

Think, think...



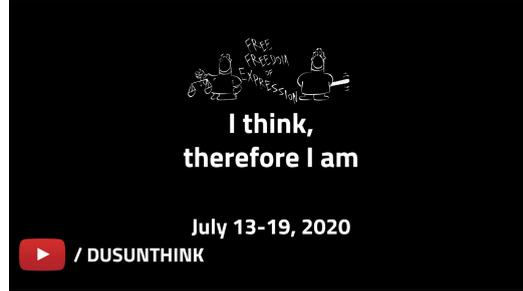
Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin (Issue 25/20, 19 June 2020)

What happened last week?

- The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) ground forces crossed the Iraq border on the morning of June 17 and launched the "Claw-Tiger" operation. The TSK had announced that the air forces has been striking across the border for a while.
- After the Parliament memberships of Leyla Güven and Musa Farisoğulları were taken off, People's Democratic Party (HDP) had announced that it would start a march from Edirne and Hakkari to Ankara under the name, "Anti-Coup Democracy March." Almost all provinces on the marching route have banned entrances and exits to and from the provinces. There continues to be interventions against the march on different locations.
- The meetings held after Erdogan's decision to change the electoral system of Bar Associations remained inconclusive. 80 Bar Associations started a "Defense March" to Ankara on June 19.
- The press embargo against the People's Democratic Party (HDP) members continues... Almost all channels debate a HDP without the HDP. Habertürk channel program producers responded to the criticism: "*We are in the private sector, we can broadcast whatever we want.*"
- The appointment of Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) Chairman Ebubekir Şahin to HalkBank and former national wrestler Hamza Yerlikaya to the Vakıfbank board of directors triggered discussions. Responding to criticisms, (!) AKP Adana Deputy Tamer Dağlı stated from the Parliamentary Chair: "*If you are uncomfortable with Hamza, you must doubt your love of homeland!*"
- Turkey's data of the last week is worrying after it loosened measures against the pandemic. The daily number of new cases approached 1,500. It is mandatory to wear a mask on the street in Istanbul, Bursa and Ankara. The Ministry of Health and the scientific committee seem determined not to disclose the data requested by scientists! "Preparations for international broadcasting," which was shown as the reason for not disclosing the data, have not been concluded. An article prepared for publication was also withdrawn.
- The Constitutional Court decided that the arrest period of Selahattin Demirtaş, who is imprisoned since 2016 and is prevented from his freedom despite a ECtHR decree, has exceeded a reasonable amount. However, the Court didn't evaluate the objection on the non-execution of the ECtHR decree. Thus, this Constitutional Court decree doesn't allow Demirtaş to be released.
- Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu targeted journalist Saygı Öztürk with insults like, "rascal" and "corrupt" after Öztürk wrote about the rise of a bureaucrat, Ali

Ayvazođlu, with an article he wrote with the title, “Trabzon hasn’t seen such a rise in career!”

- Courthouses, which didn’t conduct any prosecutions since mid-March, started their activity once again on June 15; therefore the judicial processes of journalists and rights advocates started. **Details in the bulletin ...**



Our guest this week in the weekly video programme, in which we track the agenda of freedom of expression and thought in Turkey, is academic and former MP [Ufuk Uras...](#) “[COGITO ERGO SUM](#)” is on our [YouTube Channel](#) every Friday...

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



Journalist Beritan Canözer sentenced to prison

Jin news reporter Beritan Canözer was sentenced to 10 months and 15 days of imprisonment after being prosecuted at Diyarbakır 10th Assize Court due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” through her social media posts. The sentence was not deferred.



Imprisonment against artist Azad Bedran

Artist Azad Bedran was sentenced to 3 years and nine months of imprisonment due to “making illegal organization propaganda” through his social media posts and the folk songs he sang in his concerts, as well as the music video he prepared for his song, “Partizan”.



Lawsuit against journalist Aziz Oruç

The indictment prepared against journalist Aziz Oruç, who is under arrest for six months, with the charges of “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organization propaganda” was

accepted by Ağrı 2nd Assize Court. The criminal evidence in the file includes “liking” Roj News and IMC TV Facebook pages as well as an interview he conducted.



Six journalists released

Istanbul 25th Assize Court decided for journalists Ahmet Memiş, Cemal Azmi Kalyoncu, Gökçe Fırat, Ünal Tanık, Yakup Çetin and Yetkin Yıldız to be released. In the prosecution publicly known as the “FETÖ Media Structuring Case,” 16th Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation had approved the decree for 17 defendants and reversed the convictions of six journalists.



Rights advocate Selma Altan released after 7 months under arrest

Aegean Association for Help and Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners and Detainees (EGE TUHAYDER) founding member and rights advocate Selma Altan stood trial in the first hearing of the case filed against her at Istanbul 26th Assize Court. Altan was arrested on November 16, 2019 due to “illegal organization

membership” and was released with a travel ban.



6-year 3-month imprisonment sentence against KADEP Chairman

Participatoric Democracy Party (KADEP) Chairman Lütfü Baksi was sentenced to 6 years and three months of imprisonment in the lawsuit he was on trial due to “illegal organization membership” and “making illegal organization propaganda” through his participation in the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) meetings.



