

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 33/22 - August 26, 2022)

What happened last week?

- Speaking at the event held on the 951th anniversary of the Malazgirt victory, President Erdoğan said "Our ancestors" and recited poems. "The prayers will not be silenced, flags will not fall", Erdoğan stated, and asked for votes for the 2023 elections. He further reiterated his message of the operation against Syria and said, "We may come suddenly one night, and we may come anywhere."
- In his statement on inflation, Erdoğan repeated the words, "We are all in the same boat", asked for patience and called for a "return to TL". In another speech this week, Erdoğan said, "We would be a shame to Turkey if we got stuck on the interest rate and exchange rate issue... Our country has turned the crisis into an opportunity."
- The depreciation of the Turkish lira continues. The U.S. dollar reached the level of 18.18 TL, seeing its peak in the year.
- It was alleged that the Presidency of Religious Affairs instructed the muftis, "Nine months left until the election, everyone must work in the field."
- The court certified that Hamza Yerlikaya, the former Justice and Development Party (AKP) MP and the Advisor to the President, who received a great reaction when he was appointed to the Board of Directors of Vakıfbank, used a fake high school diploma.
- 424 citizens issued a joint statement regarding the assassination threats against Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MP Garo Paylan. "We call on the political power, all political structures, the entire Turkey to take action against the deep state and mafia forces," they said.
- Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul Chair Gülseren Yoleri said, "We have detected a total of 2,694 violations regarding refugees in 2021, and these are only a very small part of what we have been able to reach." Yoleri stated that there is a very serious pressure and ill-treatment against refugees by Greece, and that this also has a reflection from Turkey.
- 34 organizations, including rights organizations, bar associations, professional organizations and political parties, made a joint written statement regarding the appointment of trustees to municipalities. The statement called for solidarity against the unlawfulness and violations of rights experienced after the State of Emergency (OHAL) process that followed the coup attempt on July 15, 2016.
- Boğaziçi University's "trustee rector" Naci İnci continues to put pressure on students, staff at school, and dismiss teachers. Finally, the elected head of the economics department, Prof. Dr. Ünal Zenginobuz was suspended for three months.
- Aydın Prison administration claimed that prisoner Fırat Çağlayan committed suicide with his shoelaces. It has previously been alleged that 28-year-old Yılmaz Ekinci, who was imprisoned in the same prison, also committed suicide on January 13. In the last 8 months, 43 prisoners lost their lives in prisons. The number of people who have been declared to have "committed suicide" in prison since 2014 is 98.



Singer Gülşen arrested

Singer Gülşen, who has long been targeted for the clothes she wears in her concerts and her advocacy for LGBTIQ+ rights, was arrested on charges of "public incitement to hatred and hostility or denigration" for a remark she made on stage at a concert in April. Gülşen had been targeted by the spokespersons of the ruling

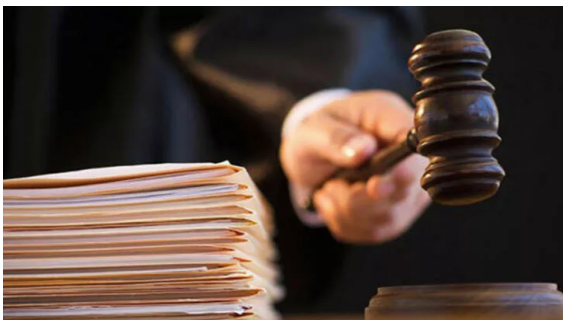
parties, pro-government media and "conservative" trolls and targeted by a lynch campaign due to her statement "He studied at an Imam Hatip school, that's where his perversion comes from" in a video recorded during the concert while she was joking with her crew, referring to a friend she was performing with. Gülşen stated in her defense statement that the video was served for provocative purposes, saying, "This is a conversation between Miraç and me, probably between songs at a stage of the concert that I don't remember. When I addressed my orchestra and said "carry me on your shoulders among the audience" and the orchestra replied to me with "let the imam carry you", the conversation in question took place between Miraç and me."



