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**Notice:** Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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# **TURKEY arrests dozens of students at peaceful protest over LGBT rights**

By News Wires

*President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday lashed out at Turkey's LGBT movement, accusing it of "vandalism" following an outbreak of student protests.*

France24/AFP (02.02.2021) – <https://bit.ly/3cviwx1> – Four people were arrested over the weekend for depicting Islam's holiest site with pictures of the LGBT rainbow flag during a

rally at Istanbul's Bogazici University.

And shortly after Erdogan's televised speech on Monday, another rally erupted at the same school with dozens of people detained and social media footage showing police dragging away students who had been protesting peacefully.

"We will carry our young people to the future, not as the LGBT youth, but as the youth that existed in our nation's glorious past," Erdogan said during a video linkup with members of his ruling AK Party.

"You are not the LGBT youth, not the youth who commit acts of vandalism. On the contrary, you are the ones who repair broken hearts."

### **'Inciting hatred'**

Rights groups accuse Erdogan of taking the mostly Muslim but officially secular country on an increasingly socially conservative course during his 18 years in power.

Homosexuality has been legal throughout modern Turkey's history.

But gay people often face harassment, and LGBT events – including Istanbul Pride – have been blocked under Erdogan.

Turkey was hit by a wave of student protests last month after Erdogan appointed a loyalist as the head of Bogazici University.

During one demonstration last Friday protesters hung an artwork opposite the new rector's office depicting the holy site in Mecca and images of the LGBT movement's rainbow flag.

Turkish police accused four people of "inciting hatred in the population". Two of them have been remanded in custody and the other two placed under house arrest.

Turkish Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu branded the suspects "four LGBT freaks".

Groups of students once again demonstrated at Bogazici university on Monday despite the presence of hundreds of riot police, demanding the four be freed and the rector stand down.

AFP reporters saw several students dragged away by the police and Istanbul's governor later confirmed 159 people had been arrested.

Further afield in the Aegean resort city of Izmir, social media posts showed police scuffling with a small group of rainbow flag-waving students.

The rallies have echoes of the 2013 protests that sprang up against plans to demolish an Istanbul park before spreading nationally and presenting a direct challenge to Erdogan's rule.

Erdogan last month accused some of those taking part in the student demonstrations of being "terrorists".

*Photo Credits : Reuters / Murad Sezer*

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