Imprisonment sentence against Turgut Öker due to “insulting Erdoğan”

European Alevi Unions Confederation’s Honorary Chairman and former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Parliament Member Turgut Öker was sentenced to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment. The court turned the sentence into 7000 Turkish Liras of judicial fine.



Human Rights Association Co-Chair threatened with burglary

The Human Rights Association announced that Co-Chair Eren Keskin's home was entered with the impression of burglary, in order to threaten her. The Association stated that those who entered Keskin's home scattered around items and left without taking anything; indicating that the

incident is purely aimed at threatening and scaring. "This threat is against everyone who is on the side of democracy and human rights," the association stated.



Investigation against social media post in 2013 due to "insulting President"

Two separate investigations were opened against Harun Karanfilci due to his social media posts. Karanfilci was charged with "insulting the President" and "conducting a perception operation against Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu" due to a social media post in 2013, whereas at the time,

neither Erdoğan was the President, not Soylu was the Minister. Karanfilci was charged in the second investigation due to his social media posts with "having a pro-coup social media account."



Investigation against acquittal decree in insulting Bahçeli

Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) opened an investigation against the local court judge, who issued a decree of acquittal for a defendant on trial with the allegation that he had insulted Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli, as well as against the Court of Appeal members who approved the decree. The Council accused the

judges of "giving the impression of not being able to conduct their profession correctly and objectively," following the complaint of Bahçeli.



Protests bans with the excuse of pandemic!

Governorates in 10 provinces banned entrances and exits to and from the provinces as well as protests, before the planned march. The bans that last between 3 to 15 days in Adana, Bursa, Bitlis, Hakkari, Kırklareli, Edirne, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Van and Tekirdağ, is based on the Coronavirus

pandemic. Shortly afterwards, protests were banned in Antalya as well and entrances and exits were banned in Batman and Mersin.



Presidency threatens social media on concerts

Presidential Directorate Of Communications announced that it will file lawsuits against those who post on social media about the Yeditepe Concerts, which have recently been on the agenda due to the few number of its audience. The statement claimed that rumors like, “Istanbul

Yeditepe Concerts costed 30 million TLs” are all lies and that there is a false perception operation on social media and in the media.



Protests bans with the excuse of pandemic!

Istanbul Governorate announced that all protests and demonstrations planned in the province until the end of June were banned. The bans in Istanbul were based on the Coronavirus pandemic as well.



1297-day protest ban is “proportionate”, according to court

The third application made by Van Bar Association at the court due to Van Governorate’s 1297-day protest and demonstration ban was denied as well. The administrative court claimed that the ban, which is ongoing for approximately three and a half years, is “necessary and

proportionate.”



Access ban against ozguruz.org

Websites “Özgürüz Radyo” and “ozguruz20.org,” which were online-radios owned by journalist Can Dündar, were banned to access by the court after the complaint of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK).



Access ban against news on pandemic

Gaziantep 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace brought access bans against 32 news articles, 69 tweets, 14 Facebook posts and 2 Instagram posts

on the identified Coronavirus cases in Oba Pasta factory with two separate decrees.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Adil Demirci Case

The lawsuit, in which ETHA reporter Adil Demirci and 22 defendants, including members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed and Federation of Socialist Youth Associations, are charged with “making terrorist organization propaganda” and “illegal organization membership”...

Court: Istanbul 25th Assize Court

Verdict: The audience and press wasn't allowed in the hearing room due to the pandemic. Judicial measures against the defendants were removed. The next hearing was scheduled for November 11, 2020.

Gezi Park Case

The lawsuit against 7 people, including journalist Can Dündar, whose files were separated as a result of the lawsuit filed against Gezi Park protests, with the charges of “attempting to overthrow the government and preventing public officers from performing their duty.”

Court: Istanbul 30th Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for September 15, 2020.

Özgür Gündem Case

The lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily executives Reyhan Çapan and Hüseyin Aykol, as well as newspaper writers İslam Tüner, Lütfi Yavuzarslan, Methi Kaya, Hasan Başak and Kemal Yakut with the charges of “making terrorist organisation propaganda,” “praising the crime and the criminal” and “public incitement towards committing a crime” through the news published in the newspaper in March 2016.

Court: Istanbul 13th Assize Court

Verdict: The court decided to wait for the execution of the warrants issued against Hasan Başak and Kemal Yakut and scheduled the next hearing for October 1, 2020.

Semiha Alankuş Case

The lawsuit filed against Yeni Yaşan Daily Editor Semiha Alankuş due to “illegal organisation membership” after she was detained during the operation against 90 people in eight provinces in October 2018...

Court: Diyarbakır 9th Assize Court

Verdict: The court issued for the journalist's acquittal.

Beritan Canözer Case

The lawsuit filed against Jin News reporter Beritan Canözer due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” through her social media posts...

Court: Diyarbakir 10th Assize Court

Verdict: The court sentenced the journalist to 1 year, 10 months and 15 days of imprisonment. The sentence was not deferred.

