

Think, think...



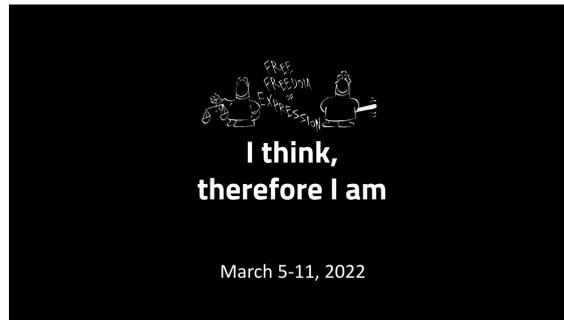
Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 10/22 - March 11, 2022)

What happened last week?

- Naci İnci, the trustee rector of Boğaziçi University, [continued](#) to appoint deans from outside the university to 3 faculties and to trample the university's autonomy...
- The government's heterodox economic policies (!) are getting heavier. Wheat and sunflower products started to experience historical price increases due to the trigger of the Ukraine war, while oil prices experienced increases one after the other. Citizens line up for sunflower oil in the markets. The pressure on the treasury on exchange rates is also ineffective: The dollar has crossed the psychological threshold of 14 against TL, is on its way to 15... Minister Nebati heralded that inflation will remain high throughout the year!
- President Erdoğan has once again targeted healthcare workers. Targeting the doctors who resigned from public hospitals as well as the doctors who went abroad, Erdoğan said, *"I am speaking frankly, let them go... We will continue on our way with our brothers who have just graduated from universities."* Patients cannot find appointments in many branches in public hospitals... The Turkish Medical Association [replied to](#) Erdoğan with the statement, *"We will stay here in this land, as we did yesterday and today, in order to be the power of the weak, to be the cure for the helpless, to fight against death and diseases, to distribute health and healing."*
- According to the data announced by TUIK; the unemployment rate in Turkey remained unchanged compared to the previous month and became 11.4 percent in January. The number of unemployed people increased by 21 thousand in January 2022 compared to the previous month and [reached](#) 3 million 859 thousand people.
- Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu visited Diyarbakır. Kılıçdaroğlu held meetings with tradesmen and non-governmental organizations in the city and said, "You will voice peace and friendship everywhere. Being a CHP member has such a responsibility." He thus [renewed his call](#) to say goodbye.
- The Council of State canceled the "Halkalı-Ispartakule Railway Line Construction" tender within the scope of the Kanal Istanbul project, finding it unlawful. In the decision, it was emphasized that the necessary clarity and competition were not provided in the tender, which was made with the "bargaining method", and that the tender did not meet the "urgency requirement" in the Public Procurement Law.
- The 2021 Activity Report of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) has been [published](#). It was observed that the appropriation allocated to MIT in 2021 was 2 billion 628 million 749 thousand liras, but this appropriation was exceeded by 486 million 265 thousand 484 liras.
- According to the data of the "Report of Rights Violations in the Marmara Region Prisons in 2021" prepared by the Human Rights Association; the number of ill-treatment, battering and torture cases in prisons doubled compared to the previous

year. According to the data of the Human Rights Association (IHD), at least 28 prisoners lost their lives last year. [Please click here](#) for details...

- The Justice Watch, which started in front of the Urfa Courthouse by Emine Şenyaşar after her husband and two sons were murdered by the bodyguards and relatives of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Parliament Member İbrahim Halil Yıldız on June 14, 2018 in the Suruç district of Urfa, and by Ferit Şenyaşar, her only son who survived the massacre, has left a year behind. During the one-year-long Justice Watch vigil, the grieving mother and her son were detained several times, and 14 separate investigations were launched against the mother, who demanded justice. In addition, Emine Şenyaşar, who was tried in the lawsuits filed for allegedly insulting Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu and Justice and Development Party (AKP) Parliament Member İbrahim Halil Yıldız, was sentenced to a judicial fine of 265 days in a lawsuit that was concluded during this period.
- Israeli President Herzog paid his first high-level visit to Ankara since 2008. Herzog and Erdoğan expressed their "goodwill wishes" at the joint press conference held after the meeting. Even though the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine and Russia came together with Turkey's initiatives at the Antalya Diplomatic Summit, no concrete steps were taken at the meeting.



