

December 2019 Report

1. Police intervention

Van, Batman, Hakkari, Mardin, Urfa, Diyarbakır: Entire month. All protests and demonstrations were banned by Governorates for 15 days. However on the 16th day, another ban was issued for 15 days; then another one. Thus, the right to meeting and demonstration is continuously being trampled.

Istanbul: Entire month. The protest known as the “Saturday Mothers,” performed in front of Galatasaray High School for 25 years by those looking for their missing relatives, is banned. The protesters were surrounded in front of Human Rights Association (IHD) Istanbul building on the street parallel to the school. Those resisting face police violence. Conversely, mothers claiming that their children were kidnapped and taken to the mountain by the PKK gather in front of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial building, supported by the government, police and media.

Istanbul: December 8. Dance protest “Las Tesis”, organized in Kadıköy against violence against women, was prevented; seven women were detained.

Diyarbakır: December 13. The press statement organized by Freedom for Lawyers Association at Koşuyolu Park was prevented based on the protest ban issued by the Governorate.

Izmir: December 17. Dance protest “Las Tesis” was prevented, 25 women were detained. The women were charged with violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No.2911 and insulting the government (Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code).

Istanbul: December 21. In the protest organised for Mustafa Koçak, who is on an indefinite hunger strike for 172 days, parents of Mustafa Koçak (Zeynep and Hasan Koçak) were detained.

Istanbul: December 21. Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD) member lawyer Oya Arslan was arrested with the allegation of “illegal organisation membership.”

Ankara: December 25. The police intervened women organising the dance protest, “Las Tesis,” at Ankara University Cebeci Campus; detaining five students.

Eskişehir: December 26. It was found out that the owner of the hall People’s Democratic Party (HDP) rented for the ordinary congress in İnönü district of Eskişehir was threatened by the police. The congress could not be held at the rented hall, thus was held on a street in İnönü.

Antalya: December 29. Women who organized the dance protest, “Las Tesis” were prevented by the police due to “*the expressions to be used during the dance.*”

Istanbul: December 29. Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDP) members were detained while protesting the Canal Istanbul project in front of Justice and Development Party (AKP) Kadıköy District Center.

Istanbul: December 31. Police intervened the New Year celebrations of the Alevis in Sultangazi; three people were detained.

2. Prosecutions

Izmir, Aydın, Denizli: December 2-31. 12 people were detained and 1 person was arrested due to their social media posts.

Diyarbakır: December 3. Lawsuits were filed against former Diyarbakır Bar Association Chairman Ahmet Özmen and 10 executive board member lawyers due to *“public incitement towards resentment and hostility”* and *“denigrating the government”* during the press statement they organized on April 24, *the anniversary of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.*

Alanya: December 6. 29 people were detained in the night raids organized at homes and offices; 11 of them were arrested due to *“illegal organisation membership.”*

Malatya: December 18. Human Rights Association (IHD) Chair Gönül Öztürkoğlu and 3 executive board members were sentenced to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to *“illegal organisation membership.”* Evidence? Social media posts.

Istanbul: December 24. All possessions of KCK Main Case defendant, writer and publisher Ragıp Zarakolu were seized. Zarakolu is still residing in Sweden.

Ankara: December 26. A lawsuit was filed against journalist Melda Onur over making a reaction on social media against the statement of Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) Chairman Rifat Hisarcıkıoğlu, who said, *“Our women are a more precious treasure than oil and natural gas,”* on March 8. Onur is charged with *“insult.”*

Adana: December 26. KURDÎ-DER Adana Chairman Giyasettin Gümüş, which was previously shut down with an emergency decree, is prosecuted with the allegation of *“making illegal organisation propaganda”* together with other executives of the association. Reason? Azadiya Welat Daily and various Kurdish magazines found in the search made at the association.

3. Other applications

Hatay: December 3. Purple Solidarity Women’s Association in Antakya district of Hatay was sealed due to *“unpermitted training”* and the association was fined with 51,000 TL.

Diyarbakır: December 17. Sur district Mayors Filiz Buluttekin and Cemal Özdemir were arrested with late night raids. The mayors were dismissed and the District Governor was assigned to the municipality as trustee.

Izmir: December 20. Urla Mayor was dismissed and arrested; the District Governor was assigned as trustee to replace him.

Ankara: December 26. Journalist Berivan Altan described the police harassment she faced under detainment at a press meeting.

4. Comments and Suggestions

Ankara:

As human rights advocates, we must continue to actively follow processes on freedom of expression, just like we did in the past so that we can stand together with the people, whose rights to freedom of expression were violated. That way, we will further make legislative, conducting and judicial authorities comply with the necessities of this freedom; increasing awareness in all parts of the society.

Diyarbakır:

All democratic rights are being destroyed with reasons like the protection of public order and prevention of crimes. We have to resist against it with full force and prompt the public opinion, informing people with true information despite all lies told by the univocal media. We share the pain of the mothers, who are looking for their missing children in front of People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Diyarbakır building and are supported by the government. However, we are also prevented from contacting them. We must resist.

Istanbul:

Everything seems dark. Basic human rights are continuously being trampled and the media has become univocal. For a deep-seated resolution, we have to fight for a new Constitution based on human rights and democracy, as well as for ways to return to the supremacy of law. This fight is, once again, the job of human rights advocates.

Izmir:

There was a case against a lawyer we talked about last month, on the abolishment of “the right to defense.” Fortunately, the case ended with success. It is an example that shows resistance leads to success. On the other hand, the ban/prevention of the dance protests seems like an intimidation against women. Furthermore, all critical social media posts are charged with “terrorist organisation propaganda.” Besides, despite the dismissal of an elected mayor is legal and reasonable, another ‘elected’ municipal assembly member must replace him instead of an assigned trustee.