

September 2020 Report

1. Administrative Bans, Security Interventions

01: **Ankara** “Peace Chain” protest organized by the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) on World Peace Day in front of the train station was prevented together with journalists who wanted to follow it.

01: **Ankara** The police prevented the press statement made by those dismissed with Statutory Decrees in front of the Human Rights Monument on Yüksel Street for 1393 days with brute force.

01 : **Antalya** The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations for seven days.

01: **Diyarbakır** The police prevented the “Peace Chain” organized by the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) on World Peace Day due to the *Governorate decree on the pandemic*.

01: **Edirne** Selahattin Demirtaş wasn’t allowed to see his children at the Type F Prison.

01: **Istanbul** The group organizing a press statement in front of the President’s house in Üsküdar in order to draw attention to hunger strikes was intervened by the police, one person was detained.

01: **Istanbul** The police intervened the press statement made at Sancaktepe-Sarıgazi neighborhood on World Peace Day, 18 people were detained.

01: **Urfa** The “Peace Chain” protest was prevented by the police on World Peace Day, 6 People’s Democratic Party (HDP) members were detained.

01: **Van** The police prevented the “Peace Chain” protest organized by the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) on World Peace Day based on the Governorate ban.

02: **Istanbul** The Governorate banned the 100th anniversary event of the Turkish Communist Movement in Kartal due to COVID-19.

03: **Istanbul** Anatolian 7th Criminal Judicature of Peace banned access from the websites <https://t24>, <https://ankahaber>, <https://ilerihaber.org.tr> due to a news article on the purchase of a land belonging to the Saving Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) by a friend of Bilal Erdoğan.

04: **Istanbul** Beykoz Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the website <https://eksisozluk.com> due to the news on the person, whose dog has allegedly been killed by his neighbor.

06: Bitlis The Governorate announced a curfew in 24 neighborhoods and rural areas within the Provincial center until second notice.

06: Istanbul The police intervened in the march, “May 1 Neighborhood’s September 2 festival” in Ümraniye May 1 neighborhood and detained 39 people using physical violence.

06: Urfa The Governorate banned all protests and events planned to be held in the province for 15 days.

07: Ankara The police intervened in the press statement organized on Sakarya Street by public employees, who were dismissed from work with Statutory Decrees, and detained three people.

07: Dersim The police intervened in the sit-in protests started by the family of Gülistan Doku for her to be found and for the suspects to be prosecuted; detaining Bedriye and Aygül Doku.

08: Izmir: The press statement organized by the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP), People’s Democratic Party (HDP) and the People’s Democratic Congress (HDK) in order to reprimand the detentions against the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) was prevented by the police.

11: Mardin The protest organized against the applications of Dicle Electric Distribution Inc. in Dirharrîn (Ortaköy) neighborhood of Artuklu district was intervened by the gendarmerie with tear gas. Eight people were detained.

12: Ankara The Governorate banned the press statement of the Revolutionist 1978 Generation Federation organized in front of the U.S. Embassy to protest the September 12, 1980 coup due to COVID-19.

13: Istanbul The press statement made in Kadıköy in order to draw attention to the ongoing forest fires on Cudi mountain was prevented by the police due to COVID-19.

14: Istanbul The police intervened against those protesting the banning of open-air events like concerts and festivals based on COVID-19 in front of Istanbul Governorate and detained five journalists.

14: Dersim The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

15: Antalya Turkish Workers’ Party (TIP) Edirne Uzunköprü district Chairman Enes Keskin was detained due to his social media posts and was released with a travel ban.

15: Hatay Edibe Özçelik, who had a heart attack during the police raid at her home, had lost her life on January 20, 2020. The police intervened against the press statement organized because of that and detained one person using physical violence.

15: Istanbul The march organized by the Medical Chamber until the Haseki Training and Research Center Hospital was banned by Fatih District Governorate due to COVID-19.

16: Hatay The police intervened against the press statement organized at Abdullah Cömert Park after Edibe Özçelik, who had a heart attack during the raid at her home in Samandağ, has lost her life on January 20, 2020. One person was detained with physical violence.