Our weekly video program "["COGITO ERGO SUM"](#), in which we follow the agenda of freedom of expression and thought, is on our [YouTube channel](#) every week...

[Click here](#) to access all our video bulletins...



Preventions against March 8 protests

March 8 events were held in different cities despite the prevention of the administration and law enforcement. The Elazığ and Istanbul Governorates banned the protests. Despite the ban decree in Istanbul, thousands of women gathered in Taksim. Thousands of women and LGBTQI+s protested in Cihangir Park, 47 people were detained at different points in response to the law enforcement's blockade of all roads leading to Istiklal Street and intervening against those who wanted to take to the street. Despite the attack of the police on those who wanted to march, protests were held in İzmir as well. Despite the interventions, the march was held at night in Antalya and 40 people, including 5 lawyers, were detained.



Security investigation against posts on oil prices

The General Directorate of Security initiated legal action against 45 accounts that shared oil prices on Twitter, on the grounds that they took "provocative actions". Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu stated that they will identify those who try to disrupt the public order

regarding the allegations that there are no stocks left in the markets in a program he attended, and said, "We will do what is necessary against those who provoke this nation to go to the stores with certain political manipulations through social media, saying, 'This will end, this will end'".



Sentence against journalists return from Supreme Court

The verdict of conviction for the then-Managing Editor of Evrensel Daily, Çağrı Sarı and Owner Arif Koşar, who were sentenced to 5 months in prison each under Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code, due to the news titled "The Police Opened Fire Against People in Nusaybin: 3 Injuries" published in the newspaper on March 15, 2016, returned from the Court of Cassation. The

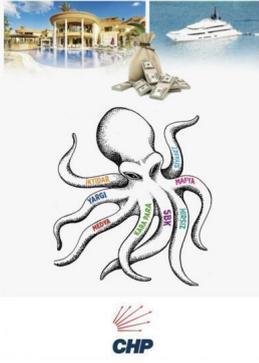
supreme court overturned the decision on the conviction instead of acquitting the defendants, stating that the elements of the crime in question were not found. The first hearing of the journalists who will be tried again within the scope of the file will be held on June 28.



Aggravated life imprisonment claim against Kavala and Yapıcı

In the Gezi trial, the prosecutor submitted his opinion on the merits to the file. In his opinion, the Prosecutor demanded that the defendants Osman Kavala and Mücella Yapıcı be sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment for the crime of "attempting to overthrow the Government of the Republic of Turkey by using force and violence". Kavala, the only

detained suspect in the case, has been behind bars for 1592 days despite the ECtHR decision.



CHP Leaflet Case

A lawsuit was filed against 10 Istanbul provincial and district executives of the Republican People's Party (CHP), who were detained for distributing the leaflets prepared by the Republican People's Party (CHP) Headquarters, on charges of "insulting the President" and "insulting a public official". The first hearing of the case will be held on September 16 at the Istanbul 2nd Criminal

Court of First Instance.



Social media investigation against journalist

Mesopotamia News Agency reporter Mazlum Engindeniz testified within the scope of the investigation launched by Yüksekova Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Engindeniz is accused of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" because he shared the agency's news about Abdullah Öcalan on his social

media account.



Eskişehir Pride Parade Case

The first hearing of the case, in which 16 people, including 2 children, were detained in the police attack during the Pride Parade held in Eskişehir for the first time in 2021, on charges of violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations, was held at the Eskişehir 8th

Criminal Court of First Instance. The court's expert examination ruled that the photographs of the defendants be taken and scheduled the next hearing for April 26.



Thesis requested for prosecution on "insulting President"

The Interuniversity Board examined the Ph.D thesis of academic Dr Mehmet Baki Deniz, which he prepared for Equivalency, requested that the academic be tried for the crimes of "insulting the President" and "terrorism". The Board is the only authorized institution in Turkey and it turned out that it received 4

separate reports from 3 universities regarding the thesis, initially approving and then rejecting it.



