

OCTOBER 2020

**Report on Violations of Freedom of Expression,
Right to Assembly and Peaceful Demonstrations in Turkey**

This report was prepared in collaboration of the Human Rights Association, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey and the Initiative for Freedom of Expression. It was broadcasted as a video conference as well.

1. Administrative Bans, Police Intervention

01 : **Ankara** The police intervened against the press statement organized in front of the Human Rights Monument on Yüksel Street at 6 PM for the protest ongoing for 1423 days by the workers to return to their work they were dismissed with Statutory Decrees; dispersing those participating in the protest from the area using physical violence.

01: **Van** The police intervened against the condolences made by People's Democratic Party (HDP) MPs for the family of Servet Turgut, who was allegedly thrown off a helicopter in Van and died. The police indicated that no speeches will be allowed during the condolence and prevented journalists from taking visuals from the event.

02: **Ankara** Ministry of the Interior sent a circular to Governorates in 81 Provinces and announced that all events to be organized by non-governmental organizations, professional organizations that are of the quality of public institutions, unions and cooperatives are postponed from 02.10.2020 until 01.12.2020 in accordance with the related letter by the Ministry of Health and the advisory decision of the Coronavirus Science Council.

02: **Diyarbakır** The Governorate postponed all events to be organized by non-governmental organizations, professional organizations that are of the quality of public institutions, unions and cooperatives for two months within measures against the COVID-19.

02: **Mardin** The Governorate postponed all events to be organized by non-governmental organizations, professional organizations that are of the quality of public institutions, unions and cooperatives for two months within measures against the COVID-19.

02: **Muğla** All mass events were restricted, including general council meetings, within the scope of measures against the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) type in Marmaris.

03: **Afyonkarahisar** The Governorate banned all general council meetings and events of non-governmental organizations for two months within the scope of measures against the new Coronavirus (COVID-19).

03 : **Ankara** The police prevented the education event organized by the Student Collectives and Community Houses at Aşık Mahsuni Şerif Park in Çankaya district on "What is COVID-19 and how to protect ourselves". The police took the park under blockade and prevented the event due to COVID-19.

05: Edirne The request of the board, which included Swedish Leftist Party Chair as well, to meet Selahattin Demirtaş was denied by the prison administration.

06: Istanbul Anatolian Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the website <https://odatv4.com> due to the news, with the headline, “Be careful with racist provocateurs during the Armenia-Azerbaijan war... The best reply to them is from Hrant Dink.”

06: Istanbul Anatolian 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the websites <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/>, <https://onedio.com/> and <https://eksisozluk.com/> due to the news they reported on Şeyda Yılmaz, who suspiciously died by falling from the window of an apartment on September 17, 2020.

06: Manisa The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations to be organized in the province for 15 days.

07: Batman The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations to be organized in the province for 15 days.

07: Istanbul 19 people were detained in house raids organized against ESP, SGD, HDP members and ETHA reporters due to participating in a funeral and following news information.

07: Izmir Security forces intervened against the leaflet distribution for October 10 commemoration in Bornova. Afterwards, distribution was permitted on the condition of being quiet.

07: Mersin 18 Mersin Women’s Platform members were sentenced to 3150 TL administrative fines each due to violating the Law on Public Sanitation No. 1593 after they have participated in the protests organized in Mersin on August 5 and 18, 2020 on the Istanbul Convention.

08: Giresun Good Party Chair Meral Akşener’s press consultant Murat İde was detained due to the lawsuit filed against him based on an article he wrote in 2015.

08: Rize Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Fındıklı District Representative Tugay Köse was detained.

10: Ankara The police intervened against the group wanting to march to the explosion area to commemorate those having died in the Train Station Massacre, detaining 11 people with physical violence.

10: Urfa The commemoration event organized by the Confederation of Public Workers’ Unions (KESK) for the Train Station Massacre was prevented due to a “ban decree.” People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Urfa Provincial Co-Chair Emine Çetiner was detained and was taken to the District Gendarmerie Command.

11: Samsun Two people were detained after arguing with neighborhood guards in İlkadım district due to “insulting the President”.

12 : Karaman The gendarmerie intervened against mining workers in Ermenek district after they wanted to march to Ankara due to their salaries and compensations not having been paid.

13: Ankara Access Providers Union brought an access ban against the news published on OdaTV and Milli Gazete websites regarding someone who committed fraud by introducing himself as a judge, prosecutor and a Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) officer, due to “violation of personal rights.”