17: Ankara The police prevented the press statement organized by the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) in front of the National Education Ministry, after the teachers who came to the Ministry in order to negotiate the opening of schools weren't let inside the building.

17: Istanbul The police detained 20 people using physical violence in the press statement organized by BIMEKS workers, who were fired without receiving their salaries or compensation, in front of Boğaziçi University, where the company owner was lecturing at.

20: Istanbul The march organized by *"Either Canal or Istanbul Coordinative"* in Yeniköy was banned by the Interior Ministry.

20: Istanbul 2 people were detained by the police after the press statement organized by *"Either Canal or Istanbul Coordinative"* in Kadıköy.

20: Van The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for another 16 days.

21: Batman The police intervened against the protest organized by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Women and Young Women Assemblies in order to support the Istanbul convention. 6 women were detained and each of them received 395 TL fines, separately, in accordance with the *"Law of Misdemeanor."*

22: Batman The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

22: Çanakkale 4 people were detained in the gendarmerie raid against the nature watch on the gold mining facility on Ida Mountains.

22: Siirt The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

25: Ankara The police intervened against the Community Houses members, who wanted to hand the report they have prepared to the Ministry of National Education. Six people, including Chair Nebiye Merttürk, were detained with physical violence.

25: Istanbul Access bans were issued against <https://Cumhuriyet.com.tr> and <https://www.diken.com.tr> websites due to the news published on the assignment to replace the dismissed physician at Bakırköy Prison.

28: Kars The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

29: Dersim The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

29: Kocaeli The police prevented the press statement organized in order to protest the detainment of People's Democratic Party (HDP) Gebze members and executives, based on the District Governorate decree.

29: Mardin The police prevented the press statement organized by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Organization as a reaction against the detainment of the party executives.

30: Kars The entrance of People's Democratic Party (HDP) members in the province was prevented after the detainment of Ayhan Bilgen.

2. Investigations, Arrests, Prosecutions

02: Istanbul Rudaw TV reporter Rawin Sterk was released by the 34th Assize Court with a travel ban.

03: Istanbul The lawsuit filed at the 22nd Assize Court against Diken website founder Harun Simavi, Editor-In-Chief Erdal Güven and former Managing Editor Semin Sezerer due to news articles containing tweets by Fuat Avni was concluded with acquittal.

04: Şırnak Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against Mesopotamia Agency's Cizre reporter Gökhan Altay with the allegation of "making illegal organisation propaganda" due to his social media posts between the years 2014 and 2018.

07: Muğla/ Bodrum One person was detained with the allegation of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan through social media posts.

08: Denizli Activist Mariam Shariatmadari was detained to be sent to Iran, after the indication that she has a finalised imprisonment sentence against her due to protesting the Law on Mandatory Head Scarves for Women in Iran.

08: Istanbul Etkin News Agency reporter Serdal Işık was detained due to the posts made from his social media account.

09: Istanbul In the lawsuit filed against Yeni Yaşam Daily journalists Mehmet Ferhat Çelik and Aydın Kese, Oda TV journalists Barış Terkoğlu, Barı Pehlivan and reporter Hülya Kılınç, as well as against Yeniçağ Daily writer Murat Ağirel due to the news they reported on the Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) officer having died in Libya; the 34th Assize Court sentenced Aydın Keser and Ferhat Çelik to 4 years and eight months of imprisonment. The court released Murat Ağirel, Hülya Kılınç and Barış Pehlivan with judicial measures and travel ban, considering the period they remained under arrest.

09: Istanbul The lawsuit filed at Istanbul 23th Assize Court is ongoing against four people, including Etkin News Agency (ETHA) editor Semiha Şahin and reporter Pınar Gayip.

09: Van A lawsuit was filed against the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly and Youth Executive Board member Hatice Büşra Kuyun with the allegation of "public incitement towards resentment and hostility" after she was being kidnapped and threatened from Maraş Street by people introducing themselves as police officers.

