



Think... think...

What happened in Turkey in May 2018

*** Supreme Electoral Council announced election bans to be applied on June 24 elections. The council brought extensive bans concerning the candidates; whereas activities of President Erdoğan, who himself will join the elections as well, was kept outside the scope of the bans.

*** Parties have already announced their election manifestos for the early elections on June 24. Opposition parties promised *"a strengthened Parliament and a new Constitution;"* Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), on the other hand, defended the *"Presidential government system."* Announcing the election manifesto of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), President Erdoğan promised on widely-criticized issues such as the separation of powers, independent judiciary, democratic politics and equality of income. Erdoğan further pointed to more operations in addition to the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.

*** Parties presented their candidate list to the Supreme Electoral Council; 167 MPs from Justice and Development Party (AKP) became candidates once again. Five current ministers were excluded from the candidate list. The candidate list of Kılıçdaroğlu created an organization vs. center crisis at Republican People's Party (CHP). There were candidates from different parts of society in the candidate list of People's Democratic Party (HDP); whereas most arrested MPs were excluded.

*** Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) decided for ballot boxes in 19 provinces to be moved due to *"security reasons."* YSK Chairman stated, *"There are 144 thousand electors assigned to the moved ballot boxes."*

*** The application made at the Constitutional Court for the annulment of the Electoral Law was denied. The annulment of provisions such as moving ballot boxes which violate election safety, the process of determining ballot board presidents and the acceptance of unsealed ballot envelopes was demanded in the application.

*** In the group meeting of this party, Erdoğan said, *"In case our nation says 'okay, enough' one day, only then we will move aside."* Immediately after the speech, the hashtag *"TAMAM"* [*"OK"*] became a worldwide trending topic on the social media. Approximately 2 million tweets were posted on the subject within 24 hours. Immediately afterwards, *"SİKILDIK [WE ARE BORED]"* hashtag was ranked first in worldwide trends. Minister of the Interior stated that the social media will be tracked as well for the security of the election period. Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) Chairman threatened social media users by saying that such hashtags can be banned.

*** The release claim of arrested Presidential candidate Selahattin Demirtaş was denied. In the unanimous verdict, one judge indicated that Demirtaş must be released due to his period of arrest and the criminal allegation charged against him. The judge emphasized that Demirtaş's arrest will damage his right to free election.

*** Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) board launched a report

following their first contacts in Turkey. Invited by Turkey to monitor the Presidential and Parliamentary elections on June 24, OSCE pointed out that the legal regulation was changed significantly and all previous advice were ignored. Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) Chairman and six YSK members did not attend the meeting between the board and the YSK.

*** Former Halkbank General Director Hakan Atilla was sentenced to 32 months of imprisonment in the U.S., being found guilty of five charges, including the noncompliance with the embargo against Iran. Erdoğan made a statement before the announcement of the verdict, calling out to the U.S. judiciary: *"He is absolutely innocent... Declaring Atilla guilty would mean declaring Turkey guilty."*

*** Turkish Lira lost heavy value in exchange with the U.S. Dollar; the exchange rate reached to 4.92 on Wednesday as an all-time highest record. Erdoğan stated that he will play a more active role in the politics of economy and finance in case he is re-elected. Annual value loss of the Turkish Lira reached 25 percent; Central Bank increased interests by 3 points. The increase in the U.S. Dollar was slowed down after the steps taken by the Central Bank; President Erdoğan claimed the responsible for the increase as the *"interest lobby."* Calling for people to change their foreign currencies into Turkish Liras, Erdoğan said, *"Some people talk about the currency exchange rates and so on. Leave those aside. You can not strike us with exchange rates. You can not strike us with such manipulations."*

*** Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Şimşek and Central Bank Chairman Murat Çetinkaya met investors in London. Reuters reported that the two names softened Erdoğan's harsh statements; giving signals for a new increase in interests.

*** State of Emergency Commission decided for six associations, which were previously shut down with emergency decrees, to be reopened due to lack of evidence. Thus, the first decision on shutdown associations was issued. The commission concluded 17 thousand applications so far and issued only 660 reassignments of service. 91,905 applications are still in the evaluation phase.