13: Istanbul The staging of a play by Dairo Fo, which was translated into Kurdish and was going to be staged at the Metropolitan Municipality City Theatres, was banned by Gaziosmanpaşa District Governorate due to the possibility that it might “disrupt public order.”

13: Istanbul 5th Criminal Judicature of Peace banned access from the websites of Cumhuriyet, BirGün, Diken, OdaTV, ABC Daily and SoL due to the news on the lawyer of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

14 : Ankara The press statement organized in front of Ibni Sina Hospital on the report, prepared by the Workers’ Health and Work Safety Assembly, entitled, “COVID-19 on its 7th Month” was intervened by the police. Eight people were detained.

14: Ankara 4th Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against Cumhuriyet Daily website due to the news published on the website on the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry employing a company without tender, through order.

18: Istanbul 4 Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) members were detained by the police with physical violence due to carrying photos and flowers during a commemoration organized at Gazi Cemevi.

19 : Karaman The gendarmerie didn’t permit mining workers from marching to Ankara from Ermenek district, due to their salaries and compensations not having been paid.

20: Kocaeli Labour Party (EMEP) Darıca District Chair was detained during a house raid organized due to his social media posts.

21: Muğla Fethiye Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against Milli Gazete website due to a news published on the Fethiye Mayor.

21: Manisa The march of mining workers from Manisa to Ankara for their rights to compensation, was banned for the second time by the Governorate for another fifteen days.

21: Van The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organized within the province for another fifteen days.

22: Afyonkarahisar 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the news on Sözcü and SoL websites on the AKP Düzağaç Mayor being dismissed from his party, due to “violation of personal rights.”

22 : Antalya Ismail Demirbaş was detained due to his statements during a street interview.

22: Diyarbakır The People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial building and Yenişehir district building were raided and searched by the police due to the buildings containing "illegal documents."

24: Adana The press statement organized by Community House members was not permitted by the police, thus the statement was made inside the Community House building.

24: Ağrı The police raided the People's Democratic Party (HDP) building in Doğubeyazıt. After the search, posters and some official documents in the building were confiscated.

24: Ankara The police intervened against the group marching before the press statement organized by Community House members with the demand, "We Want to Work with Security, Live Like Humans," and detained 24 people.

24: Konya The Governorate announced that all meetings, demonstrations, sit-in protests, tents and related events and demonstrations to be organized across the province were banned for 15 days.

25: Antalya The Governorate announced that all meetings, demonstrations, sit-in protests, tents and related events and demonstrations to be organized across the province were banned for 3 days.

25: İstanbul The police intervened against the press statement organized by youth organizations in Kadıköy and detained 55 people using physical violence.

25: İzmir A march was organized by a few people, who were allegedly Syrians, due to the France-Turkey crisis close to the area where a political party's open-air event was organized. The police prevented the march.

25: İzmir Community Houses organized a press statement across Karşıyaka Pier with the demand, "We Want to Live." The group was taken under blockade by the police and 17 people, one of them a 17-year-old, were detained with physical violence and reverse handcuffs.

27: İstanbul Bakırköy 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against Cumhuriyet, Duvar, Tele1 and Gerçek Gündem websites.

28: Ankara 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the social media account of French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo due to the violation of personal rights.

28: Ankara Information Technologies and Communications Authority (BTK) issued access bans against the websites of JinNews Agency, Etkin News Agency and Yeni Demokrasi following the Van 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace decree.

29: Dersim The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organized in the province for 15 days.

31: Balıkesir Human Rights Association (IHD) Branch Chairman Fahri Semizoğlu, People's Democratic Party (HDP) Burhaniye District Co-Chair Yahya Anık and HDP member Serdar Kocaman were detained during house raids.

2. Investigations, Prosecutions

01: İstanbul The prosecution of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) Chair Şebnem Korur Fincancı continued at the 42nd Criminal Court of First Instance due to her social media posts during the Gezi Park protests. The hearing was scheduled for a later date.

01: İstanbul The prosecutions of previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily's Co-Editors-In-Chief Hüseyin Aykol and Eren Keskin, Managing Editor Reyhan Çapa and journalist Hasan Başak continued at the 13th Assize Court. The next hearing was scheduled for December 3.

01: İstanbul Journalist Ayşenur Aslan was summoned to testify by İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Press Office as a suspect.