10: Ankara In the mutual lawsuit of compensation between OdaTV Ankara News Director Müyesser Yıldız and Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar at Dışkapı 7th Civil Court of First Instance, Yıldız was sentenced to pay 20 thousand Turkish Liras of moral compensation to Akar.

10: Istanbul Writer Hasan Basri Aydın was detained at the airport due to having insulted former Justice Minister Cemil Çiçek.

10: Izmir Compensation lawsuits were filed against four female workers, who were fired from SF Trade Textiles, due to being members of professional unions. The lawsuits were filed by their boss due to "leading to unfair competition" and "sharing confidential information on the company" and the women face the possibility to pay 200 thousand TL compensation each, of which 100 thousand TL was moral and 100 thousand TL material.

10: Van Van 5th Assize Court sentenced former People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Co-Chair Yadişen Karabulak to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to "*illegal organization membership.*"

11: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court sentenced MP Remziye Tosun to 10 years of imprisonment due to "*illegal organization membership.*"

15: Istanbul The lawsuit filed at the 30th Assize Court against seven people, including M. Ali Alabora and Can Dünder, on Gezi Park protests, continued.

15: Istanbul 14th Criminal Court of First Instance issued a warrant against musician Ferhat Tunç in the lawsuit filed against him due to insulting the President.

15: Mersin Unsecured Workers Association Chairman Abduselam Kutlu and members Fadil Sevinç and Kazım Acar were detained with house raids. Kutlu had called the workers not to go to work after the negotiations between workers' associations in Çukurova and the Mediterranean Exporters Union (AKIB) were stuck.

16: Muş 2nd Assize Court sentenced People's Democratic Party (HDP) Muş former Co-Chair Muhlise Karagüzel to 8 years and one month of imprisonment due to "*illegal organization membership.*" Karagüzel will remain arrested.

17: Diyarbakır 10th Assize Court sentenced former Democratic Regions Party (DBP) CoChair Sebahat Tuncel to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment in the lawsuit filed with

the allegation of *“insulting the President”* through her expression, *“Tayyip Erdoğan is a complete misogynist.”*

17: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against journalists Canan Coşkun, Ali Açar and Can Uğur due to *“targeting a public officer having taken part in the fight against terrorism”* through the news they reported on the death of Berkin Elvan, started at the 34th Assize Court.

17: Istanbul The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against former Cumhuriyet Daily Editor-In-Chief Can Dünder on the publication and broadcasting of visuals of Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) Trucks was held at the 14th Assize Court. The court issued for all assets of Dünder to be confiscated in case he doesn't go to the court within 15 days.

17: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against Mısra Öz, the mother of Oğuz Arda Sel (who lost his life in the Çorlu train accident), continued at the 5th Criminal Court of First Instance due to her social media posts.

20: Istanbul Investigations were started against the Bar Association Chairman and 10 executives due to the hanging of the photo of lawyer Ebru Timtik on the Bar Association building after her death during her indefinite hunger strike.

20: Izmir The lawsuit filed against a number of defendants, who were detained during the corruption protests in 2013, due to charges in accordance with the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911 has concluded and the defendants were acquitted.

21: Diyarbakır In the summary judgement of the lawsuit filed at the 9th Assize Court against Evrensel Daily writer and Labour Party Central Executive Council member Yusuf Karataş due to the events he participated in, the court sentenced Karataş to 10 years and six months of imprisonment due to *“illegal organization membership.”* The travel ban issued against him is ongoing.

21: Istanbul An investigation was opened against HAYKURDER (Animal Saving Association) Chairman Erman Paçalı due to his social media posts, calling on Parliament members about the Law on Animal Rights.

22: Istanbul The Prosecutor claimed for journalist Sabiha Temizkan to be penalized in the lawsuit filed against her with the allegation that she has made illegal organization propaganda through press.

22: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily Editors-In-Chief Hüseyin Aykol, Zana Kaya; Managing Editor İnan Kızılkaya and politician Hatip Dicle continued at the 22nd Assize Court. The court issued a warrant for Hatip Dicle and scheduled the next hearing to a later date.

