



Think, think...

Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

(Issue 32/18, 10 August 2018)

What happened last week?

*** A Turkish board of nine officials headed to Washington following the crisis on the imprisonment of pastor Brunson, meeting U.S. officials. The daily trip of the board lasted for nine hours, no announcement was made on the conclusion of the negotiations. *“The only progress for us would be for pastor Brunson to come home to the United States,”* U.S. Foreign Ministry Spokesman stated. No conclusion emerged from the negotiations in the U.S. according to the Wall Street Journal, as the Trump administration prepares for new tariffs against Turkey.

*** Turkish Lira’s fall in value continues to accelerate; U.S. Dollar reached a new high at 6.46 TL during the week. *“If they have their dollar, we have our God,”* Erdoğan said.

*** President Erdoğan announced his 100-day action plan with 400 projects, 48 of which are focused on the defense industry. *“Take your foreign currencies out from below your pillows, turn them into the Turkish Lira,”* said Erdoğan, announcing his new project to resolve foreign debt as by focusing on the Chinese markets.

*** Targeting People’s Democratic Party (HDP) voters, Erdoğan said, *“Those who supported HDP so they enter the Parliament will give account for it as well.”*

*** Congress debates continue within the Republican People’s Party (CHP). Announcing the decision on collected signatures, CHP administration indicated that no congress will be made due to the lack of sufficient signatures; whereas, the oppositional side claimed that the numbers were played with.

*** The investigation against Middle East Technical University (METU) students was completed following their arrest due to the cartoon, *“World of Tayyips.”* The students face imprisonment sentences for up to four years. IFEX called for freedom of expression advocates to share the cartoon on the social media to *“tell Turkey that satire is not a crime.”* **(Details below...)**

*** 333 social media accounts were examined and legal actions were taken against 261 social media users during the operations organized between July 30 and August 6, 2018.

*** Freemuse repeated the call for the release of arrested journalist and painter Zehra Doğan and stated that artists and their artwork - just like in the case of Doğan - are attempted to be suppressed with “terror” charges. **(Details below...)**

*** The lawsuit filed on the bomb attack organized by ISIS against the Peace Rally organized in Ankara on 10 October 2015 was concluded. *“Not only public officers, some of the offenders of the incident were also excluded from the case file. Files of offenders who openly had first-hand connections to the massacre were closed,”* the lawyers stated.



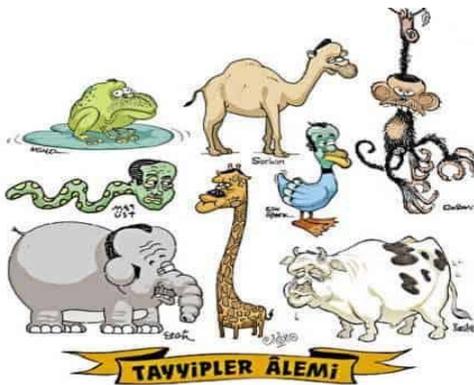


Lawsuit against students over cartoon “World of Tayyips”

A lawsuit was filed against four students, who were arrested due to holding a banner depicting the cartoon, “World of Tayyips,” during the graduation ceremony at the Middle East Technical University (METU), as well as against the copy

shop owner due to ‘insulting the President.’

Accepting the indictment prepared by Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, Ankara 11th Criminal Court of First Instance issued the four students to remain arrested. The indictment claimed imprisonment sentences against the students for up to four years each, topped with a one-sixth penalty increase due to the offense having been publicly committed.



IFEX launches campaign for cartoon “World of Tayyips”

A root organization for worldwide advocates of freedom of expression, International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) launched a campaign on the social media for the

cartoon, “World of Tayyips”, which led to the arrest of four university students and investigations against Republican People’s Party (CHP) leader and MPs, with the hashtags #WorldofTayyips/#tayıpleralemi.

