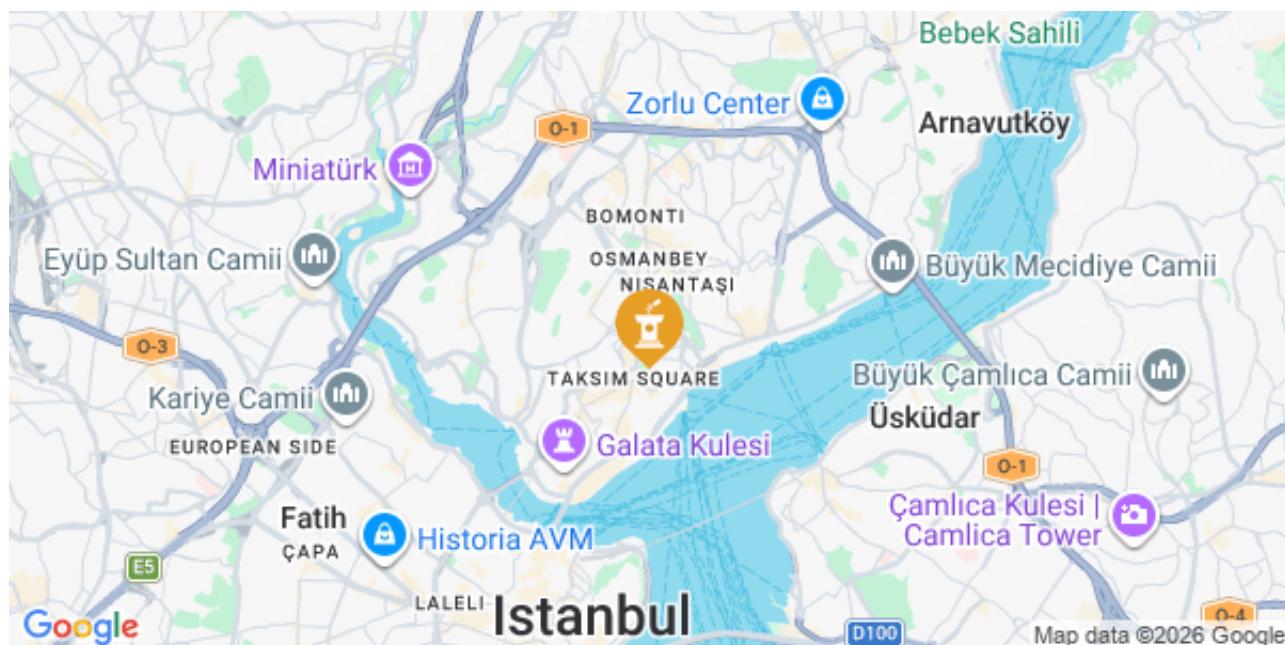




Politics



02

FEB

14:06 UTC

Turkey Alert: Israeli national arrested in Istanbul for insulting President, per February 1 reports; remain cognizant of local laws

Current Situation:

- An Israeli national has reportedly been detained on charges of “insulting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish flag, and the State of Palestine.”
- The arrest reportedly took place in Istanbul’s Taksim Square.
- The individual has remained in detention for over ten days and was traveling alone in Turkey at the time of the incident, per reports.
- The case is reportedly being handled by Israel’s Foreign Ministry.

Source: [Walla](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. Turkish authorities frequently arrest individuals for insulting the President or national symbols under Article 299 of the Turkish Penal Code. The charges carry penalties of up to four years’ imprisonment, which may reportedly be extended if the insults are made publicly. The law also applies to foreign nationals who have previously been detained on similar charges. For instance, in [March 2025](#), a Swedish journalist was arrested on charges of insulting the President and alleged

links to a terrorist organization.

2. Together with the latest incident, this underscores the authorities' resolve in maintaining tight control over politically sensitive expression, as well as heightened sensitivities toward criticism of the state. Foreign nationals may be particularly susceptible to such charges based on a lack of awareness of these local customs and the penalties that they carry.
3. The profile of the latest detainee, an Israeli national, is notable and comes amid a significant deterioration of relations between Ankara and Jerusalem since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023. This has manifested in Ankara adopting a strong pro-Palestinian stance, resulting in anti-Israel rhetoric from Turkish officials and a decision to ban trade with Israel in [May 2024](#). It also resulted in the detention and deportation of an Israeli footballer playing in Turkey in [January 2024](#). He was charged with "publicly inciting the public to hatred and hostility" after he displayed a message and a Star of David on his wrist during a match, referencing 100 days since Hamas' attack on Israel in October 2023.
4. In this context, the allegation that the woman "insulted the State of Palestine" may imply that Turkish authorities treat expressions perceived as anti-Palestinian as subject to legal or official scrutiny under Article 299. This is particularly with remarks made by Israeli nationals, who may face increased scrutiny in this regard amid heightened anti-Israel sentiments among the Turkish public and strained bilateral relations between the states. The individual's reported detention for over ten days is likely to be perceived by Israel as influenced by these diplomatic sensitivities linked to her nationality.
5. **FORECAST:** As indicated by reports, high-level diplomatic efforts are likely to continue in the coming days to secure the detainee's release. Based on precedent, such cases involving foreign nationals are typically resolved through deportation accompanied by entry bans, and a similar outcome is thus likely in this instance. Regardless, further incidents are likely to recur, highlighting the risk of detention for foreign nationals operating or residing in Turkey who may not be accustomed with local laws.

Recommendations:

1. Those operating or residing in Turkey are advised to refrain from public statements, the display of symbols, or social media posts that may be perceived as critical of Turkey, its state institutions, government policies, the President, or sensitive geopolitical developments such as the Israel-Hamas war, as this may lead to prosecution and arrest.
2. Foreigners, particularly Israelis, conducting travel in Turkey are advised to remain cognizant of local political, religious, and social customs and avoid discussing potentially sensitive topics.
3. Remain mindful of any social media posts published prior to travel that may be viewed by the authorities as critical of Turkish government policies or senior officials. Security personnel may examine personal electronic devices for such content upon entry into Turkey.