Lawsuit against HDP's budget statement

A lawsuit was filed against the Manisa provincial and Turgutlu district executives of People's Democratic Party (HDP), who distributed the party's statement regarding the budget negotiations in the Parliament last December, which drew attention to the poverty brought on by the economic crisis. The trial of

9 People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and journalist İbrahim Coşkun, who were charged with "violating Law No. 2911" within the scope of the lawsuit, will begin on April 20 at the Turgutlu 4th Criminal Court of First Instance.



Memorandum against HDP MP

A memorandum was prepared about Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Batman Parliament Member Feleknas Uca for her speech at an event she attended in Aydın on July 12, 2020. In her speech, she said, "...We wanted to reach our mothers, sisters and comrades in the Aegean, Marmara, all Kurdistan cities in

Turkey..." Uca's expression, "Kurdistan and the cities of Kurdistan", became reasons for the charge of "public incitement to hatred and enmity."



Posters changed upon Governor's discomfort

Posters with the words, "Istanbul Convention Keeps People Alive, Enforce Law No. 6284", which the Van-Hakkari Medical Chamber had hanged in Van for the celebration of March 8, International Women's Day, were removed by

the advertising company on the order of the Governorate, and "Happy March 8" posters were hung in their place, without the knowledge of the Chamber.



Author Azad Zal convicted

Author and J&J Publishing House owner Azad Zal (Mehmet Güngörmüş) was sentenced to 6 years and 3 months in prison in the case he was tried at Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court on charges of "terrorist organization membership" as part of the investigation against the Democratic Society Congress (DTK).



Access ban against Yeni Yaşam Daily and PIRHA

With a decree issued by the Hatay 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace, access to Yeni Yaşam Daily and PIRHA News Agency websites was banned. No explanation was given about the contents or the reasoning behind the decision.



HDP Assembly member Beritan Yaşar convicted

The final decree was issued in the lawsuit filed against Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly member Beritan Yaşar at the Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court on the charge of "terrorist organization membership" based on a secret witness statement and the press

statements she attended. The court sentenced Yaşar to 7 years and 6 months in prison.



Barbaros Şansal becomes target for homophobic hate

Invited to Şanlıurfa as part of the event organized by the Şanlıurfa Bar Association, famous fashion designer Barbaros Şansal was exposed to homophobic hate speech on social media before the event. Some journalists, politicians and union leaders who live in Urfa,

who are known for their close relations with the government, demanded that the event be canceled, targeting Şansal. Upon the increase in homophobic and hateful discourses, Şansal announced that he was targeted and canceled the program, stating that there was no safety of his life.



Investigation against environmental activist

Milas Public Prosecutor's Office declared that environmental activist Deniz Gümüşel's thermal power plant protest at the olive festival was a "right" and issued a verdict of non-prosecution. The sponsorship of thermal power plants in the Olive Harvest Festival organized by Muğla Municipality and Milas District Governorate on November 14 was met with a reaction by the residents of Milas, and

environmental activist Deniz Gümüşel, who carried the banner "Either indestructible wood or coal", was detained during the protests.



Access ban against news on access ban

The news that the Freedom of Expression Association announced that the news containing the allegations about the Deputy Minister of National Defense was censored was blocked by the Ankara 1st Criminal Court of Peace on the grounds of "violation of personal rights". The association was announcing the

decrees of the criminal judicatures of peace on the access bans - so the access ban decree and deleting the content was made for the 13th time regarding the contents on the website of the association.



Lawsuit against Istanbul Pride Parade

The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against 7 people, who were detained in the 2021 Istanbul Pride Parade after it was banned by the Beyoğlu District Governorate, was held at the Istanbul 18th Criminal Court of First Instance on the charge of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations." The second

hearing of the case was scheduled for September 21.



Journalist acquitted in first hearing

Journalist Ahmet Kanbal was acquitted in the first hearing of the lawsuit filed against him at the Mardin 1st Criminal Court of First Instance upon the complaint of Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu. The journalist was charged with "insulting a public official" due to his tweet after Soylu's resignation: "Rats leave the sinking ship first... It is a universal saying... The ship sinks when the rats leave..."