Lütfü Baksi Case

The lawsuit filed against Participatory Democracy Party (KADEP) Chairman Lütfü Baksi due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” through participating in the meetings of the Democratic Society Congress (STK)...

Court: Diyarbakir 11th Assize Court

Verdict: The court acquitted Baksi of the charge of “propaganda” and sentenced him to 6-year 3-month imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”

Selma Altan Case

The lawsuit filed against Aegean Association for Help and Solidarity with the Families of Prisoners and Detainees (EGE TUHAYDER) founding member and rights advocate Selma Altan due to “illegal organisation membership”...

Court: Istanbul 26th Assize Court

Verdict: In the first hearing, Altan was released with a travel ban after seven months under arrest. The next hearing was scheduled for a later date.

Hazal Ocak Case

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Hazal Ocak due to “insulting a public officer” through the news article published in the newspaper on “Berat Albayrak purchasing land from the Canal Istanbul route”...

Court: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The lawyers presented an excuse due to the pandemic and couldn't attend the first hearing of the lawsuit. The hearing was held through the file only and the sides' excuses were accepted. The prosecution was deferred.

Rojhat Doğru Case

The lawsuit filed against former Gelî Kurdistan TV cameraman Rojhat Doğru due to “disrupting the unity and the territorial integrity of state,” “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” through his social media posts, his participation in the Kobanê protests on October 6-8, 2014 as he was tracking news information, as well as various interviews he conducted...

Court: Diyarbakir 8th Assize Court

Verdict: The court decided for Doğru, who is arrested within another file, to be prepared ready for the next hearing and scheduled the next hearing for October 13, 2020.

Azad Bedran Case

The lawsuit filed against artist Azad Bedran due to “making illegal organization propaganda” through his social media posts and the folk songs he sang in his concerts, as well as the music video he prepared for his song, “Partizan”... Bedran was sentenced to imprisonment and the Court of Appeals issued a decree of reversal, therefore the file is currently on re-trial.

Court: Diyarbakir 8th Assize Court

Verdict: Bedran was sentenced to 3 years and nine months of imprisonment in the re-trial after the reversal decree of the Court of Appeals.

Turgut Öker Case

The lawsuit filed against the European Alevi Unions Confederation Honorary Chairman and former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Turgut Öker due to “insulting the President”...

Court: Istanbul Anatolian 25th Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: Öker was sentenced to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment and the sentence was turned into 7000 TLs of judicial fine.

Academics for Peace Case

The lawsuit filed against “Peace Petition” signatory and academic Lütfiye Bozdağ...

Court: Istanbul 37th Assize Court

Verdict: The academic was sentenced to 1 year and six months of imprisonment and was acquitted in the re-trial after the violation decree of the Constitutional Court.

Onur Emre Yağan Case

The lawsuit filed against İleri News’ former Editor-In-Chief Onur Emre Yağan due to “making successive terrorist organisation propaganda” through the news published on the website between the years 2014 and 2018, which were shared on social media as well...

Court: Istanbul 33th Assize Court

Verdict: The court decided for the file to be sent to the Prosecutor’s Office for an opinion to be prepared and scheduled the next hearing for July 13, 2020 at 13:00.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

Rifat Doğan Case

The lawsuit filed against Artı Gerçek reporter Rifat Doğan with the allegation of taking a photo in the hearing room on July 3, 2019 during the hearing in the lawsuit filed on the train disaster in Çorlu...

June 23, Tuesday; Çorlu 4th Criminal Court of First Instance

Case Against News on Turkish National Intelligence Agency Officer

The lawsuit filed against eight people, six of whom are arrested, due to “violating the Law on Turkish National Intelligence” and “disclosing confidential information and documents” through the news on the Turkish National Intelligence Agency officer, who died in Libya...

June 24, Wednesday; Istanbul 34th Assize Court

Ender İmrek Case

The lawsuit filed against Evrensel Daily columnist Ender İmrek due to “insult” through his column, entitled, “The Hermes bag was sparkling...” in which he wrote about Emine Erdoğan’s Hermes bag...

June 24, Wednesday; Istanbul Bakırköy 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Deniz Yücel Case

The lawsuit filed against Die Welt Turkey reporter Deniz Yücel due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” and “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” through the interviews he made with PKK executives...

June 24, Wednesday; Istanbul 32nd Assize Court

Case Against Social Media Posts on Afrin Operation

The lawsuit filed against 12 people, including journalists Sibel Hürtaş and Hayri Demir, due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility,” “making illegal organisation propaganda” and “denigrating military forces” through their social media posts on the Afrin Operation...

June 25, Thursday; Ankara 15th Assize Court

Sabiha Temizkan Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Sabiha Temizkan due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” through a Twitter post, in which she wrote, “ISIS wins Mahmur camp”...

June 25, Thursday; Istanbul 35th Assize Court

RedHack Case

The lawsuit filed against six journalists due to “illegal organisation membership,” “disrupting Information and Technology system” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” through the news they reported on the emails of Berat Albayrak, which were initially leaked by RedHack...

June 25, Thursday; Istanbul 29th Assize Court