*** The university student, who was charged due to entering the hearing room wearing a t-shirt with the writing, *"Hero"* on it, was acquitted. The writing was claimed to have connections with the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ); such outfits and t-shirt were the reason for the uniform application.

*** Roboski Massacre was left in impunity at the European Court of Human Rights as well, following Turkey.

*** Investigations were started against 1663 people in May due to their social media posts, according to the data announced by the Ministry of the Interior.

*** 148 journalists entered May 3 Press Freedom Day in prison.

*** Taksim was under police blockade on May 1 this year as well. Entrance to the area was banned the entire day.

*** Gezi Park was taken under blockade once again on the fifth anniversary of the protests; the park was surrounded by police barricades. The march organized towards the park was not permitted.



‘Teacher Ayşe’ released

Teacher Ayşe Çelik, who was sentenced to 1 year and three months of imprisonment due to saying, “Do not let children die” by participating in a TV show in 2016 via phone call to point out the curfews in Kurdish provinces, was released. The execution of Çelik’s sentence was paused for six

months and will continue afterwards.

Convicted of ‘illegal organization propaganda’, Çelik has been imprisoned on April 20 together with her six-month-old baby; later had to leave her baby outside due to prison conditions. No steps were taken regarding the application made at the Constitutional Court for the stay of Çelik’s execution, whereas a petition campaign was started, led by our initiative, for both Çelik and her baby Deran to be released. Teacher Ayşe was released from Diyarbakır Type-E Prison and went back home, meeting her baby. However, the petition will continue until the Constitutional Court decides for retrial following the application and until the conviction is reversed with Çelik’s acquittal. More than 25 thousand signatures were collected within the petition, with a target of 100 thousand signatures. To participate; <https://goo.gl/AvZDw4>



9 out of 100 people are suspects, according to Justice Ministry data

Ministry of Justice Directorate General of Criminal Records and Statistics announced the criminal statistics of 2017. According to the announcement, investigations were opened against 11 million 833 thousand 926 people.

Which means, nine out of a hundred citizens in Turkey were investigated as “suspects.”

During this period, 6,381 investigations within the category described as “*crimes against the sovereignty of state and the reputation of its bodies*”, including the offense of ‘insulting the President’ as well as the Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, were turned into lawsuits. 2,343 of the proceedings made within this category were concluded with convictions in 2017.

For the full data on criminal statistics:

http://www.adlisicil.adalet.gov.tr/istatistik_2017/istatistik2017.pdf



Press lawsuits

Pressure on journalists and media institutions continued in May with lawsuits and penalties. According to the data compiled by Karınca Newspaper, five more journalists were arrested within the one-month period. Journalists on trial were sentenced to a total of 22 years, 8 months and seven days of imprisonment; four arrested journalists were released. Here are

some of the prominent news of May:

Investigation against academic over publishing cancer research hidden by ministry

An investigation was filed against Asst. Prof. Dr. Bülent Şık, who was previously dismissed from Akdeniz University with an emergency decree. The investigation is based on the academic's article series, entitled, "Ingredients causing cancer hidden by Turkish government, here is the poison list." The investigation was started following the complaint of the Ministry of Health. Şık is investigated due to 'announcing confidential information concerning professional duty', 'obtaining banned information' and 'announcing banned information.'

The article series of Şık contained the unannounced data of "*Evaluation of the Effects of Environmental Factors on Health in Kocaeli, antalya, Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli Provinces*" project. The provinces were selected since death due to cancer between the years 2011 and 2016 was above the world average. Şık wrote on his personal Twitter account to announce the investigation against him. "*The main responsibility of an academic is towards the people, not governments or institutions... There can be no secrets or bans in matters concerning public health,*" wrote Şık.

Journalist convicted after sharing his own news on social media

Mezopotamya Agency reporter Hayri Demir was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days of imprisonment due to his social media posts. Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court convicted the journalist of 'making illegal organization propaganda' due to four different social media posts including one newspaper advertisement to commemorate journalists killed in the 1990s as well as newspaper sections on the news he reported. The court deferred the announcement of the verdict.