IFEX pointed out to cartoons being used by the Turkish government as a tool to declare criticism as a crime and invited all advocates of freedom of expression around the world to share the cartoon on the social media *“to tell Turkey that satire is not a crime and for solidarity with those under judiciary threat.”* In the campaign text, IFEX stated, *“Satire aimed at political leaders is a fundamental expression right. We stand with those arrested for sharing the cartoon in Turkey.”* Please [click here](#) to join the campaign.



Judicature bans protesters from approaching rally square

Selvi Polat and Nursel Tanrıverdi were banned from approaching Bakırköy Cumhuriyet Square any nearer than 200 meters. Polat and Tanrıverdi have been taken into custody while protesting at



the square to be reassigned their jobs after being dismissed with emergency decrees.

The Prosecutor's Office claimed the arrests of the two names due to 'organizing illegal meeting and demonstration.' Bakırköy 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace released the two names with judicial measure, banning them from approaching the protest square until a public case is filed against them. Lawyer Ferdi Yamar evaluated the verdict as a scandal. *"This is a verdict that deprives individuals of their rights. The State of Emergency is said to be over, whereas this verdict is a decree that intervenes with the freedom and lives of individuals,"* Yamar stated.



6-month imprisonment against journalist due to TCK Article 301

Gevaş Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced journalist Hülya Emeç to imprisonment due to 'public denigration of the security organization' through her news article, entitled, *"His heart could not take gun pointed to him by the police during*

house raid."

In the lawsuit filed against the journalist related to the news on the death of 48-year-old Şefik Tunuç, who died after a heart-attack followed by police raiding his house in Gevaş district of Van for three times in 2014, Dicle News Agency (DIHA) reporter Emeç and the wife of Tunuç were sentenced to 6 months of imprisonment in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK). The court deferred the announcement of the verdict. The agency's Executive Board Chairman Zekeriya Güzüpek, Editor-In-Chief Dicle Müftüoğlu and Van Office Chief Ferhat Çelik were acquitted after standing trial within the same case.



Journalist Güneş released in first hearing

The hearings of the lawsuits filed against Mezopotamya Agency (MA) reporter Berzan Güneş and Dicle News Agency (DIHA) reporter Ziya Ataman were held. Dicle News Agency has previously been shut down with an emergency decree.

In the third hearing of the case against Ziya Ataman, who is arrested since 11 April 2016, Şırnak 1st Assize Court didn't issue a release verdict for Ataman. The reporter is on trial together with 18 other defendants, nine of them arrested, due to 'illegal organization membership.' *"My only weapon as a journalist is my pen. I have no other weapon,"* Ataman said. The next hearing of the case will be held on 26 October 2018. Güneş, on the other hand, was arrested last June due to 'making illegal organization propaganda' through his social media posts and was released in the first hearing of the case against him at Iğdır Assize Court.





Journalist Uğur Akgül arrested

Dicle News Agency (DIHA) reporter Uğur Akgül was taken into custody in Kızıltepe district of Mardin. It was later revealed that the 2-year and six-month imprisonment sentence against the journalist was finalized in the case he was on trial due to his news coverage during the curfews in Nusaybin; the

journalist was arrested and taken to Mardin Type-E Prison. Dicle News Agency had previously been shut down with an emergency decree.



Journalist Yazgülü Aldoğan dismissed from Posta Daily

Journalist-writer Yazgülü Aldoğan was dismissed from Posta Daily. A columnist at the newspaper since August 2009, Aldoğan is known to write on the situation of military school students during the July 15 coup attempt cases. The journalist wrote her last column on July 12th.

Announcing the matter on her social media account, Aldoğan wrote that an embargo was imposed on her columns for three weeks. *“The Demirören Family may not like my opinions, they may not want to work with me... However, what could possibly be the reason for me being fired from the place I’ve been working at for 20 years, without compensation, with all my rights being ignored,”* Aldoğan said.

Pro-government Demirören Holding had purchased the Doğan Media Group, including Hürriyet Daily, Posta Daily, Fanatik Daily, CNNTurk, Channel D, Yay-Sat and Doğan News Agency within for 916 million dollars last May. Many media workers and executives were dismissed from the purchased media institutions since the acquisition.