New investigation against journalist Ahmet Kanbal

A new investigation has been launched by the Mardin Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on the grounds of his news and social media posts about Mesopotamia Agency reporter Ahmet Kanbal. The journalist is accused of "public incitement to hatred and hostility" due to the

news about rape perpetrators expert sergeants, some irregularities regarding the trustee period, and the news about the Mardin Governorate's ban against theater plays in Kurdish. In

the file, the journalist was also charged due to his posts about Ceylan Önkol, Uğur Kaymaz, Hacı Lokman Birlik and Syrian Ali Al Hamdani, who were killed by the law enforcement, and his criticism of the statement of Justice and Development Party (AKP) Parliament Deputy Chairman Numan Kurtulmuş with the words, "It is immoral to invest the Turkish lira given to him by the state in foreign currency" regarding the increasing exchange rates.



Arrested journalist Sedef Kabaş stand trial

Arrested journalist Sedef Kabaş, who was charged with "insulting the President" and "insulting a public official because of their duty" due to a Circassian proverb she used in a television program she attended in January, stood trial. The journalist, who has been held in Bakırköy Women's Closed Prison since January 23, was sentenced to two years and four months in prison for insulting the President in

the first hearing held at the Istanbul 36th Criminal Court of First Instance, whereas she was acquitted of the charge of insulting Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu and the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Adil Karaismailoğlu. The journalist, who was arrested for 49 days within the file, was released.



Memorandum against TIP Chairman Erkan Baş

Sharing President Erdoğan's speech targeting the opposition after it said that they would not pay companies for Kanal Istanbul, with the note, "Whether I say the colonial governor or the collection mafia, it is not clear; one would be ashamed to talk about their country like that..." A report was prepared to lift the

Parliamentary immunity of Turkish Workers' Party (TIP) Chairman and Istanbul MP Erkan Baş. As part of the investigation, Baş is charged with "insulting the President" due to his social media post on June 26, 2021.



Youtuber'a "Cumhurbaşkanına hakaret"ten hapis

Youtuber Orkun Doğanay Kömürgöz was sentenced to 14 months in prison on charges of "insulting the President" for three songs he published on the Internet: "Thank God, I am a president today as well", "Send it to my IBAN" and "diss to my tall brother-in-law". The court deferred the announcement of the verdict.



Sultan Eylem Keleş
@esultankeles

2 gün önce Elazığ'da gözaltına alınarak ifade verdiğim ve avukatımla birlikte hiç mahkeme yüzü görmediğimiz cumhurbaşkanına hakaret davasının bugün görülen 2. duruşmasında 1 yıl 5 ay ceza aldım. Valla adaletin hızı gözlerimi yaşattı, hayrolsun bakalım. :)

... **Journalist Sultan Eylem Keleş convicted**

Journalist Sultan Eylem Keleş, who was prosecuted on charges of "insulting the President" for three separate social media posts from 2014-15, was sentenced to 1 year, 2 months and 17 days in prison, without even being taken to court, in the lawsuit filed against her at the Izmir 2nd Criminal Court of First

Instance.



Acquittal decree in Roboski Massacre Commemoration Case

16 citizens, who were prosecuted on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" for commemorating the 34 people who were murdered in Roboski on December 28, 2011, were acquitted in the

lawsuit filed against them at the Şırnak 2nd Assize Court.



District Governorate obstacle against Kurdish theater play

Cizre District Governorate banned the staging of the Kurdish play Mem u Zin, which was planned to be staged by Şermola Performance on March 12 "without an explanation".



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Adalet Kaya Case

The ongoing trial with the combined file of other lawsuits filed against Rosa Women's Association President Adalet Kaya due to the allegation on her Democratic Society Congress (DTK9 delegation, her participation in a statement of the association she was the head of, as well as certain social media posts she made...

Court: Diyarbakır 11th Assize Court
Verdict: The case was adjourned to June 22.

Case Against Trustee Protest

The lawsuit filed against 38 people, including journalists Taylan Öztaş and Tunahan Turhan, on the charge of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations" for protesting trustees appointed to municipalities...

Court: Istanbul 23rd Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The court decided to lift the judicial measures against the defendants, who presented their defense statements, and adjourned the case to June 9.

