



# Think, think...

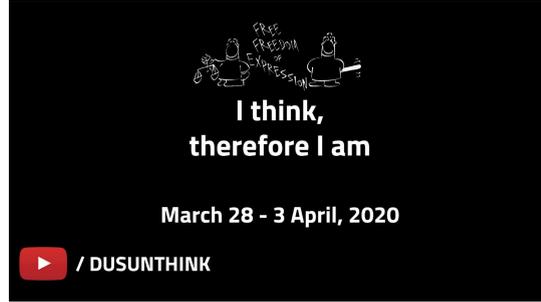
## Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

(Issue 14/20, 3 April 2020)

### What happened last week?

- As Turkey leaves its third week behind in the fight against the Coronavirus, it's become the country that reached 10 thousand cases fastest in the world. A travel ban was issued across the country within the fight against the outbreak. Intercity travels were bound to Governorate permission and all international flights were stopped. More than 70 villages are under quarantine.
- After the cabinet meeting with the expectation of an increase in curfews and the government's social expenses, President Erdoğan made an announcement and repeated his call for citizens to stay home. Erdoğan further announced a "National Solidarity Campaign" and stated that he donated his seven-month salary. The government set its eyes on the citizens' pockets once again, despite expectations of governmental support.
- Aid accounts of Istanbul and Ankara Metropolitan Municipalities were blocked. Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu targeted the municipalities, saying, "They can't collect aid without our permission; they're trying to create a new government." Erdoğan also stated, "There can be no government within a government."
- As Erdoğan said, "We have to continue production and keep the gears running," professional unions demanded a ban against dismissals, together with paid leaves and for all production to be stopped during the pandemic except basic need and emergency products and services.
- As people's information on the outbreak's size and data on the cases is limited only to official announcements, the Medical Association announced the data in their hand. Immediately afterwards, the Ministry of Health started to share relatively more detailed data. Minister of Health Fahrettin Koca made an announcement for the first time on the provincial distribution of Covid-19 cases. The virus is spread all around the country. Istanbul is the province with the most number of identified cases, having 60 percent of all cases there, followed by Izmir, Ankara, Konya and Kocaeli. According to the minister statement, 601 health workers were infected as well. Çapa Faculty of Medicine member Prof. Cemil Taşçıoğlu has lost his life. Taşçıoğlu was in the team that treated the first Coronavirus case known in Turkey.
- The AKP presented to the Parliament a law draft prepared in collaboration with the MHP on regulations regarding penitentiary executions. Journalists, rights advocates and thought "criminals" were left outside the scope of the crime. The government therefore wants to release those, who have committed 'crimes' against other citizens; and to keep those, who resist the government's authority against the threat of the Coronavirus. In other words, the government intends to save the first group and leaves the latter to die. "Such an unlawful situation against human rights can only happen in countries like Turkey," attorney Ergin Cinmen says. You may find his criticism on the amendment in our video bulletin.

- At least six journalists were detained or summoned to testify this week. The Interior Minister announced that 2,863 accounts were identified in the social media operations conducted within the last 15 days.



*[Please click here](#) to watch our weekly video programme, “COGITO ERGO SUM” in which we track developments on freedom of expression and thought in Turkey. “COGITO ERGO SUM” is on [our YouTube channel](#) every Friday and on Can TV every Saturday at 22:00...*



### **Mardin Medical Chamber Co-Chair summoned to testify**

An investigation was started against Mardin Medical Chamber Co-Chair Osman Sağlam after he criticised that Mardin Provincial Health Directorate didn't share information with them and the measures taken against the Coronavirus were insufficient. The investigation was opened

following the complaint of the Provincial Health Directorate and Sağlam testified within the charge of “public incitement towards fear and panic.”



### **Truck driver detained after saying, “I can't stay home, I'm not rich, I'm working”**

Truck driver Malik Yılmaz was detained after he reacted against calls to stay home within the measures against the Coronavirus. Yılmaz had said, “I'm not retired, not a public employee, nor rich. I'm working, I'm a truck driver. I don't earn money if I don't drive. This virus won't kill me, but your system will.” Yılmaz was detained at his home in Istanbul, charged

with “incitement towards disobeying the law” through the video he shared on social media. After testifying at the Prosecutor's Office, Yılmaz was released with judicial control.



### **Investigation against HDP MP after call to “stay home”**

An investigation was started against the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Remziye Tosun, who made an announcement for the residents of some neighborhoods in Sur and Yenişehir districts of Diyarbakır to take measures against the Coronavirus and stay home. Tosun and a HDP Youth Assembly member are charged with “public incitement

towards resentment and hostility or denigration” (in accordance with Article 216 of the Turkish Criminal Code).