Freemuse calls for Zehra Doğan

Denmark-based Non-Governmental Organization Freemuse (Freedom of Musical Expression) called Turkish officials once again to release arrested journalist and painter Zehra Doğan. Pointing out to the vagueness of anti-terrorism laws in Turkey,



Freemuse stated that artists and their artwork - just like in the case of Doğan - are attempted to be suppressed with “terror” charges.

Doğan had been sentenced to 2 years, 9 months and 22 days of imprisonment due to sharing the paintings she created in Nusaybin district of Mardin during the curfews on the social media, as well as due to her coverage of news on the notes of a 10-year-old child.

Please [click here](#) for the Freemuse Report on the State of Artistic Freedom in 2018, which has a special section on Turkey.



Investigations against 261 social media users in one week

Ministry of the Interior announced investigations opened against 261 people due to their social media posts after the examination of 333 social media accounts between the dates 30 July - 6 August 2018. According to the announcement of the Ministry, the social media users were charged with

‘making illegal organization propaganda,’ ‘insult,’ ‘provoking the public towards resentment, hatred and hostility’ as well as ‘intending against the indivisible integrity of the state.’



Solitary confinement against convicts due to ‘insulting President’

Bolu Type-F Prison Administration sentenced 5 convicts to 10 days of solitary confinement due to insulting President Erdoğan and the prison officer through the culture and arts magazine, “*Ayvaz*,” issued monthly by the prisoners.

Explaining the right violations they were facing in a letter he sent to Evrensel Newspaper from prison, Volkan Pamuk wrote that there were additional sentences against them besides the solitary confinement, such as being banned from events and other bans on letters and meetings. Pamuk indicated that the applications of State of Emergency continue despite the State of Emergency having officially ended on July 19th; expressing restrictions on their rights of publication-broadcast. According to the letter, more than 5 books and 5 magazines are not allowed in the prison, the monthly right to open meeting is being applied once in two months; phone calls are being restricted and that their rights to call 10 people are being applied as two groups of five people each.





Investigation against rainbow flag at METU

Middle East Technical University (METU) Faculty of Sciences and Literature Dean's Office started a disciplinary investigation against students, who allegedly hung a rainbow flag on the school building during the LGBTI+ Pride March organized inside the campus on May 11th.

The Dean's Office sent an information email to the students on the investigation. "...with the allegation that they have hung the flags that are symbols of the structure known as LGBT, also known as a 'rainbow', on the roof of the Department of Physics chairmanship within the spring celebrations," the email sent to the students stated. The university's Dean's Offices in the Faculty of Finances and Business Administration, the Faculty of Architecture as well as the Directorate of Foreign Languages have previously started investigations against the students, who participated in the METU LGBTI+ Pride March.



Discriminative speech by TRT General Director

Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) General Director İbrahim Eren stated that they are not considering to participate in this year's Eurovision Song Contest as Turkey; showing the voting system and Conchita Wurst as reason. Wurst

was the first-rank winner of 2014 Eurovision.

"I can't show an Austrian, who was ranked first with his beard, skirt, not identifying himself in any gender, not accepting to be identified in any gender and saying 'I am both man and woman at the same time' on live broadcast, I can't," Eren said.



3,076 hate speech identified in media within four-month period

Hrant Dink Foundation launched the "Monitoring Hate Speech in Media" report focused on the January-April 2018 period.

According to the report, the first four months of the year has seen 2,265 columns and news articles targeting national, ethnic and religious groups. The report indicated that some texts involved hate speech against more than one group; with a total of 3,076 hate speech identified. Armenians were the

target of most of the hate speech in the media. The numbers of expressions containing hate speech against Armenians during this period was identified to be 671, 427 against Jews, 320 against Greeks, 274 against Syrians and 226 against Greeks of Turkish Nationality ("Rum"). Please [click here](#) for the full report.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- There was no development on the cases we're tracking due to judiciary recess.