



Think, think...

Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

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What happened last week?

*** Erdoğan spoke on operations to replace mayors with trustees, saying, "*We will use our authority.*" He further stated that the operations will continue. As Erdoğan claimed that the People's Democratic Party (HDP) municipalities are sending money to Qandil, documents of presents worth thousands of Turkish Liras gifted by the trustees to Erdoğan and other AKP ministers were revealed.

*** Protest demonstrations against trustee operations on municipalities continue. Human Rights Association made a call for the UN and the EU to take urgent action against police violence. According to the data announced by the association, around 1000 detainments were recorded in the first week of the protests between August 19-23. Five journalists were kept arbitrarily under custody for seven days after being detained while tracking protests in Mardin on August 20th.

*** 189 people, including journalists, academics, artists, politicians and lawyers, launched a common declaration and stated, "*We do not recognise trustees.*" (***Details in the bulletin...***)

*** Erdoğan announced that ground troops would enter eastern Euphrates in Syria in a short while.

*** Together with their heavy ammunition, YPG troops retreated 25 to 40 kilometers within the "security zone" agreed upon by Turkey and the U.S.

*** Suriye ordusu İdlib'deki operasyonlarını yoğunlaştırırken Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Moskova'ya gitti, son gelişmeleri Rusya Devlet Başkanı Putin ile görüştü. Yapılan ortak açıklamada Putin; "*Kaygılıyız. Oradaki teröristler Rus askeri üslerini tehdit ediyor. Türkiye ile teröristlerin yok edilmesi için ek tedbirlerin çerçevesini belirledik*" dedi. Erdoğan bölgedeki sükuneti Suriye rejiminin saldırılarının bozduğunu söyledi.

*** Regarding the incidents between June 7th and November 1st, former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said, "*When the records are opened, many people wouldn't be able to look others in the eye.*" Following these statements, the People's Democratic Party (HDP) requested a Parliamentary research. AKP could not solely win the elections on June 7, 2015. Between June 7th and the re-elections on November 1st, when the AKP came to power alone, incidents have occurred starting with a bomb explosion during the Diyarbakır rally of the People's Democratic Party (HDP). The period witnessed successive attacks in many provinces, from Suruç to Dağlica, and from Ankara to Diyarbakır, with hundreds of casualties.

*** President Erdoğan spoke in Ahlat district of Van and stated, "*We will construct this state building in our district, no matter who is disturbed or tries to prevent it.*" The article added to the omnibus bill for the construction of a Presidential Palace in Ahlat, which started in April 2019, has previously been annulled by the Constitutional Court.

*** The number of bar associations boycotting the Opening Ceremony of the New Judicial Session, planned to be held in the Presidential Palace on the 2nd of September, reached 51.

*** State of Emergency Applications Monitoring Committee concluded 84,300 out of the 126,200 applications so far that were made on those dismissed from public service as well as on shut-down institutions and organisations through Statutory Decrees. The Committee denied 77,600 applications. Therefore, the data revealed once again how "effective" a domestic legal remedy the committee is.

*** Istanbul Governorate announced that 16,423 refugees were transferred to provinces with Deportation Centers.



Declaration by academics, artists, politicians and lawyers: “We do not recognise trustees”

189 people, including journalists, academics, artists, politicians and lawyers, launched a common declaration and reacted against the trustees assigned to Van, Diyarbakir and Mardin municipalities to replace mayors. “*We consider this coup against Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van Mayors to have been made against ourselves. We do not*

recognise this decision. We consider every knock against people who protect their elected mayors, to have been made against ourselves. We are against tyranny. We know very well that those remaining silent today will be the victims of tomorrow. We invite everyone around the world, who believe in democracy, in the will of people, in the right to election, freedom of thought, supremacy of law, feeling of justice and the sound of conscience to react against this tyranny,” stated the declaration. [Please click here](#) for the full declaration and the signatories.



Detainments within trustee operations exceed 1000

Human Rights Association (IHD) Diyarbakir Branch indicated that the rights to election, meeting and demonstration, freedom of expression and information of millions were violated within one week after trustee operations against municipalities.

According to the data announced by the Association, more than 1000 citizens, including journalists, were detained between August 19th and 23rd in various provinces - especially in Diyarbakir, Van and Mardin. Human Rights Association (IHD) pointed out that the Governorates and the Ministry of the Interior committed a crime through acting against the Constitution and the law, that torture and mistreatment were arbitrarily applied and that the intervention against social reactions were completely unlawful.

The association demanded the following from the authorities after one week of observation:

1. Immediate withdrawal of trustee assignments
2. Re-employment of previously dismissed Co-Mayors
3. An end to the restrictions against peaceful meetings and demonstrations
4. And end to applications that are against the torture and mistreatment ban during interventions against demonstrations. Active investigations to be opened against security forces and their commanders applying torture and mistreatment.
5. An end to unrightful and arbitrary custodies, detainments and arrests.



2-year 4-month imprisonment sentence against journalist due to tweets

Artı Gerçek news portal editor and journalist Meryem Yıldırım was sentenced to 2 years and four months of imprisonment due to “having made terrorist organisation propaganda” through her posts on Twitter. Istanbul 36th Assize Court did not abate or defer the sentence due to the journalist “not exhibiting any signs of remorse.” Reacting against the sentence, which is currently at the stage of appeal, Yıldırım’s lawyer Veysel Ok stated, “The tweets Meryem posted were solely those calling for justice. The court has unfortunately used its own authority and did the best it could in order to imprison a journalist.”

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Investigation against commemoration for Ulaş Bardakçı



An investigation was started against Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) members on the commemoration event organised for Ulaş Bardakçı, who was one of the revolutionary youth leaders of the 1968 generation and was killed in 1972. 36 people, who visited the grave of Bardakçı on February 19, 2019, are charged with “making terrorist

organisation propaganda.”