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| <p><u>Case Against Istanbul Convention Protest</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 7 women, who were beaten and detained by the police after hanging the poster, “Enough Now, Women Demand Life Assurance” on the building of the Istanbul Family, Labour and Social Services Provincial Directorate to defend the Istanbul Convention, on the charges of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations”, “resisting to prevent duty”, “preventing public institution activities” and “damaging public property”...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 23rd Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The case was adjourned to June 9.</p> | <p><u>Ankara Bar Association Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Ankara Bar Association Chairman and Executive Board members, who reacted to President of Religious Affairs Ali Erbaş after he targeted LGBTQ+s with hate speech during a Friday sermon on April 24, 2020, on the charge of “insulting a public official because of his duty in relations of their faith, thoughts and opinions”...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 16th Assize Court</p> <p>Verdict: The request of Ali Erbaş to join the trial process was accepted, whereas the request of the Presidency of Religious Affairs to join the trial was denied. The court adjourned the case to June 22.</p> |
| <p><u>Case Against Villagers Resisting to Plants</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 15 women, who resisted against the geothermal plants to be constructed on the agricultural fields in Kızılcaköy district of Aydın, on the charge of “resisting to prevent duty” and “resisting law enforcement”...</p> <p>Court: Aydın 1st Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The case was adjourned to June 9.</p> | <p><u>Madımak Protest Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against seven citizens, who were detained as they were protesting the Madımak Massacre in 2020 on the charge of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations” and “resisting law enforcement”...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The case was adjourned to September 27.</p> |
| <p><u>Muharrem İnce Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Homeland Party Chairman Muharrem İnce on the charge of “insulting the President” due to the speech he gave at the Republican People’s Party (CHP) Uşak Provincial Chairmanship in 2016, when he was a CHP MP...</p> <p>Court: Uşak 3rd Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for March 28.</p> | |

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

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| <p><u>Turgut Öker Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against the Confederation of European Alevi Unions Founder and Chairman Turgut Öker due to the speech he gave at the protest rally organised against President Erdoğan in Germany in 2015...</p> <p>March 15, Tuesday at Istanbul Anatolian 10th Criminal Court of First Instance</p> | <p><u>Zekine Türkeri Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist and writer Zekine Türkeri on the charge of “making illegal organisation propaganda” due to her social media posts...</p> <p>March 15, Tuesday at Istanbul 13th Assize Court</p> |
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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reyhan Çapan Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against former Managing Editor of Özgür Gündem Daily on the charge of “making illegal organisation propaganda through press” and “printing and publishing terrorist organisation statements”...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 16, Wednesday at Istanbul 2nd Assize Court</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Vedat Dağ Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Diyarbakır Provincial Organisation’s Press Consultant Vedat Dağ on the charge of “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” due to his participation in and sharing Peoples’ Democratic Party events, as well as secret witness statements against him...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 16, Wednesday at Diyarbakır 11th Assize Court</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ferhat Tunç Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against artist Ferhat Tunç on the charge of “insulting a public official” due to his social media posts on former Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım in 2016...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 17, Thursday at Istanbul Büyükçekmece Criminal Court of First Instance</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gökhan Yavuzel Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against writer Gökhan Yavuzel due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” through an article he wrote on culture and arts...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 17, Thursday at Ankara 7th Criminal Court of First Instance</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hifzullah Kutum Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against academic Hifzullah Kutum on the charge of “making terrorist organisation propaganda” due to a “September Revolution” message as well as a Mele Mustafa Barzani visual he shared on social media...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 17, Thursday at Elazığ 2nd Assize Court</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Case Against Kurdish Song</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Mesopotamia Culture and Arts Center members Abdullah Ayav, Vesile Yüksel and Ruken Aslan on the charge of “making illegal organisation propaganda” due to singing in Kurdish during a children’s festival organised in Nusaybin...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 18, Friday at Mardin 3rd Assize Court</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DIAYDER Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Religious Scholars Aid and Solidarity Association (DIAYDER) members and executives on charges of “terrorist organisation membership” and “terrorist organisation membership”, which was used as basis for the “special inspection” used by the Interior Minister against the workers of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 18, Friday at Istanbul 14th Assize Court</p> | |