Indictment against Özgürlükçü Demokrasi completed

An indictment was prepared against the 14 employees of Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Newspaper. Six of the 14 employees are currently arrested; and a trustee has been assigned to the newspaper. Istanbul 23rd Assize Court accepted the indictment, which charges the defendants, including the newspaper's owner İhsan Yaşar and Editor-In-Chief İshak Yasul, with 'illegal organization membership', 'making illegal organization propaganda' and 'distributing illegal organization publications.'

25 pages of the 67-page indictment consists of the news published on the newspaper after January 20, with further allegation that a “routine and systematic terrorist organization propaganda was made with the aim to create a negative perception with news against the government” regarding the Afrin operation. The newspaper was asserted to have been the continuation of Özgür Gündem Newspaper, which was shut down with an emergency decree. Hence being the newspaper’s editor, managing editor, owner, distributor or undertaking any administrative or financial responsibility for the newspaper was considered a crime.

Investigation against Gün Printing employees completed

The indictment against the 21 arrested Gün Printing employees was completed. A police operation was conducted on Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Newspaper and the printing house of the newspaper, Gün Printing, on March 29. Istanbul 7th Criminal Judicature of Peace assigned a trustee to both organizations.

The indictment was prepared against the printing house employees and was accepted by Istanbul 26th Assize Court. It charges eight people with ‘willfully aiding and abetting an illegal organization’ and 13 people with ‘illegal organization membership,’ ‘making illegal organization propaganda’ and ‘distributing illegal organization publications.’ The reason for the trustee assignment at the printing house was claimed to be 110 verdicts issued against the publications connected to the printing house, which predicted them to be pulled off the shelves; as well as the lawsuits against the writers, chief editors and copyright owners of the publications being printed at the company. The printing house was asserted to “have been established for the propaganda and agitation work in line with the purpose and goals of the illegal organization.” The indictment further mentions the headline on Özgürlükçü Demokrasi newspaper, referring to the Afrin operation, as the reason for the ‘crime’ since the issues of the newspaper were printed by Gün Printing. The grammar book, “*Zimanê Kurdi*”, published by the company, was also claimed to be a “fake Kurdish grammar book.” The indictment asserts that the book was published so that young generations grow up with terrorist ideologies.

6-year 4-month imprisonment against journalist Aydın Atar

Azadiya Welat Newspaper’s Managing Editor Aydın Atar was sentenced to 6 years and four months of imprisonment due to ‘illegal organization propaganda.’ Atar was on trial at Diyarbakır 7th High Criminal Court due to nine articles published on the newspaper in 2012 and 2013.

6-year 3-month imprisonment sentence against journalist Çağdaş Kaplan

Yeni Yaşam Newspaper’s Editor-In-Chief Çağdaş Kaplan was sentenced to 6 years and three months of imprisonment in the case filed against him with the allegation of ‘illegal organization membership’ following an investigation started in Sakarya in 2010. Sakarya 2nd Assize Court issued a travel ban against the journalist during his appeal. 18 other defendants on trial together with Kaplan were also sentenced to 6 years and three months of imprisonment each due to ‘illegal organization membership.’

Kaplan had covered the news on the operations against Kurdish students studying at Sakarya University in 2010, while studying at that university and reporting for Dicle News Agency (DIHA). Kaplan had then been taken into custody and a lawsuit was filed against Kaplan and the students, who were taken into custody together with Kaplan, due to 'illegal organization membership.' DIHA was also shut down with an emergency decree.

Indictment against two journalists over social media posts on Afrin

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office claimed Artı TV Ankara Representative Sibel Hürtaş and Mezopotamya Agency reporter Hayri Demir to be penalized with imprisonment sentences up to 10 years and six months due to their social media posts and publications on the Afrin operation. The indictment prepared charged the journalists with 'inciting people towards resentment and hostility' and 'making terrorist organization propaganda through press.'

Many people, including journalists and politicians, were taken into custody on January 22 after their social media posts on the 'Olive Branch Operation.' Hürtaş and Demir was among those who were taken into custody; the two journalists were later released with judicial control. In the case file of Hürtaş and Demir, there are ten others who are charged due to their posts on the Afrin operation.

