

# Think, think...



## Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 33/23 - August 25, 2022)

### What happened last week?

- Speaking after the cabinet meeting, President Erdoğan stated that they are aware of the economic problems and asked for patience. In another speech this week, Erdoğan argued that the economic problems were the product of "political games", called for "national unity" and said that Turkey's 2053 and 2071 targets were not a dream. The picture is grim for the 2023 targets Erdoğan announced before the 2011 general elections, which he does not even mention today. Turkey, which was the 17th economy in the world that day and targeted the top 10, ranks 21st today. While the national income per capita promised for 2023 was 25 thousand dollars, it has fallen by about 500 dollars since then to 9 thousand 961 dollars. The targeted \$2 trillion gross domestic product will be \$800 billion in 2022.
- The Central Bank made a regulation to reduce the Currency Protected Deposit (FXPD), which has reached 45 percent of Turkish lira (TL) deposits. The CBRT ended the conversion target from FX deposits to FX deposits and the practice of establishing additional/discounted securities according to the TL share.
- The Central Bank raised the policy rate by 750 basis points from 17.5 percent to 25 percent.
- It was noteworthy that 285 of the 306 goods and service purchases made by the Presidency in the first half of the year were made under direct procurement or exemption from the Public Procurement Law.
- The Council of Judges and Prosecutors dismissed the president and one member of the 24th Criminal Chamber of the Istanbul Regional Court of Appeals, which will hear the appeal of the jail sentence and "political ban" verdict against Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, who is preparing to run for re-election. The judge of the local court that convicted İmamoğlu was also replaced just before the last hearing of the case.
- In Adana, an unidentified woman left explosives and flammable materials in 3 plastic bottles in the building used by HDP and Green Left Party. The attacker, who was caught hours later while trying to enter the party building and handed over to the police, said she was directed by the police. The governor's office claimed the attacker was "mentally unstable".
- Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloğlu announced that a total of 108 million accesses to 252,883 internet addresses have been blocked since 2014, when the National Cyber Incidents Response Center (USOM) was established. He defined the blocked pages as "harmful".
- CHP MP Sezgin Tanrikulu announced the rights violations report for June, stating that 357 people were subjected to torture and 5 of them were children. According to the report, 399 people were detained during protests and events and 12 of them were

arrested. 15 protests and events were banned. 23 protests and events were intervened by law enforcement.

- The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) threatened to censor VOA Turkish, the new name of amerikaninsesi.com, which was banned in June 2022 for not applying for a license, and gave 72 hours to apply for a license. If the newspaper fails to apply, access to the website will be blocked.



### **District Governorate bans "Can Atalay Meeting"**

Izmit District Governorate banned the "Justice Gathering for Can Atalay" event, which was to be organized by the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) Kocaeli Provincial Organization for jailed MP Can Atalay. "In order to ensure public security and general public order within the borders of Izmit district, to prevent the commission of crimes and to protect the lives

and property of citizens, all kinds of actions related to the 'Justice Gathering for Can Atalay' event are banned for 7 days," the district governorate said in its decision.



### **Saturday Mothers detained again**

Despite the Constitutional Court's decision on the violation of the Constitutional Court's ruling, the ban imposed by the district governor's office on the protests of the Saturday Mothers, which they have been organizing for 28 years to ask the fate of their relatives who disappeared in detention and to bring the perpetrators to trial, continues. The police attacked the demonstration again this

week, beating and detaining 21 rights defenders. Protests to be organized in Adana and Van in solidarity with the Saturday Mothers were also banned by the governorates of the two cities.



### **The case against journalist Furkan Karabay**

A lawsuit was filed against Furkan Karabay, editor of Gerçek Gündem news website, for his social media posts about Akın Gürlek and Hasan Yılmaz, who were appointed deputy ministers of Justice by President Erdoğan, and İrfan Fidan, who was made a member of the Constitutional Court. The first hearing of the lawsuit will be held on January 17th at Ankara 16th Criminal Court of First Instance. The

journalist is charged with "publicly and repeatedly insulting a public official because of his duty."



