

# Think, think...



## Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin (Issue 32/20 - August 7, 2020)

### What happened last week?

- After many months fighting against the outbreak, we turned back to where we started. The number of daily identified cases reached thousands. Despite all claims, the picture in Turkey isn't bright as well. Turkish Medical Association announced that tests for people having contact with COVID-19 positive patients have decreased so much, even stopped. "Our achievements, that were earned with great effort and loss of lives, are being lost one by one," the association stated. On the other hand, the experts claim that daily data announced by the Ministry of Health does not reflect the truth. According to the statement made by Ankara Medical Association, the number of daily positive cases reach almost one thousand only in Ankara. According to the new case number map launched by the Ministry on August 1st, the number of daily cases in the Southern Anatolian region was recorded as 265. Diyarbakır Medical Chamber, on the other hand, recorded that the daily number of new cases only in Diyarbakır and Urfa is around 650. Statements made by the Governors of three provinces in the last week point to the Ministry of Health having hidden real data. The numbers announced by the Governors in Erzurum, Malatya and Rize are way above the numbers announced by the Ministry on the "COVID-19 State Report."
- After the targeting of the Istanbul Convention, women started demonstrations all around the country with the call, "We don't give up our rights, apply Istanbul Convention." The demonstration organized in Izmir was banned by the Governorate. The police intervened against the demonstration, beating and detaining 16 women. Democratic mass organizations also made statements, supporting the Convention, one after another. 155 female writers and poets launched a statement that announced their support for the Istanbul Convention, saying, "No violence, yes Istanbul Convention."
- According to the data by the We Will Stop Femicides Platform, 36 femicides have occurred and 11 women died suspiciously in July, when the ruling power started the debate on the Convention. At least 182 women were killed this year and at least 474 women were killed in 2019. Women's organizations continue their demand for a complete and effective application of the Convention, instead of debating it.
- Prices of gold and foreign exchange continue to break records. The Turkish Lira lost about three percent of its value in one day this week, as Euro saw 8.69 TL and the US Dollar 7.35 TL. Quarter gold reached 847 TL. The Turkish Lira lost 40 percent of its value against the Euro in the last year, and lost 32 percent of value against the US Dollar.
- According to the data by the Journalists Association, 76 journalists and media workers left another feast behind, deprived of their freedom. Two journalists on average per day have stood trial in the last month.

- The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) launched a report on the allegations of torture and mistreatment in Turkey, prepared after the Committee's visit in many provinces, prisons and police stations in 2019. The committee report indicated that a significant number of arbitrary applications, mistreatment, unhealthy conditions, complaints of torture and harassment is ongoing. The report indicated that the suggestions and calls for the government aren't being applied and that it is absolutely essential to give a clear message to security forces that mistreatment under detainment or in prisons are not tolerated.
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#### **Investigation against news on sexual abuse against child**

An investigation was opened against local weekly newspaper Jiyan News' Owner İdris Yayla due to the news on a 17-year-old being dragged to suicide following the sexual abuse of a specialized sergeant in Batman. The journalist is charged with “public incitement towards resentment and hostility or denigration.”



#### **Press statement in Germany penalized in Turkey**

İbrahim Doğan, who participated in the press statement organized in Cologne, Germany to protest the detainment of Selahattin Demirtaş in 2016 and later faced a lawsuit against himself in Turkey, was sentenced to 1 year and three months of imprisonment. The sentence was issued due to “making illegal organization propaganda” and was

deferred.



### Grup Yorum members detained

Grup Yorum members were detained as they were rehearsing in Beykoz Polonezköy for their concert in Yenikapı on August 9th, which was banned by Istanbul Governorate. Simultaneously, the police raided İdil Cultural Center in Okmeydanı, where Grup Yorum continues to work.



### Women detained due to protesting to support Istanbul Convention

The protest organized in Alsancak with the call of Izmir Women's Platform against the targeting of the Istanbul Convention was intervened by the police. 16 women were beaten and detained. Those detained were released after testifying.



### Hozan Cane to remain arrested

The case of German citizen and Kurdish artist Hozan Cane, who was sentenced to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to “terrorist organization membership” through her social media posts, started to be retried after the application of appeal. The court decided for Cane to remain arrested in the hearing held in Edirne,

scheduling the next hearing for September 3.



### Court reverses ban against 9th METU Pride March

Ankara 7th Administrative Court reversed the ban issued by the Middle East Technical University Rectorate against the 9th Middle East Technical University LGBTI Pride March. The court decree stated that the Rectorate ban against the event that is organized in May 2019 continues the LGBTI event ban declared by Ankara Governorate in

November 2017 based on the Law of State of Emergency, thus claiming it to be against the law.



## Basın açıklamasına açılan soruşturma

Emek Partisi üyelerinin Adana'daki Aytek Konfeksiyon fabrikası önünde bildiri dağıtırken saldırıyla uğramasını protesto için fabrika önünde basın açıklaması yapan parti üye ve yöneticileriyle birlikte eylemi takip eden Evrensel gazetesi muhabirinin de aralarında olduğu 12 kişi hakkında soruşturma açıldı.



## Protest bans

Van Governorate extended the protest and demonstration ban in the province for another 15 days. The protest ban in Van had started on November 21, 2016 due to “security” reasons after the coup attempt. The ban was later based on “national security” and “the Coronavirus

outbreak.” Thus, a Constitutional right is not able to be used for longer than 2000 days due to the decrees of the administration. Protests and demonstrations in Muş and Hakkari were banned by the Governorates there for 15 days, based on “public order” and “national security.” Thus, the use of the right to meeting and demonstration in Hakkari is being banned continuously for 75 days.



## Court of Cassation reverses acquittal decree in “insulting Erdoğan” case

The Court of Cassation reversed the decree of acquittal issued for a citizen due to the charge of “insulting the President” through his social media posts. In the lawsuit filed following a denunciation through an email, Izmir Karşıyaka

8th Criminal Court of First Instance had issued the citizen’s acquittal, deciding that he has expressed his own opinions and criticisms on the incidents in the country. Following the request of Erdoğan’s lawyers, the Ministry of Justice claimed for the finalized decree of acquittal to be reversed in the interest of the law. 16th Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation then reversed the acquittal decree of the local court. The Court of Cassation stated that the legal benefits protected by Article 299 of the Turkish Criminal Code is the honour and dignity of the President, stating that this is essential for the protection of social peace and public order.



## Access bans

The news on the investigation opened by the Higher Education Institute against Gaziantep University Rector Ali Gür due to “forgery of documents” and “misuse of duty” were banned to

access. Rector Gür targeted the journalists in a statement he made on Twitter by calling them “terrorism-lovers.” Iskenderun 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the news published on Sendika.org, ArtıGerçek and KızılBayrak websites on the worker who suspiciously has lost his life in Algeria. Two separate decrees issued by Urfa Criminal Judicatures of Peace banned access from the Twitter posts on the news related to AKP Urfa Youth Organization Chairman, who recently was the target of reactions due to a video he shared.



## **TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

\*\*\*There are no developments next week on the lawsuits we are tracking due to the judicial recess.