The indictment charges Hürtaş due to the interviews she made with former MP Ahmet Faruk Ünsal as well as with former People's Democratic Party (HDP) Şanlıurfa MP Osman Baydemir; Demir with three tweets he posted to announce information and news.

Lawsuit against journalists covering EMEP press statement

A lawsuit was filed against journalists who covered the news on the press statement of Labour Party (EMEP) organized in Didim, Aydın, on the Afrin Operation. The indictment prepared against Didim Özgürses Newspaper Owner Mustafa Öge, Mavi Didim Newspaper Owner Ergün Korkmaz, newspaper employee Erdem Özden and EMEP District Chairman Kazım Temiz was accepted by Didim Criminal Court of First Instance. The first hearing of the case will be held on June 22; the defendants are charged with 'provoking the people.'



First BIA Media Monitoring Report of 2018 launched

Independent Communication Network (BIA) launched the 'January-March 2018 Media Monitoring Report'. According to the report, 121 journalists entered April in prison. 301 journalists, columnists, editorial executives and cartoonists were put on trial within the three-month period; 48 of them were convicted due to 'coup attempt', 'illegal organization propaganda', 'illegal organization membership', 'denigrating government institutions' and 'insulting the

President' with sentences of 3 life imprisonments and a total of 210 years, 5 months and 22 days of imprisonment.

Eight journalists were sentenced to a total of 16 years, 7 months and 22 days of imprisonment (with 3 years, 2 months and 22 days of imprisonment deferred) as well as 21 thousand TL judicial fine only in the cases filed due to 'insulting the President' in accordance with Article 299 of the Turkish Penal Code. Four journalists were acquitted and 10 journalists are still on trial with claims of imprisonment for a total of 46 years, 6 months and 6 days. New lawsuits were filed against three journalists due to insulting Erdoğan in the first quarter of 2018; investigations against journalist Ahmet Şık, Evrensel Editor-In-Chief Fatih Polat and Cumhuriyet newspaper reporter Alican Uludağ still haven't turned into lawsuits. In this case, 28 journalists have become the victim, defendant or suspect of Erdoğan within the first quarter of the year.

Nine websites, 73 news, 5 newspapers, 3 newspaper articles, one TV series, one letter and one report were censored in the same period. On the other hand 35 online news articles were censored after interpreting the official response given by Parliamentary Spokesman Ismail Kahraman on child abuse as 'protecting child abuse'. For the full report: <https://goo.gl/dHwQAC>



Courtrooms

Artists, writers, social media users were again at courtrooms in May due to 'insulting Erdoğan,' 'making illegal organization propaganda' and 'illegal organization membership.' More than 1500 investigations were opened against social media posts only in the last four weeks. Here are some of the prominent news of May:

Proceeding of arrested Boğaziçi University students to start on June 6

Istanbul 32nd Assize Court accepted the indictment prepared against 21 students, 13 of them on pre-trial detention, who were targeted by President Erdoğan after saying, "*There is no delight in massacre*" as a reply to those distributing "*Afrin delights*" at Boğaziçi University. The indictment claims imprisonment sentences against the students up to five years each due to 'making illegal organization propaganda' by holding a banner and chanting slogans. The Prosecutor asserted that the defendant students have "attempted to legitimize methods adopted by terrorist organizations" and "aimed at disrupting the environment of peace." The first hearing of the case will be held on 6 June 2018.

Artist Erdal Güney convicted of 'insulting Erdoğan'

Turkish folk music artist and researcher Erdal Güney was sentenced to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment due to insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with his song, which involves the words, "*my dear father.*" The court deferred the announcement of the verdict. The verdict will be abated in case Güney does not repeat the same offense within

the five-year probation period. In another lawsuit against Güney due to the committing the same offense publicly, this time against Bilal Erdoğan, the artist was sentenced to 1960 TL judicial fine.

4-year 6-month imprisonment sentence against Afrin post

Gaziantep 7th Assize Court sentenced Recep Özdemir to 4 years and six months of imprisonment due to 'illegal organization propaganda.' Özdemir was on pre-trial detention for three months after reacting against the Afrin operation on the social media.

