

# Think, think...



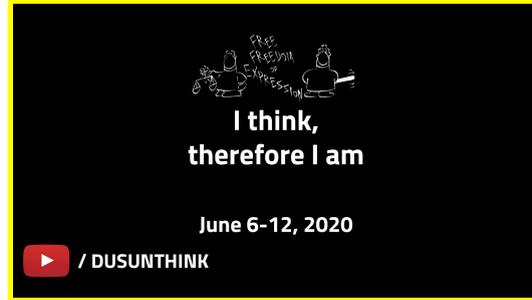
## Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

(Issue 24/20, June 12, 2020)

### What happened last week?

- Speaking during the week, Constitutional Court (AYM) Chairman Zühtü Arslan emphasized “the right to a fair trial and the need to protect fundamental rights and freedoms”. He pointed out that the number of individual applications to AYM is very high and that more than half of the applications are made due to a “violation of the right to fair trial”.
- The Republican People’s Party (CHP) applied to the Constitutional Court (AYM) for the annulment of the Law of Execution. Speaking at the exit of the AYM, CHP Group Deputy Chairman Engin Altay said, "A legal system in which the thinker is in prison and the thief is outside is not fair."
- The ruling power is determined to change the Law on Political Parties! However, the amendments planned to be made in the law will not be directed towards the “power of the leader and the provisions preventing the functioning of intra-party democracy” which the public has been criticizing for years; the AKP-MHP partnership is not hiding the fact that they are working on provisions to prevent new parties from participating in the elections.
- The law proposal regulating the right to use force and weapons use of the bazaar and neighborhood guards was accepted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The guards now possess the authority to intervene in demonstrations and marches as well.
- 10 regional directors of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) were dismissed with a Presidential decree. According to TUIK unemployment data for March 2020, "unemployment has decreased" during the pandemic period. The reliability of TUIK has been debated for a long time ...
- The “Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya)”, which is considered an important part of the world cultural heritage list, continues to be the material of politics. Although the opening of the museum to the worship of Muslims was brought to the agenda by the ruling power, the proposal of the Good Party to “open Hagia Sophia for worship” was rejected on Tuesday by the votes of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) members. Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) abstained.
- Among the three MPs whose Parliament memberships were taken off and were arrested afterwards, Enis Berberoğlu (CHP) and Leyla Güven (HDP) were released. Diyarbakir MP Musa Farisoğulları (HDP) is still under arrest.

- The last pandemic restrictions have been removed as well. Curfews for those between the ages of 0-18 and over 65 have been lifted.



*Our guest this week in the weekly video programme on freedom of expression and thought violations in Turkey is Mahmut Alnak, who was imprisoned 10 times so far and is currently continuing to battle in this field with an electronic clamp on his ankle at home. Alnak is one of the most important names in the tradition of civil disobedience in Turkey. [COGITO ERGO SUM](#) is on our [YouTube](#) channel every week.*

*[Please click here](#) for all of our video bulletins...*



### **Journalist Müyesser Yıldız arrested**

TELE1 Ankara representative İsmail Dükel and ODA TV Ankara representative Müyesser Yıldız were detained after their houses were searched early in the morning. The investigation against Dükel is still unknown; whereas Yıldız was detained within the investigation on “military espionage.” Yıldız was recently targeted by Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu, who called her a “terrorist-sympathizer.” The journalists were

kept in custody for four days and afterwards, Müyesser Yıldız was arrested and İsmail Dükel was released on the condition of judicial measures.



### **Mahmut Alnak in electronic handcuff**

Former Parliament member and lawyer Mahmut Alnak was taken under electronic handcuff following his release with "house imprisonment" in the first hearing he was taken after remaining under arrest for three months with a claim of life imprisonment. "I resisted the handcuff at the security station and courthouse. So they started to

get the rematch of it through attaching an electronic handcuff to my ankle," said Alnak, who likened the practice to the neck rings of slaves in Africa and America. Alnak was the guest of our video programme this week.

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### **Freedoms intervened on grounds of epidemic**

Human Rights Association (IHD) and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) announced rights violations in the first five months with a declaration entitled, "Stop Violence!" The rights organizations indicated that freedoms were intervened with public health being handled as an issue of national security during the outbreak and

called on the ruling power to stop police violence, fight against impunity as well as give up on discriminatory statements with hate speech. According to the data shared by rights organizations, two people have lost their lives and 189 people were exposed to torture and mistreatment as a result of the fire opened by security forces in the last five months. 363 peaceful meetings and demonstrations were intervened using physical violence; 754 people were detained.