23: Hatay 2nd Assize Court sentenced journalist Burcu Özkaya to 1 year and three months of imprisonment due to *“making illegal organization propaganda”* through her

social media posts on the Turkish Armed Forces operation in Syria; and deferred the announcement of the verdict.

23: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against 20 people, including Etkin News Agency (ETHA) News Director İsmınaz Temel, reporter Havva Cuştan and the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) members, continued at the 27th Assize Court. The court denied the claim for the judicial measures against the defendants to be revoked and postponed the hearing.

25: Izmir Former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly member Pervin Oduncu was detained within the investigation opened by Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office on the Kobani protests in 2014.

27: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against journalist Fatih Portakal due to his social media posts was held at the 46th Criminal Court of First Instance.

27: Istanbul Artist Veysi Ermiş was detained due to his social media posts. Ermiş was later released after testifying.

28: Kocaeli Izmit Halk Daily owner Faruk Bostan and Managing Editor Bülent Karagöz were arrested due to “slander” through the news article in the newspaper on rape and sexual abuse.

29: Istanbul In the investigation opened against the Republican People’s Party (CHP) Provincial Chair Canan Kaftancıoğlu due to having taken a photo of Presidential Communications Director İbrahim Altun, the Prosecutor issued a verdict of non-prosecution.

30: Izmir: 12 people were detained due to their social media posts.

3. Other Violations

01: Gaziantep An access ban was issued with court decrees against two threads on <https://eksisozluk.com/> regarding the death of Duygu Delen due to “a violation of personal rights.”

02: Afyon An access ban was issued with a 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace decree on the news on <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/> regarding someone employed at the Culture Directorate of the Municipality having been assigned to parks and gardens.

02: Gaziantep Access bans were issued with a 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace decree against the news on <https://sol.org.tr>, <https://www.evrensel.net/>, <https://www.birgun.net/>, <https://ilerihaber.org/> and <https://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/> regarding the suspicious death of Duygu Delen, who fell from the balcony of her boyfriend’s apartment on August 13, 2020.

02: İzmir A convict at Şakran Prison said that after a phone call, the person he was on the call with was stripped by the prison guards, beaten and was forced to say, *“How happy is he who can say I’m a Turk!”*

08: İzmir The Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) İzmir Provincial Organization building was raided by the police. In the raid based on the search of a particular person, identities of 8 people inside were checked and they were detained.

10: Ankara 7th Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against LGBTIQ+ meeting, dating and chatting platform GaBiLe.

12: Ankara Writer Firat Sözeri was threatened by four unidentified people waiting for him in front of his home.

14: Afyon Governorate targeted media organisations, which expressed that the attacks against Kurdish workers in Afyon has a social side; claiming that *“there is no social side to the incident.”*

15: Ankara Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) issued media blackouts and administrative fines against four TV channels:

a) *Three times media blackout and an administrative fine from the upper limit was issued against Haber Global TV Channel due to the expressions of Erol Mütercimler on religious vocational schools.*

b) *Three times media blackout and an administrative fine from the upper limit was issued against Meltem TV Channel due to the expressions of Erol Mütercimler on the show he was hosting, regarding child abuse incidents in Sakarya.*

c) *An administrative fine was issued against TELE1 TV Channel due to the expressions of Mine Kırıkkanat on a show she attended as a guest.*

d) *An administrative fine was issued against FOX TV Channel due to the expressions of Selçuk Tepeli on primetime newscast.*

21: Diyarbakır People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Central Executive Board member and HDP Youth Assembly Co-Spokesperson Serhat Aktumur was kidnapped by unidentified people, who claimed to be Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) agents, then he was accused of espionage and experienced physical violence.

23: Ankara 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued access bans against 97 Twitter posts by lawyer and academic Dilek Ekmekçi as well as against her account and the thread opened on <https://eksisozluk.com/> regarding young girls and women being forced to sex labour through a gang at orphanages.

23: Ankara 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the news on <https://www.cumhuriyet.com/tr>, <https://odatv4.com/> and <https://www.halktv.com.tr/> regarding the luxury formal cars rented by Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University rector Prof. Dr. Şükrü Baydemir.