### **Bar Association President appeals to prosecutor, investigated for 'threatening'**

An investigation was launched against lawyers who met with the prosecutor about the long detention of politicians, lawyers and journalists detained in April as part of a Diyarbakır-based investigation. Three lawyers, including Diyarbakır Bar Association President Nahit Eren, are accused of "threatening the

prosecutor" for objecting to the detainees being kept in the detention center on the lowest floor of the courthouse, which does not have humane conditions.



### **Journalist Kadir Koç goes to prison**

Kadir Koç, a journalist in Silivri, announced that he will be imprisoned as a result of the merging of three files in which he was sentenced to 1 year 11 months, 11 months 20 days and 8 months in prison for insulting former ministers Süleyman Soylu and Nurettin Nebati and President Erdoğan. Koç, who

announced that he will spend at least 2 years in closed prison as a result of the merging of the 3 files, which are normally on probation when they are processed separately, was convicted for saying "the criminal eventually returns to the scene of the crime" referring to a visit Soylu made to Silivri, and Nebati was convicted for an imitation he posted on Youtube.



### **Doctor sued under 'censorship law' for telling about vaccine shortage**

In the winter of 2022, Dr. Yusuf Eryazgan, President of the Şanlıurfa Family Physicians Association, who told the press about the vaccination problem in family health centers due to the disruptions in the Ministry of Health's supply, based on his own experiences

and the information shared by his colleagues, was charged with 'publicly disseminating misleading information', known as the censorship law. The first hearing of the case will be held on February 6 at Istanbul 32nd Criminal Court of First Instance.



### **Artist Emel Çiftçi arrested**

Emel Çiftçi, an artist who went to a hospital in Diyarbakır for treatment, was detained on the grounds of investigations launched against her in Ankara and Batman. Çiftçi, whose testimony was taken on charges of "membership in an illegal organization" and "leading an illegal organization" within the scope of her culture

and art activities, was arrested on the grounds of "suspicion of fleeing" despite presenting reports to the court stating that she had cancer and needed urgent surgery.



### Prison sentence for director and model who shot in a mosque

An indictment was prepared against director Bilal Kısa and model Ezgi Cebeci, who made a fashion shoot at Ankara Kocatepe Mosque, on charges of "publicly denigrating religious values embraced by a section of the public"

with a prison sentence of up to 1 year and 6 months each.



### Investigation against journalist Can Ataklı

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against journalist Can Ataklı for "public incitement to hatred and hostility" due to his remarks about Sincan Municipality's educational activities for children in a video published on social media.



### Judge accepts censorship request of abuse perpetrator

The defendant, who was sentenced to 15 months in prison for abusing a 14-year-old boy in Cyprus in 2014, had the news about the case censored. Kahramanmaraş 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban on 5 news articles published on the websites of

newspapers published in Cyprus, claiming that the defendant's honor and dignity were offended by the news and therefore the news could not be considered within the scope of freedom of the press.



### Blocked news

Former General Director of Tarım Kredi Koop, Fahrettin Poyraz, who was sentenced to compensation for 'purposeful and organized obstruction of a journalist's reporting' for trying to prevent corruption news about him. The news about Fahrettin Poyraz, former General Manager of the Agricultural Credit Cooperative, who was sentenced to

compensation for "purposefully and organized obstruction of journalists' reporting" for trying to prevent corruption news about him, was blocked from access by the Gölbaşı Criminal Judicature of Peace.



### Access ban on torture in Akbelen

Access to the tweets of İlay Kadiroğlu, one of the protesters who resisted in Akbelen, where trees were cut down for the thermal power plant, was blocked. Ankara 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace censored the posts about the torture in Akbelen.



### Preacher of Salvation Church in Malatya threatened

Mehmet Çolak, a preacher and administrator at the Kurtuluş Church in Malatya, was threatened by a group calling itself the "Turkish Revenge Brigade". Çolak said that 3 men who followed him said, "We will wipe Christians like you from this land, we will cut off all your heads. You will change your religion (...). If you

don't leave the church, we will chop your head off" and threatened him with death.



## TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

\*There are no hearings of the cases we follow due to the judicial holiday

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You can also access the pdf format of the bulletin at [dusun-think.net/bultenler](http://dusun-think.net/bultenler).