Taken into custody on 12 February 2018 with the allegation of making illegal organization propaganda on the social media, Recep Özdemir was later arrested on February 19. His social media posts considered criminal were the song "*Şifa İstemem [I do not want healing]*" by Delila and the photograph shared with the inscription, "*200 residences in Cinderes were bombed yesterday. Civilians are dying.*" The court sentenced the verdict considering the higher limit, due to the posts made during the operations.

Stage actor convicted due to social media posts

Yolcu Theater actor Cenk Dost Verdi was sentenced to 2 years and six months of imprisonment due to his social media posts. Verdi announced the penalty on the social media and evaluated the situation as an "abdication of reason." Stating that he is charged with 'making illegal organization propaganda' due to his posts which carry the quality of news, the actor wrote, "*The penalty I received is unlawful due to the restriction of my right to criticism without a legal basis... I will continue to speak the truth everywhere, on every stage and I will always stand behind what I've said so far.*"

Statements against Afrin operation become crime evidence

An indictment was prepared against 11 politicians including People's Democratic Congress (HDK) Co-Spokesperson Prof. Dr. Onur Hamzaoğlu and former HDP Co-Chair Serpil Kemalbay with imprisonment claims for up to eight years with the allegation of 'inciting people towards hatred and hostility' and 'making terrorist organization propaganda'. Hamzaoğlu and Kemalbay have been dismissed from Kocaeli University with emergency decrees.

In the indictment prepared by Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, HDP party and organization spokespeople were claimed to have aimed to 'defame the Olive Branch operation' with their speech 'publicly accusing the Republic of Turkey' on 4 February 2018. Books found in the search at the residence of Hamzaoğlu were shown as crime evidence. Onur Hamzaoğlu had been arrested in February together with Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Deputy Chair Fadime Çelebi within the investigation.

Imprisonment sentence against HDP MP Baluken approved

Gaziantep Regional Court approved the 16-year and 8-month imprisonment sentence against People's Democratic Party (HDP) Diyarbakır MP İdris Baluken.

Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court sentenced Baluken to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to 'armed terrorist organization membership', to 4 years and seven months of imprisonment four times due to 'making terrorist organization propaganda' as well as to 4 years and 7 months of imprisonment sentence four times due to 'violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations.' With the approval of the Court of Appeals, the 9-year and two months of imprisonment sentence against the MP issued due to 'making illegal organization propaganda' and 'violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations' was finalized. Following the finalization of his sentence, Baluken won't be able to be a candidate in the June 24 elections. He was the first-rank candidate of HDP from Batman.

Summary against HDP MP Garo Paylan

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office prepared a summary against People's Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul MP Garo Paylan due to his statements on the Armenian Genocide. *"Once upon a time, we were 40 percent. Now we are one over a thousand. Something must have happened to us - which I call a genocide,"* said Paylan. He was charged with 'publicly denigrating the Turkish nation, the government of the Republic of Turkey' and with 'insulting the President' regulated with Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code.

1-year 8-month imprisonment sentence against HDP MP Taşdemir

The summary judgment of the lawsuit filed against People's Democratic Party (HDP) Ağrı MPs Dirayet Taşdemir and Berdan Öztürk with the allegation of 'making illegal organization propaganda' was held at Erzurum 2nd Assize Court. Taşdemir was sentenced to 1 year and eight months of imprisonment due to the speech she gave during the funeral ceremony of a PKK member; the court deferred the announcement of the sentence. A verdict of acquittal was issued for Öztürk.

Pınar Aydınlar arrested

Artist Pınar Aydınlar was taken into custody at Atatürk Airport upon her arrival from Germany. Aydınlar's passport was seized and she was taken to Bakırköy Women's Closed Prison. It was announced that Aydınlar was taken into custody and arrested because of the approved 10-month imprisonment sentence against her due to 'making illegal organization propaganda' with her speeches within the election campaigns as a candidate for People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Izmir for the 7 June 2015 general elections.

Artist Pınar Aydınlar was convicted of commemorating the founder of Turkish Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) İbrahim Kaypakkaya, one of the 1968 generation leaders, in a concert she took part in in Tunceli five years ago. Tunceli 2nd High Criminal Court sentenced Aydınlar to 10 months of imprisonment due to 'illegal organization propaganda'. The court further issued for Aydınlar to be deprived of some of her rights, including her right to election.