23: Samsun 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the news published in Sözcü Daily on the investigations opened against private hospitals, which increased their fees for the use of operation rooms during the COVID-19 outbreak. The ban was based on a violation of personal rights.

25: Bitlis Musician Hozan Cesim was threatened by people introducing themselves as “Intelligence officers” after being summoned to the Provincial Gendarmerie Command. The musician performs in weddings and other similar events.

25: Hatay 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against Yeni Yaşam Daily’s website <http://yeniyasamgazetesi>. Furthermore, access to <http://siyasihaber.org/> was banned with a decree on the same date as well.

4. Comments and suggestions

Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV):

According to the findings of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) Documentation Center, prosecutions against at least 38 journalists continued throughout Turkey during September 2020. Access bans were brought against 37 news articles, 1 social media account, 97 social media posts, 11 online content and 3 websites. Four journalists were detained and two journalists were threatened.

How the access bans are used excessively is revealed very clearly with the access bans against news website sendika.org. Evaluating applications on the banning of sendika.org news website from access for 62 times on September 15, 2020, the Constitutional Court (AYM) decided that the freedom of expression and press freedom were violated. However, despite the Constitutional Court decree, sendika63.org website was banned from access with a court decree as well.

Another interesting incident on freedom of expression and press freedom in September 2020 was the letter sent by Istanbul Provincial Security Directorate to Istanbul 13th Assize Court, wanting the finalised and annotated reasoned decrees on peace academics Esra Mungan, Muzaffer Kaya, Kivanç Ersoy, Sevda Bulduk and Şebnem Korur Fincancı to be sent to the Information and Archive Bureau Command of the Security Branch Directorate, even though the academics have been acquitted. The academics were prosecuted due to signing the “We Will Not Partake In This Crime” petition.

Protest and demonstration bans issued by Governors and District Governors have continued in September. Everywhere across the country, Governors and District Governors are issuing consequent decrees of ban and extending the ban period, which is limited to maximum 30 days in the legislation. Even in some extreme cases, the bans are effectively being made continuous and indefinite. Thus, the essence of the right to meeting and demonstration is being removed and rendered totally unusable. The most extreme and sad example in this subject is the ongoing application in Van.

Citizens in Van are completely unable to use their right to meeting and demonstration since November 21, 2016. With the latest decree issued by the Governorate on September 20, 2020, the protest and demonstration bans have reached a total of 1414 days without break. This actually means: 1 million 136 thousand 757 citizens residing in Van are unable to use their right to meeting and demonstration, which is guaranteed and protected by the Turkish Constitution, as well as their related right to freedom of expression and organization, for a total of 3 years, 10 months and 14 days. This situation is nothing but an unnamed, permanent State of Emergency - even a state of siege.

ANKARA:

Applications and policies leading to violations in freedom of expression and the right to meeting and demonstration continuing during the COVID-19 period, especially some types of violations increasing during this period as well, reveals the need for a varying and increasing activity of press organizations and professional unions. Reporting, documenting and continuing activities of advocacy are still the most effective methods we have in hand in order to prevent such violations.

ISTANBUL:

Detainments due to the intervention of security forces against protests, administrative bans, prosecutions of politicians and journalists, investigations and arrests due to social media posts as well as access bans against newspapers and news websites due to the reported news have continued with full speed in September.

İZMİR:

The prominent rights violations of this month were:

1. Raids against opposition parties, detainments of their members and executives,
2. Government authorities targeting media over reporting news outside of their expectations,
3. Rights violations in prisons and prisoners being forced to express the happiness and pride they feel for being a Turk,
4. Governorate bans.

In a country which claims to be democratic, such applications are indicators that there exists no democracy.

Once again, we express our demands for arbitrary detainments and arrests to end, for the restrictions against the right to peaceful demonstrations and protests to be removed, for applications against the mistreatment and torture ban during interventions against demonstrations to end, for the security forces applying mistreatment and those who command them to be effectively investigated, for the investigations, prosecutions and arrests against journalists due to the news they report to end, as well as for the bans against publication and communication websites to be revoked.