### **Coronavirus investigation against journalist Nurcan Baysal**

An investigation was opened against journalist Nurcan Baysal due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” as well as “threat” through her social media posts and articles on the Coronavirus outbreak.



### **Journalist Hakan Gülseven detained**

Journalist Hakan Gülseven reacted against the National Solidarity Campaign recently announced by President Erdoğan with his statements on social media. Gülseven was detained with the allegation of “public incitement towards resentment and hostility, and denigration.” Gülseven was released after testifying.



### **Coronavirus investigation against journalist Ahmet Kanbal**

Journalist Ahmet Kanbal was also summoned to testify due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” and “spreading fear and panic among people” through his news article with the title, “Children with positive Coronavirus tests in the same unit as the

others.”



### Journalists summoned to testify in Van

Journalists Oktay Candemir and Ruşen Takva were summoned to testify within the investigations opened against them. Candemir was indicated to have been charged due to his social media posts on the Coronavirus, whereas Takva stated, *“The reason for my summoning wasn’t explained, as is tradition. It’s probably*

*about the news I reported or my statements at TV shows I attended.”*



### Investigation against journalist Barış Terkoğlu

Another investigation was opened against OdaTV Editor-In-Chief Barış Terkoğlu, who was charged due to the news reported on the Turkish National Intelligence officer, who died in Libya. Terkoğlu is charged due to the news broadcasted on OdaTV on April 5, 2019 with

the headline, *“Who are the new parallel Pelican-supporters?”*



### University student detained over criticising Erdoğan’s ‘campaign’

Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Fine Arts student Ata Egemen Çakıl was detained over criticising the donation campaign started by President Erdoğan for the Coronavirus outbreak. After the campaign was announced with the name, “National Solidarity,” Çakıl

wrote on Twitter, *“Don’t be fooled by the individuals who introduce themselves as President and ask for money on live TV.”* Çakıl was released after testifying.



### Detainment over satirical social media post

A citizen, Ceyhun T., was detained in Bağcılar due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility, and denigration” through his satirical social media post on the recent application requiring shifts for taxis based on “odd-even license plate numbers” in three big metropolitan municipalities of Turkey within the measures against the Covid-19 outbreak.

The citizen was released after testifying. In the satirical post, Ceyhun T. had written, *“Fight at a taxi station in Bağcılar on license plate numbers: 2 wounded, one taxi driver detained.”*



### **Mine company cuts down trees, villagers detained over reacting against it**

Meyra Mining Inc. started to cut down the trees in Kirazlıyayla of Yenişehir district in Bursa in order to extend the lead, copper and zinc mine field. Gendarmerie units detained the villagers, who reacted against the application.



### **Lawsuit against mother after losing child in train disaster**

A lawsuit was filed against Mısra Öz Sel, who fought for justice to prosecute whoever was responsible for the train disaster in Çorlu after losing her 9-year-old son, due to “insulting public officers because of their duty.” Sel had

said that the judicial board “*preferred to play the three monkeys.*” She will stand trial on September 17.



### **2019 shows increased targeting of LGBTI+ defenders**

Kaos GL Association launched the 2019 Media Monitoring Report, which focuses on how LGBTI+s are reflected in the media. According to the report, the number of newspapers targeting LGBTI+s and their rights increased; 56 percent of all articles published in written media involved discriminatory language and

hate speech, showing LGBTI+ identity and existence as a “crime.” In 1419 of 2675 news articles, interviews and columns examined, LGBTI+s were represented with a discriminatory language. Hate speech was identified in 751 texts. 446 texts committed the crime of hate, targeting LGBTI+ individuals, associations or organisations. 1040 texts showed being lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex as a “crime.” 994 texts (35 percent) marked LGBTI+s as “immoral.” [Please click here](#) for the full report.



### **27 rights organisations call Turkey to release thought criminals**

27 Turkish and international non-governmental organizations, including IFoX (Initiative for Freedom of Expression) called Turkey to immediately and unconditionally release all imprisoned journalists, human rights advocates and all other thought criminals due to the

Coronavirus threat in prisons. The organisations underlined that the application of arrest is used as a penalisation in Turkey, saying, “*The imprisoned journalists and rights advocates should not have been arrested in the first place. If they are not released, the serious rights violations they are already victims of, will be heavier.*” Prisoners who are over a certain age and experiencing serious health issues were also demanded to be released.



### **Journalist Hakan Aygün detained**

A long-time executive and producer for Halk TV, Hakan Aygün was detained due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility or denigration” due to his social media post.



### **Indefinite hunger-striker Grup Yorum member Helin Bölek passes away**

Grup Yorum member Helin Bölek, who was on a hunger strike for 288 days to protest the pressure and concert bans, has passed away.



## **TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

- All hearings across the country were postponed except “urgent matters” within measures against Covid-19. Therefore, no hearings will be held next week.