Photo of Tahir Elçi considered 'illegal organization propaganda'

Hatice Ateş has been taken into custody with an operation in December 2017 in Bursa and was arrested due to her social media posts. In the case she was on trial at Bursa 2nd Assize Court, Ateş was sentenced to 1 year and three months of imprisonment due to

‘making illegal organization propaganda.’ A photo of killed Diyarbakır Bar Association Chairman Tahir Elçi, which was among the photos on the social media profile of Ateş, was considered a reason for penalty as well. Ateş was convicted and released in the first hearing of the case held on April 18 after five months in detention.

Prosecutor finds colours “yellow, red, green” crime element in combination

The prosecutor found scarves and strings with yellow, red and green colours as crime elements in the lawsuit against 24 people, six of them arrested, with imprisonment claims for up to eight years due to participating in the funeral of Kamber Morkoç after he died in Ardahan due to the fire opened by the soldiers. The prosecutor claimed that these are “colours misused by the illegal organization.”

In the indictment prepared, the Prosecutor claimed that the funeral ceremony of Morkoç was “turned into an illegal organization propaganda” and that a perception is created that the incident was performed by the soldiers to end “terror” operations in the region. Various political party activities were described as ‘illegal organization propaganda’ and ‘public incitement towards hatred and hostility’ as well. The first hearing of the case will be held on May 30 at Ardahan Assize Court.

Proceeding of lawyers protesting curfews starts

The first hearing of the case filed against 18 Libertarian Lawyers Association members was held at Istanbul 36th Assize Court. The lawyers have performed a sit-in protest and made a press statement in Beyoğlu Tünel to point to the curfews and civic deaths. The lawyers face imprisonment claims for up to 144 years in total due to ‘making illegal organization propaganda’ and ‘participating in illegal meetings and demonstrations.’ The next hearing of the case was scheduled for 8 November 2018.



Arrested rapper Ezhel writes: “Damn censorship”

Musician Ezhel has been arrested with the allegation that his songs encourage and ease drug use. In the letter he sent from prison, Ezhel wrote, “Damn censorship, long live fully independent rap!”

Musician Sercan İpekoğlu, known in the music scene as ‘Ezhel’, has been taken into custody at Istanbul Security Directorate on May 24 after going there to testify within an investigation opened against him. İpekoğlu has later been arrested by the court he was taken to.



Nine books from Avesta Publishing pulled off shelves

Nine books published by Avesta Publishing were pulled off the shelves by İdil Criminal Judicature of Peace within “the fight against terrorism.”

The books withdrawn from shelves are as following: “*Kan, İnançlar ve Oy Pusulaları*”, “*Cesur Adamların Ülkesine Yolculuk*”, “*Tasavvur mu Gerçek mi?*”, “*Mahabad Kürt Cumhuriyeti Büyük Güçlerin Politikasında Kürtler 1941-1947*”, “*Mağdur Diasporadan Sınırötesi Vatandaşlığa mı?*”, “*Ülkemde Bir Yabancı*”, “*Çaldıran Savaşı’nda Osmanlılar Safeviler ve Kürtler*”, “*Tanrı ve Şeyh Adi Kusursuzdur: Yezidi Tarihinden Kutsal Şiirler ve Dinsel Anlatılar*” ve “*Kürdistan Bayrağının Altında ve Irak’ta Soykırım.*” One among them is the sacred text of the Yezidis and others published at reputable universities of the world as Ph.D theses. Two people, whose houses were raided in İdil, Şırnak due to ‘KCK/PKK charges’ possessed the aforementioned books; their possession became a reason for the books to be pulled off shelves.



Governorate bans movie screening of Ankara Bar Association

Ankara Governorate banned the LGBTI Short Movie selections to be screened by Ankara Bar Association’s Human Rights Center.

The governorate claimed that the screening will “publicly incite one part of the society, with different qualities in terms of social class, race, religion, sect or region; to resentment and hostility towards the other part” and that it will “incite provocation.” The ban’s reason was shown as “the possibility of reactions by some groups due to social sensitivities.” The lawyers reacted against the ban; watching the short movies on their cell phones in front of the Bar Association building.