Saturday Mothers prevented for 4 years

Since 1995, the Saturday Mothers have been gathering at Galatasaray Square for their disappeared and murdered children. They made a statement regarding the police violence against them and the square, which has been under police blockade for 4 years, and said, "The government uses the ban decisions implemented by the governorates and district

governorates as a means of silencing the society and forcing it to obey their ideology. Today, louder than ever, it is time to say "No to the bans!" without discrimination... No matter who is silent, we will not be silent. It is a matter of dignity for us to tell about the persecution we have witnessed."



New lawsuit in file after acquittal

Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office prepared a new indictment against former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Education Commission member Çekdar Budak, who was among the 10 people arrested on May 20 in an investigation against Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members and Party Assembly members. Budak was charged in the

indictment based on his training of party members, as well as two books that were seized during a police raid at his house on the grounds that they were subject to a confiscation order. The trial of Budak, who is charged with "terrorist organization membership," will begin at Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court on November 17.



Constitutional Court rejects Gezi Park application

The Constitutional Court rejected the application of Tayfun Kahraman, Mücella Yapıcı and Can Atalay, who were sentenced to 18 years in prison in the Gezi Park Case, which was made on the grounds that the arrest warrant issued against them was unlawful. The

application, which was made on the grounds that "the right to personal liberty and security, freedom of expression, the right to organize meetings and demonstrations, and freedom of association were violated due to the arrest warrant issued with the verdict" was found inadmissible by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that it was "clearly lacking in grounds".



Three CHP MPs investigated

An ex-officio investigation was launched against Republican People's Party Mersin MP Ali Mahir Başarır, former Republican People's Party (CHP) Balıkesir MP Mehmet Tüm and former Republican People's Party (CHP) Istanbul Deputy Provincial Chair Murat Akbaş due to their remarks against President Erdoğan and Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu during

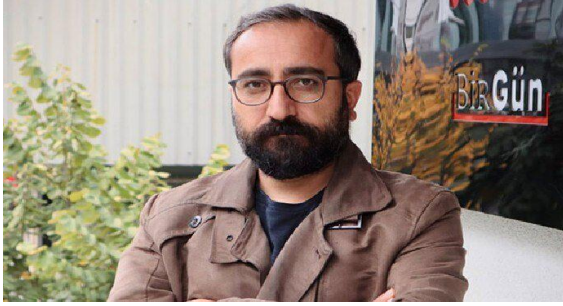
their speeches at panels organized at the 5th book fair in Balıkesir's Edremit district. The three names were charged with "insulting the President", "inciting people to hatred and hostility" and "humiliation".



Nol-pros in investigation against social media post

The investigation against Gaziantep Bar Association lawyer Bektaş Şarklı, who was charged with "insulting Erdoğan" due to his social media posts, ended in non-prosecution. Within the scope of the file, Şarklı wrote, "Justice and Development Party (AKP) organizations are queuing for buffalo yogurt

and pinecone honey. Sultan Suleiman has instructed so! You couldn't eat buffalo yogurt, pinecone honey and Medina dates today as well, could you? The people from the palace are eating and giving thanks on behalf of you as well..."



Investigation against tweet

An investigation was initiated against BirGün Daily's Editorial Coordinator İbrahim Varlı due to his tweet, "Islamists are cruel, Islamists are tyrants, there is no evil that Islamists cannot do..." posted on September 25, 2020, on the grounds of "public incitement to hatred and hostility".



Evrensel Daily's official ad right revoked

The Press Ad Institute has taken its official advertisement embargo against Evrensel Daily one step further and completely revoked the newspaper's right to publish official advertisements. The Press Ad Institute (BIK) used the fact that Evrensel Daily readers buy the newspaper en masse at certain points during

its inspections as a justification for the cancellation.



Nol-pros in investigation against journalist

Journalist Vildan Atmaca, who was detained in a police raid against her house in Istanbul in February and was released after 8 days, was investigated for "terrorist organization membership" based on the news she had reported in 2015 and 2016. 6 months later, a verdict of non-prosecution was issued.



