



Think, think...

Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

(Issue 1/20, 3 January 2020)

What happened last week?

- The Presidential summary on sending soldiers to Libya passed GNAT General Council with 325 votes against 184.
- President Erdoğan stated that Turkey would like to have a say in the future of Antarctica.
- Erdoğan spoke on the controversial Canal Istanbul project and said, “*We will build it, no matter if they want it or not.*” Citizens wanting to submit objection letters against the approving Environmental Impact Assessment (ÇED) report formed long queues in front of environmental directories.
- According to the data shared by former Republican People’s Party (CHP) MP and journalist Barış Yarkadaş, four journalists were arrested in December. Eight of 38 prosecuted journalists were sentenced to a total of 20 years and ten months of imprisonment; new lawsuits were filed against four. 13 journalists were arrested, 82 journalists were detained, 76 journalists were sentenced to a total of 249 years, 11 months and 15 days of imprisonment and new lawsuits were filed against 33 journalists in the year 2019. 60 news were banned to access.
- Despite the violation decree issued last week by the Constitutional Court, Wikipedia is still banned to access for 978 days.



Lawsuit filed against journalist Mehmet Erol

A lawsuit was filed against journalist Mehmet Erol due to his social media posts made from his personal account as well as the account of Democratic Regions Party (DBP), where he was the press consultant between the years 2013 and 2015. The journalist faces an imprisonment claim for up to seven years

within the case at Diyarbakır 10th Assize Court due to “making illegal organisation propaganda.”



Investigation against mother after losing son in train disaster

An investigation was started against Mısra Öz Sel, who was fighting for justice for the penalisation of whoever was responsible for the train disaster in Çorlu district of Tekirdağ with 25 casualties after losing her nine-year-old son. *“They treat relatives and families of the deceased cruelly, without mercy; instead of doing something for justice. I*

will not give up on my case,” Sel said.



Indictment against families and lawyers searching for justice

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office prepared an indictment against Mısra Öz Sel, Hüseyin Şahin and İsmail Kartal, who lost their relatives in the train massacre in Çorlu with 25 casualties; as well as victim lawyers Mürsel Ünder, Gökmen Yeşil and Selvi Yüzbaşıoğlu.

The indictment charged the families and their lawyers with resisting the police and preventing duty during the protest they performed in front of the Constitutional Court on June 12th.



“Singing folk song” becomes crime evidence against arrested artist Yılmaz Çelik

An indictment was prepared against artist Yılmaz Çelik, who was arrested on December 10th, due to “illegal organisation membership” and “propaganda.” His social media posts with photographs of İbrahim Kaypakkaya

and Mahir Çayan, as well as the folk songs he sang were shown as evidence for the “crime.” The first hearing of the case will be held on March 26th At Tunceli 2nd Assize Court.



Co-Mayors charged due to municipal work

In the indictment prepared against Van Muradiye Co-Mayors Yılmaz Şalan and Leyla Balkan, the municipal work they conducted were made bases for the

charges imposed against them. Magazines, music saved on a flash disk, photographs on press statements and funeral visits as well as virtual distribution of the municipality were shown as evidence for the charge of “illegal organisation membership” and “propaganda.” The Co-Mayors have been detained on December 6th, with Şalan later arrested and Balkan released with judicial measures.



RTÜK issues 3.8 million TL fine in one year

Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) fined 12 TV channels, one radio channel and 23 broadcasts with a total of 3,854,476 TL in 2019. Anti-government organisations were targets of these fines throughout the year. FOX TV became the TV channel receiving the most amount of

fines in 2019 with 1,312,515 TL. TELE1 channel was fined with 21,114 TL administrative penalty and broadcast pauses twice due to live broadcasting the group meeting of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP). Radio Sputnik (RS FM) was penalised with broadcast pauses for five times as well as 4,633 TL fine due to the criticisms against the government and the earthquake in Istanbul. KRT TV was fined with 17,065 TL of administrative penalty and broadcast pauses twice due to “criticising Erdoğan.” FOX Life channel was further penalised with 42,228 TL administrative penalty and broadcast pauses for eight times due to a homosexual kissing scene on a TV-series.



Publishers Union: “New censorship council: Family Ministry”

The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services announced the books “*Sexuality - We’re Exploring Sexuality*” by Defne Ongun Müminoğlu, “*Rainbow Inside and Out*” by Mehmet Güler and “*Resentment Wings*” by Adem Özbay “*detrimental.*” Following the

announcement, Turkish Publishers Union made a statement and indicated that the Family Ministry is the new council for censorship. “*These announcements of ‘detriment’, made arbitrarily with insufficient and abstract reasons without being evaluated by experts and without looking at the content, context, literary significance and value of the books are threatening our publishing and our world of culture,*” the union stated.



Time-limitation shield for torturer police officers sentenced to life imprisonment

Istanbul Security Directorate claimed that a disciplinary penalty can’t be given to four police officers, who received

Verdict: After the ordered hearing at Uludere (Roboski) Courthouse, the case will be held in Şırnak on January 13th.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

Selahattin Demirtaş Case

The lawsuit filed against former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş due to “terrorist organisation management,” “making terrorist organisation propaganda,” “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations,” “public incitement towards resentment and hostility,” “public provocation to disobey the law,” “provocation to commit crimes” and “praising the crime and the criminal”...

Date: January 7, 2020; Ankara 19th Assize Court

Barış Polat Case

The lawsuit filed against Mezopotamya Agency reporter Barış Polat, who is charged with “illegal organisation membership” due to his social media posts as well as old issues of Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Daily found in his home...

Date: January 7, 2020 at 10:20; Gaziantep 7th Assize Court

Case Against Kurdish Song

The lawsuit filed against 12 university students, four of them arrested, who are charged with “illegal organisation membership” due to singing in Kurdish during the Newroz Celebrations they participated in last year in Antalya...

Date: 8 Ocak 2020; Antalya 10th Assize Court

Osman Akın Case

The lawsuit filed against former Managing Editor of Yeni Yaşam Daily, Osman Akın due to “denigrating the government” in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code due to the news with the headline, “Tyranny against those arrested in Afrin”...

Date: January 9, 2020 at 10:20; Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Hazal Ocak and Alev Coşkun Case

The lawsuit of compensation filed by pro-government businessman Mehmet Cengiz against Cumhuriyet Daily owner Alev Coşkun and reporter Hazal Ocak due to the news article published in the newspaper with the headline, “Luxury Annex Overseeing the Bosphorus”...

Date: January 9, 2020 at 10:40; Istanbul Anatolian 14th Civil Court of First Instance

Case Against News on Pastor Brunson

The lawsuit filed against journalists Alican uludağ and Duygu Güvenç due to “denigrating the government” in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code in relation to the news they reported for Cumhuriyet Daily on Pastor Brunson...

Date: January 9, 2020 at 10:50; Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Seyhan Avşar Case

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Seyhan Avşar due to “targeting a public officer taking part in the fight against terrorism” through the news article with the headline, “Ex-Con Sözcü Prosecutor”...

Date: January 9, 2020 at 11:00; Istanbul 29th Assize Court

You may find all news of the week on www.dusun-think.net;

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