Event of author at book fair cancelled due to ‘social sensitivities’

The program to be held by writer Esra Elönü within the Book Fair in Kocaeli was cancelled with the reason that her opinions on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk create “social sensitivities.” Elönü was a

speaker in a forum within the fair with the topic, “Questions in Purgatory.” The event was cancelled following the meeting between the municipal administration and the publishing house bringing Elönü to the fair.



News banned to access due to ‘insulting Erdoğan’

The news published on Cumhuriyet Newspaper on 1 March 2018, entitled, *“Gendarmerie prevents those protesting the massacre of 40 thousand trees for Erdoğan’s ‘summer palace’ with a ‘dumper’”* was banned to access.

Lawyer Yaman Akdeniz, who is an expert on freedom of expression and press freedom, announced that the decision was made due to ‘insulting Erdoğan.’ Akdeniz indicated that the Criminal Judicatures of Peace issue such verdicts for about 15 thousand times on average per year, without even notifying the press.

The news reported approximately 40 thousand trees being cut off for the “summer palace” of President Erdoğan in Okluk, Marmaris of Muğla and that the NGOs protesting the situation are being prevented by the gendarmerie.



METU Rectorate prevents Pride Week and Pride March

Middle East Technical University (ODTU) Rectorate did not permit the Pride Week and March to be organized by ODTU LGBTI+ Solidarity on May 7-12. The mail sent to all students by the rectorate indicated that no event will

be permitted within the university in accordance with the decision of Ankara Governorate, dated 18 November 2017, preventing all LGBTI+ events in the province.

Amnesty International called for urgent action against the prevention. The organization emphasized that the prevention violates the freedom of the right to meeting. *“The march must be permitted and the general ban applied on all LGBTI+ events in Ankara must be removed,”* said the organization. To take part in the urgent action; <https://goo.gl/Z11GXa>



European Court of Human Rights denies application on Roboski Massacre

European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) did not accept the application on Roboski Massacre, causing the deaths of 34 people, 19 of them children, after the bombardment of Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) aircraft. The court's reason for denial was the

previous denial of the supreme court due to the deficient documents in the application, which were not compensated in time.

The verdict was announced by lawyer Kerem Altıparmak, who is also among the applicants, on Twitter. *"The European Court of Human Rights buried the Roboski massacre in history. The name of the court must now be changed into European Court of Nonacceptance, because that's the best they can do!... 34 people were massacred, together with children, nothing was done for seven years. Now those seven years was forgotten, the application was denied because the lawyers were a couple days late. I can not find words to speak,"* wrote Altıparmak.

The application made at the Constitutional Court has previously been denied on 24 February 2015 due to "the identified deficiencies in the case file not being compensated in time." The European Court of Human Rights evaluated this denial as the "lack of exhaustion of domestic remedies."



11th Gathering for Freedom of Expression

The 11th 'Istanbul Gathering for Freedom of Expression' has been held for the first time on a completely online environment since its start in 1997.

In the sessions broadcasted on YouTube for two days, experiences on freedom of expression within the past two years were shared by witnesses from both Turkey and abroad. Turkish and international participants searched an answer to the question, "Where are we headed?" with their video messages.

In the 11th Gathering, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression David Kaye, Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Media Freedom Representative Harlem Desir, Knut Fleckenstein from European Parliament Socialists and Democrats Group, Prof. Noam Chomsky and other representatives from HRW, IFEX, FIDH, Freedom House, INDEX

on Censorship, Article 19, PEN, IPA, IPI, EFJ, CPJ, Fritt-Ord Foundation, RSF and others working on freedom of expression have shared their opinions. The sessions were broadcasted live on Artı TV and IFEX as well.

You may find the first day's sessions on <https://goo.gl/wjeSo1> ,

The second day's sessions on <https://goo.gl/ddEtQ1>.

You may find all detailed information on the 11th Gathering on www.dusun-think.net/istanbul-bulusmasi.

You may find details and more on <http://www.dusun-think.net/?dil=en> and read our weekly bulletins on <http://www.dusun-think.net/?s=bulten>