessment

This report finds that, during the period examined through the lens of rights-based peace journalism, most of the six channels framed the "Syria" agenda and the Kurdish issue primarily through a security lens and displayed practices closer to war journalism. On television in Turkey, peace journalism appears less as an established and sustained journalistic practice than as a space that expands and contracts in response to political developments.

During periods of ceasefire and agreement, terms such as "negotiation," "dialogue" and "integration" become more prominent. Yet when national symbols come to the fore—as in the "flag-lowering" incident—or when fighting intensifies, security discourse quickly returns.

In most broadcasts, therefore, the language of peace is driven not by a lasting editorial commitment on the part of the channel but by the shift of the actors being reported on towards diplomacy. When the parties negotiate, the media report the negotiations, but rarely open up a discussion of the social conditions required for peace, its rights dimension or the obstacles it may encounter. Peace is largely framed as an arrangement between states, armed actors and security policies. Ceasefires, disarmament, integration and the restoration of central authority are presented as its primary indicators.

The approach shared by most of the channels suggests that security discourse in Turkey functions not merely as a political position but as an entrenched regime of knowledge. Having numerous experts repeat the same security frame in different words does not alter the underlying hierarchy of knowledge.

Security discourse is not confined to pro-government broadcasters. Channels commonly described as opposition media may criticise government policies, distance themselves from official statements and give space to different political views. Yet when it comes to the Kurdish issue and the "Syria" agenda, state-centred concepts, security expertise and distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate actors remain present in opposition broadcasting as well. Ownership or ideological proximity to the government is therefore not, in itself, the determining factor.

The persistent linking of developments in Syria to debates over peace in Turkey also demonstrates how porous the boundary is between foreign-policy reporting and the Kurdish issue within Turkey. The terminology used for the SDF, YPG and PKK does more than define actors in Syria: it also shapes which Kurdish actors are regarded as legitimate in Turkey and with whom peace can be discussed.

The security discourse surrounding "Syria" does not remain outside Turkey's peace process. On the one hand, the discourse of a "Terror-Free Turkey" brings the possibility of negotiations and disarmament onto the agenda. On the other, the same discourse can reduce peace to the resolution of a security problem rather than addressing rights and political participation.

The varying visibility given to the hair-braiding protests and the "Rojava" protest in Istanbul makes the social and gender dimensions of peace journalism particularly clear. While television channels converge in their coverage of official agreements and military developments, women's solidarity, violence against the body and political demands voiced in the streets can far more easily fall outside the news agenda.

Television's audiovisual form makes these limitations even more visible. Maps, troop numbers and live reports from the field can lend an appearance of technical authority to a security narrative, while dramatic footage, on-screen captions and tone of voice set the emotional boundaries through which events are understood.

One channel may construct a military frame through a harsh and judgemental voice-over, while another may do so through the language of expertise and technical detail. Peace journalism on television therefore cannot be achieved simply by softening the language. It also requires rethinking the relationship between images, sound, sources and editing.

Peace journalism requires changes to the sources of information on which reporting relies, the actors it recognises as legitimate, the stories it considers newsworthy and the routines through which news is produced. It means not only maintaining critical distance from official statements, but also refusing to reproduce the words of marginalised actors uncritically; not only showing civilians, but recognising them as sources of knowledge and rights-holders in their own right; and not only reporting a ceasefire, but investigating the social conditions necessary for peace.

From this perspective, the central question facing peace journalism in Turkey is broader than whether the media supports peace. The more fundamental question is whose knowledge journalism draws on when it talks about peace, through which rights it understands peace, and what conception of political agency it allows into the conversation.

The broadcasts examined in this report show that space does open up for the language of peace at particular moments. Yet that space remains bounded by security discourse, hierarchies of official sources and conditional forms of legitimacy. Sustainable rights-based peace journalism requires moving peace beyond a language invoked only when conflict temporarily subsides and embedding it instead in the everyday practices of sourcing, representation and verification that shape news production.

At the same time, the report provides important examples of how individual editorial choices can still make a difference even within structural constraints. In this sense, it reflects Alankuş's observation that "there is always somewhere to begin practising peace journalism." This study seeks to make those points of departure visible—with both their possibilities and their limits.

9. Recommendations for rights-based peace journalism

Reducing war-, victory- and security-centred language in television news and discussion programmes cannot be achieved simply by avoiding particular words. For rights-based peace journalism to take root, the entire news-production process — from the choice of subjects and sources to decisions about images and sound and the management of programmes — needs to be reviewed.

These principles cannot be left solely to reporters' individual choices or to occasional training sessions. Newsrooms should establish written editorial principles covering source use, terminology, verification, audiovisual ethics and correction procedures.