Gendarmerie intervention in Mezeköy

The gendarmerie intervened at night against the villagers who were holding a vigil against the Geothermal Power Plant to be built in Mezeköy district of Aydın; 18 villagers were detained. The district governorate banned entry and exit to Mezeköy for a week, and members of Çine Life Platform (ÇİYAP) and Aydın Ecology and

Life Platform (AYEP) who wanted to go to the village were prevented from entering the village by the gendarmerie.

Access block against news on district governor

The district governor, who banned entry to and exit from the village for 7 days in order to prevent any reaction against the Geothermal Power Plant company against which villagers protested in Mezeköy in Köşk District of



Aydın, blocked access to the news of Evrensel Daily. Following the application of District Governor Tuğba Polat, Aydın 1st Criminal Court of Peace issued an access block on the article, "Villagers Continue to Stand Watch Against Geothermal Power Plant: District Governor Threatens Village Headmen with Geothermal Power Plant!" dated July 28.



Rubber bullets against people reacting against eviction

In Tokatköy neighborhood of Beykoz district of Istanbul, Justice and Development Party's (AKP) Beykoz Municipality tried to evict citizens from their houses by force even though the courts issued a stay of execution. The police intervened harshly against the citizens who took to the roof to prevent eviction. The police used rubber bullets against the citizens on the roof and pepper sprayed them in the houses they entered. 16 people were detained, the police also intervened against journalists. Journalists who wanted to take footage of the incidents were dragged out of the area by the police.



Police intervention against workers demanding rights

The police intervened in the 35-day strike by ETF Textile workers in Tuzla district of Istanbul for their unpaid compensation, bonuses and salaries. Guards and the riot police battered and dragged the workers away from the factory as the workers tried to prevent the removal of goods from the factory. Workers Aliye Doğan, Sema Lermi and DERİTEKS Tuzla Branch President Hikmet Numanoğlu received an assault report for rib injuries.



Police intervention against funeral

The police attacked the funeral ceremony organized for Gökhan Gür in Perşembe district of Ordu. The police used tear gas during the ceremony and tried to detain those carrying the coffin and those holding banners and kicked the coffin. Political party and NGO representatives and Gür's family intervened and tried to prevent the intervention; 9 people were detained.



“Justice Watch” prevented

In the 22nd week of the Justice Watch protests, relatives of ill prisoners gathered at Kartal Square in Istanbul and were taken under blockade by the police. The police prevented the statement, citing a ban order of the district governorate.



Intervention against villagers over reacting against expropriation

An investigation was launched against villagers who reacted against the expropriation order issued for the village of Gundikremo in the central Şırnak province for the coal exploration activities of the company owned by Justice and Development Party (AKP) member Süleyman

Bölünmez on the allegation of "damaging public property".



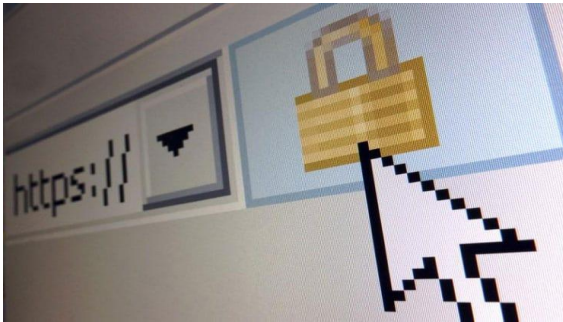
Fethiye MilyonFest banned

The music festival MilyonFest, which was planned to be held between September 1-4 with the support of the Fethiye Municipality, was banned with a Governorate decree. Thus, 16 concerts/festivals have been canceled in the last 4 months.



Governorate bans September 1 concert

The Mersin Governorate banned the concert organized by the Human Rights Association (IHD) Mersin Branch on September 1, World Peace Day, where artists Pınar Aydınlar and Dodan Özer were to perform, on the grounds that it "threatened public security".