### **HRW: Investigations interrupt battle against epidemic**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reacted against the investigations opened against Van, Mardin and Urfa Medical Chamber Chairmen. HRW indicated that doctors are being targeted since March 2020 due to their interviews and social media posts on COVID-19 and stated, "The authorities must respect the important roles health professional

organizations have on both informing people and protecting public health."



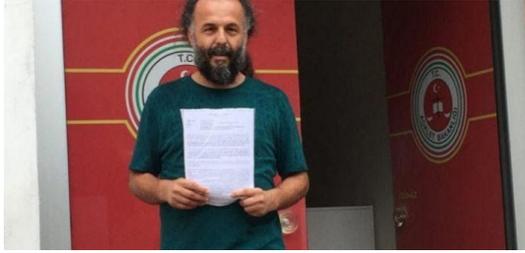
### **Protest bans**

Governorates in Urfa and Gaziantep banned all protest and demonstrations to be organised within the provinces for 30 days due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Events deemed appropriate by the local administration are outside the scope of this ban.



### **Detainments due to social media posts**

Warrants were issued against 9 social media users in Ankara due to "making terrorist propaganda and insulting government authorities;" 8 of them were detained in related operations.



### **Investigation against conscientious objector Şendoğan Yazıcı**

A new investigation was opened against conscientious objector Şendoğan Yazıcı with the allegation of alienating people from the compulsory military service. The conscientious objector faces 8 separate lawsuits so far, and this

time he is charged due to the social media post in which he said, “Don’t serve your military service. Don’t be a part of the militarist order. Be put off the military service, let four corners of the country freeze. Don’t live and let live millions of inhumane denigrations and disgrace.”



### **Penalty against social media post on İskilipli Atıf Hodja**

Branch Manager and Eğitim-Bir-Sen Branch Secretary Ertuğrul Yıldız at Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education was sentenced to administrative condemnation due to his social media post on 10 November. In his related post, Yıldız said, “Today is a day when the axis shift

*reaches a nirvana...!!! I seem to see that some of our friends' posts, turn İskilipli Atıf Hodja, and many Islamic scholars in their grave... A pity.”*



### **This week in cases of insulting Erdogan**

A lawsuit was filed against economist Mustafa Sönmez for “insulting the president” due to the views he shared on his social media account five years ago. The first hearing of the file, which was accepted without the prosecution statement of Sönmez, will be held in November 2020.



### **Villagers detained after attempting to prevent nature massacre**

Villagers resisted the waste facility to be built by a mining company in Kirazlıyayla village of the Yenişehir district of Bursa and were afterwards detained. 5 of the 9 villagers who were called to the gendarmerie station were detained. Villagers were transferred to the Prosecutor's Office and

then were released with judicial control.



## Journalist threatened

Yeni Çağ Daily writer Yavuz Selim Demirağ stated in his column that “bullets were left in the mailbox of his house, but he will not go to the police”. Demirağ has been attacked in front of his house last year, and the investigation remained inconclusive.



## Police intervention against press statement

Workers working on the construction of Cadde54 Shopping Center wanted to make a press statement in front of the construction company for their unpaid receivables. While the police prevented the statement, 8 people were detained. The workers were kept in Üsküdar District Police for a long time, and then were released after

testifying at the Prosecutor's Office.



## 212 news appeared in newspapers in May involving hate speech

According to the data shared by Kaos GL Association, 212 discriminatory statements as well as news and articles involving hate speech against the LGBTI + were identified in national and local newspapers throughout May. In other words, content were published with discriminatory

statements against the LGBTI+ about seven times a day. [Please click here](#) for details.



## Access ban against news on pandemic

An access ban was brought against the news article on 29 Covid-19 cases were identified in Oba Makarna's Gaziantep production facility, which was published on dokuz8haber website. In the decree issued by Gaziantep 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace, it was claimed that “the news article damaged the reputation of the firm by using the name and the logo,” whereas neither the logo nor the name of the firm was in fact used in the

article.