1. **Question security-centred approaches.** When reporting cross-border developments, newsrooms should regularly question the tendency to build stories primarily around military, bureaucratic and official state statements and reports. The right to life, housing, health and humanitarian crises should be treated as primary subjects of the news.
2. **Ensure source diversity.** The parties to the conflict, regional actors, civil society organisations and international rights advocates should be systematically included in the news process.
3. **Mainstream feminist epistemology.** Mainstreaming feminist epistemology requires journalism to question the masculine gaze that has become normalised in the profession, as well as claims to neutrality and objectivity, and to make visible the relationship between othering and gender. Rather than representing women and marginalized communities only through victimhood, journalism should include them as rights-holders able to speak through their own experiences, knowledge and political demands.

1. **Strengthen verification and editorial judgement in moments of crisis.** Symbolic crises such as the "flag-lowering" incident can encourage a rapid, emotionally charged broadcasting language. In such situations, definitive judgements should not be made before the source, date, location and context of footage have been verified; when necessary, publication or broadcast should be delayed.
2. **Position discussion programmes as inclusive spaces.** Discussion programmes have the potential to open space for events to be debated and shared from different perspectives. Yet such discussion should rest on a common commitment to prioritising constitutional safeguards, minority rights and social reconciliation. Moderators bear responsibility for maintaining this framework.
3. **Build the language of peace.** Training on gender equality, rights-based approaches and peace journalism for media workers and editorial teams should be institutionalised. Language that deepens conflict, polarises, accuses or declares people guilty should give way to constructive language that creates space for mediation and non-violent civilian solutions.
4. **Make choices of sound, image and editing rights-based.** Peace journalism must be reflected not only in the written script but across the whole of television's narrative form. Decisions about sound, images and editing should not be treated as merely technical operations carried out at the final stage. The frame established by a reporter can change during editing, voice-over, graphics and broadcast management. The rights-based character of audiovisual storytelling should therefore be treated as a shared editorial responsibility across all units involved in news production, not as the responsibility of the reporter alone.

8. **Ensure pluralism in representation.** Representatives of local and central government and other official actors can easily become primary sources because they are able to circulate their statements quickly. Such statements should pass through an editorial filter, and newsrooms should ensure that people and communities whose voices are less often heard in the public sphere can also appear as subjects in the news. In societies where gender, belief, ethnic identity, class position and other differences coexist, journalism should reflect that plurality in its sources and systematically create speaking space for groups that are excluded, rendered invisible or have limited opportunities for representation.

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Appendix 1 – Summarify quantitative data analysis methods

1. LLM (Large Language Model)-based discourse labelling

Each sentence in the dataset was labelled across six discourse dimensions using a large language model (LLM). Labelling was conducted in two stages: the first covered sentiment, hate speech and offensive language; the second covered polarising language, othering and erasure. A confidence score from 1 to 5 was also generated for each dimension.

LLM-based discourse labelling

Dimension	Definition	Label Options
1. Sentiment	The dominant emotional tone of a sentence	Positive / Negative / Neutral
2. Hate Speech	Derogatory or threatening language based on protected characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, religion or gender)	Present / Absent + category + target
3. Offensive Language	Insults, profanity, demeaning language or provocation—not necessarily identity-base	Present / Absent + target
4. **Polarising Language**	Language that casts a group as "other" and excludes it from society	Polarising / Not polarising
5. Othering	Language that casts a group as "other" and excludes it from society	Othering / Not othering + target
6. Dismissal	Dismissal of opposing views or groups; in extreme cases, dehumanisation	Dismissal / Dehumanisation / Neither

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION: When a presenter or reporter relayed an event in journalistic language, the sentence was treated as "reporting" and was not given a problematic label, no matter how severe the quoted content might be. By contrast, when a speaker — such as a politician, guest or citizen — directly targeted a group, the statement was labelled under the relevant discourse dimension.

2. Confidence score

A confidence score from 1 to 5 was generated for each label. The score reflects how certain the model was about its own classification.

Confidence score

Score	Meaning
5	Certain – clear, unambiguous wording
4	High confidence – minor differences in interpretation may arise
3	Moderate confidence – more than one interpretation is possible
2	Low confidence – meaning conveyed implicitly or by insinuation
1	Very low confidence – statement is too brief or lacks context

The confidence score plays an important role in interpreting raw labelling rates. Checking whether a discourse dimension with a high rate rests mainly on low-confidence classifications is one of the principal ways of assessing the robustness of the findings.

3. Topic modelling (BERTopic)

Turkish-language topic modelling was conducted using the BERTopic library. A separate model was trained for each channel and the resulting topics were automatically named by an LLM. The discourse profile of each topic across the six dimensions was then calculated to identify relationships between topics and discourse.

4. Keyword analysis

Four keyword groups were defined for the period and every sentence was matched against these groups. Daily and period-based match rates were then calculated.

Keyword group definitions

Group	Example keywords
Security / Operations	operation, cleared out, elimination, neutralised, root out, defeat
Terrorism / Groups	terrorist organisation, PKK, YPG, SDF (SDG), ringleader, terrorist leader
Politics / Negotiations	alliance, bargaining, reform, rights, national survival, ceasefire, agreement
Conflict / Violence	bomb, chaos, braided hair, peace, brotherhood, order