Censorship against news on censorship

After Prof. Dr. Yaman Akdeniz, one of the founders of the Freedom of Expression Association, raised the issue of fake court orders sent to some news websites to delete certain news articles, the Gaziantep 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace imposed an access block on 141 news articles, Twitter and Facebook posts on the subject. Kahramanmaraş

Pazarcık Criminal Judicature of Peace decided to delete Akdeniz's tweets and many other news articles on the "fake court orders" issued on the grounds of violation of personal rights.



Access block on news about bribery allegations against judge

The Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace blocked access to the news that mentioned the name of the suspended Sakarya Tax Court judge who was involved in the

operation against 3 criminal organizations that manipulated iron and steel prices and caused public damage with fake invoices, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.



Access block against news on MP's news about divorce

An access block was issued against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Erzurum Parliament Member (MP) Zehra Taşkesenlioğlu's "news about her divorce" by the Gölbaşı Criminal Judicature of Peace. Taşkesenlioğlu's divorced husband, former Turkish Aeronautical Association University

Rector Ünsal Ban, had posted on his social media account that he would "make statements" in response to being asked for a total of 70 million TL. A few days later, the same Criminal Judicature of Peace censored more than 70 other news articles, including the one published on our website, about the access block.



Media blackout against news on accident in Derik

The Derik Criminal Judicature of Peace imposed a media blackout on news reports on the accident in Derik, Mardin, in which 20 citizens lost their lives. The court cited "the protection of public health, national security, public order, public safety and prevention of further crimes" as grounds for the blackout. No

similar decree was issued regarding the accident in Gaziantep, where 21 citizens, including two journalists, lost their lives on the same day as the accident was caused by trucks leaving Eti Bakır, owned by Cengiz Holding, one of the government's tender-rich companies.



Suspicious death under custody in Manisa

24-year-old Orhan Azman, who was detained in Manisa on charges of 'resisting the police', died suspiciously in Selendi District Gendarmerie Command detention center. It was claimed that Azman, who was kept in custody, ended his life by hanging himself with his t-shirt around his neck on the window bar of the detention center's bathroom. An

investigation was launched into the incident.



6-year imprisonment against murderer police officer sufficient for Constitutional Court!

The Constitutional Court rejected the application of the family of Abdullah Cömert, who was killed when a tear gas shell fired by the police hit his head in Hatay during the Gezi Park Resistance. The Constitutional Court found the Cömert family's application for 'violation of the right to life' 'inadmissible' and cited the 6-year, 10-month and 15-day prison

sentence given to the murderer police officer Ahmet Kuş with a 'discretionary discount' as the reason. Eren Can, lawyer of the Cömert family, said: "We have seen the impunity policy in cases where the perpetrator is the state's law enforcement agency. The Constitutional Court evaluated the sentence issued for 'conscious negligence' for police violence as proportional to the crime... They made it look as if there was a very fair trial, but the accused police officer was not arrested even for a single day. He was in and out of prison for 3-4 days after he was sentenced... This policy is actually a result of the state saying to public officials who commit crimes, 'relax, I got your back'."



Constitutional Court: “No judgment can be made with statement taken without lawyer”

The Constitutional Court (AYM) decided on violation of rights in two separate applications made within the framework of the right to a fair trial. Ruşen Bayar and Özgür Uyanık, who were convicted in separate cases in 2008 and 2009, appealed on the allegation that their statements taken at the police station without a lawyer and under torture were grounds for

conviction. Considering the fact that the police statement was taken without a lawyer as a violation of the right to a fair trial, the Supreme Court ruled that a retrial should be held in both applications to eliminate the violation of rights. In addition, the applicants will be paid 20 thousand TL for non-pecuniary damages.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Lawsuit against 3 Rights Advocates

The lawsuit filed against three women's rights advocates, who were among those detained during the protest organized in Izmir on February 3, 2021 regarding the trustee appointment to Boğaziçi University, on the charge of “insulting the President”...

September 2, Friday at Izmir 41st Criminal Court of First Instance