Protest bans in Van and Şırnak



Protest bans were announced in Şırnak and Van as well after trustee operations. The Governorates declared the bans for fifteen days due to “security reasons.” Thus, the ban that never ended since the State of Emergency in Van, was extended once again. Meanwhile, protest bans continue in Diyarbakır and Mardin, where the mayors were previously dismissed.



Kadıköy District Governorate bans Queer Olympix

Kadıköy District Governorate banned Queer Olympix due to “the protection the public order, general health and morality.” The sports event was the first of its kind in Turkey as a queer olympics, and this year was going to be the third round. The event was supposed to start in Heybeliada on August 23rd and continue in Kalamış, Kadıköy on August 24th.



Watch against Geothermal Energy Plant in Manisa intervened

The watch, started by the citizens against the Geothermal Energy Plant (JES) to be constructed in Hacibektaşlı Neighborhood in Salihli, Manisa, was intervened by the gendarmerie with tear gas and pressurized water; 38 were detained.



Access bans

AKP Istanbul MP Ravza Kavakçı was employed at Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in 2008 and left for the U.S. on the same day with the scholarship he received to study. An access ban was brought on the news and Twitter posts revealing the situation. Ankara 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban on the news published on

Euronews and Kronos news portals following the request of Atty. Neslihan Koçer. The news covered the fate of four people who were dismissed from public service with Statutory Decrees. The four people were missing for months and were later found out to have been arrested at Ankara Security Directorate the whole time.



“Normalised State of Emergency” Report

Heinrich Boll Stiftung Association launched a report, examining the legal framework that changed together with the Presidential system. Amendments in the legislation enacted through Statutory

Decrees were categorized and a database was created on certain changes and additions to or reductions from specific laws. [Please click here](#) for details.



TÜRKİYE'NİN MÜLTECİ LGBTİ+'LAR İLE İMTİHANI: IRKÇILIK



HEVİ LGBTİ+ Association launches “Training Program Report on the Fight Against Racism”

Hevi LGBTI+ Association is known with their work on discrimination, sexism, racism and xenophobia through the events they organised during 2018 and 2019. The Association now launched a report within the “Training Program on the Fight Against Racism in the LGBTI+ Field.” The report revealed the experiences of refugee and migrant

LGBTI members. [Please click here](#) for the full report.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

WHO: Taraf Daily Case

CASE: Former executives of previously shut-down Taraf Daily, Ahmet Altan, Yasemin Çongar, Yıldray Oğur and reporter Mehmet Baransu face imprisonment sentences from 20 years up to 52 years and six months due to the document, “Dominant action plan,” having been published on the newspaper.

COURT: İstanbul 13th Assize Court

VERDICT: Baransu testified after being courted by the gendarmerie from Silivri Prison, where he is kept arrested. The hearing was ongoing as the bulletin was being prepared.

WHO: Uğur Yılmaz Case

CASE: Journalist Uğur Yılmaz face an imprisonment sentence for up to 25 years due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” due to the press statements he participated in to track news during the time he was working at Bitlis Municipality Press Unit as well as his social media posts and secret witness statements against him. The journalist is arrested within the case since June 2017.

COURT: Bitlis 2nd Assize Court

VERDICT: The court issued for the file to be sent back to the Prosecutor’s Office for an opinion on the basis to be prepared. The next hearing of the lawsuit will be held on October 22, 2019.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

WHO: Selahattin Demirtaş Case

CASE: Former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş is arrested in remand with an imprisonment claim from 43 years up to 142 years due to “terrorist organisation management,” “making terrorist organisation propaganda,” “violating the Law

on Meetings and Demonstrations,” “public incitement for resentment and hostility,” “public incitement to disobey the law,” “praising the offense and the offender.”

DATE: September 2, 2019, Ankara Sincan Prison Campus Hearing Room

WHO: ETHA-EHB Case

CASE: 23 people on trial, including Etkin News Agency (ETHA) reporters İsmınaz Temel and Havva Cuştan as well as the Legal Bureau of the Oppressed (EHB) lawyers, are charged with “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda.”

DATE: September 3, 2019, at 11:30, İstanbul 27th Assize Court

WHO: Hrant Dink Assassination Case

CASE: Security Directorate, Intelligence Office and Gendarmerie officers having responsibility in the assassination of Agos Daily Editor-In-Chief Hrant Dink are on trial.

DATE: September 4-5-6, 2019, İstanbul 14th Assize Court

WHO: Sözcü Daily Case

CASE: Journalists Burak Abay, Gökmen Ulu, Mediha Olgun and Yonca Yücekaleli are on trial due to “establishing and managing a terrorist organisation,” “making terrorist organisation propaganda” and “committing a crime on behalf of an illegal organisation without being a member.”

DATE: September 4, 2019, 10:00, İstanbul 37th Assize Court

WHO: Çağdaş Erdoğan Case

CASE: Journalist and photoreporter Çağdaş Erdoğan is charged with “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” due to the allegation that he has taken photographs of the social facilities allegedly belonging to the Turkish National Intelligence Agency, as well as his social media posts.

DATE: September 5, 2019, İstanbul 33rd Assize Court

WHO: Academics for Peace Case

CASE: Lawsuits filed against scientists signing the petition, “We Will Not Partake In This Crime,” launched by the Academics for Peace Initiative, due to “making terrorist organisation propaganda.”

DATE: September 5, 2019, 10:00, İstanbul 36th Assize Court; September 6, 2019, 09:30, İstanbul 30th Assize Court

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and the pdf format of the bulletin on www.dusun-think.net/bultenler.**