01: İzmir Evrensel Daily reporter Eda Aktaş was sentenced to 3,150 TL judicial fine with the allegation of "not complying with physical distance rules" as she followed news information, four months later.

01: Kars In the investigation conducted by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, the police organised house raids and detained 21 People's Democratic Party (HDP) members, including Co-Mayor Şevin Alaca, due to "illegal organisation membership." HDP Provincial Organisation building and Municipality was raided and searched by the police.

02: Ankara 20 people, including Kars Co-Mayor Ayhan Bilgen, former HDP Ankara MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder and former HDP Diyarbakır MP Altan Tan, have been detained on September 25 within the Ankara-based investigation against Kobane protests in 2014. 17 of the 20 people were arrested by the court they were taken to, due to "the suspect of escaping."

05: İzmir Three people, who allegedly made PKK/KCK, DHKP-C and Dev-Yol propaganda on social media, were detained with a gendarmerie operation.

05: Şanlıurfa Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against 12 people on the September 1, World Peace Day events.

06: Antalya Two people were detained during house raids, including HDP Siirt Provincial Chairman.

07: Ankara In the lawsuit filed against poet Ahmet Telli at Ankara 22nd Criminal Court of First Instance due to "insulting the President" through a social media account that did not belong to him, defense statements were made and the court scheduled the next hearing for January 7, 2021.

07: İstanbul The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against journalist Can Dündar on the publication of visuals on the Turkish National Intelligence (MIT) trucks was held at the 134th

Assize Court. The court decided for Can Dündar to be considered a fugitive and for all assets belonging to him to be seized.

07: İstanbul The prosecution of journalist Ceren Sözeri due to her article, entitled, “Who made AKP lose votes” continued at the 2nd Commercial Court of First Instance.

07: İzmir The Chief Physician’s Office at DEÜ Hospital penalised 16 health personnel with salary cuts due to participating in a press statement on June 17, using their union rights. The Prosecutor’s Office also penalised 10 people due to not complying with the rules of social distance.

07: Urfa Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office started an investigation against 26 lawyers, including Bar Association Chairman Abdullah Öncel, due to “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911.”

07: Van’da Four journalists (MA reporters Adnan Bilen, Cemil uğur and JinNews reporters Şehriban Abi, Nazan Sala) were detained during house raids organized by the police. MA Agency Van Office was raided and searched simultaneously and didn’t permit agency reporters to join the search in the office.

08: Ankara The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against journalist Ayser Çınar at Ankara 22nd Assize Court was held due to her social media posts on the military operation against Afrin. The court issued the acquittal of Ayser Çınar, due to the elements of the crime not having been fulfilled.

08: İstanbul The indictment prepared by the Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office against businessman Osman Kavala was accepted by the 36th Assize Court and an imprisonment sentence for up to 20 years was claimed against Kavala.

08: İstanbul The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against People’s Democratic Party (HDP) members and arrested journalist Ferda Yılmazoğlu was held at the 28th Assize Court. The court decided for Yılmazoğlu to remain arrested and scheduled the next hearing for December 29.

08: İstanbul The prosecution against Evrensel Daily writer Erdal İmrek continued at Bakırköy 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. The next hearing was scheduled for December 2.

08: Edirne The prosecution of MHA reporters Naci Kaya and İdris Sayılğan, who were detained as they were following news information on the refugees crossing borders, continued at the 8th Criminal Court of First Instance. The court scheduled the next hearing for a later date.

08: İstanbul The prosecution of former Gazete Karınca owner Necla Demir continued at Bakırköy 8th Criminal Court of First Instance. The next hearing was scheduled for October 28.

08: İstanbul The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against a citizen due to recording a mistreatment by a guard against another citizen and sharing that video on his social media

account was held at the 55th Criminal Court of First Instance and the court turned the 25-day imprisonment sentence against Ketenciler to 500 TL judicial fine.

09: Ankara The prosecution of People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Legal Committee member lawyer Kenan Maçoğlu continued at Ankara 8th Assize Court with the allegation of “insulting the President.” After receiving the defense statements, the court scheduled the next hearing for November 6, 2020.

11: Istanbul Medical Chamber delegate Dr Tahsin Çınar was detained due to the posts made by a social media account that didn’t belong to him. He was released after remaining under custody for a night.

12: Antalya During road checks at Korkuteli district, one Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Assembly member and Tevgera Jinên Azad (TJA) activist; as well as one People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly member and 2 HDP Provincial executives were detained.

12: Istanbul The prosecution of Contemporary Journalists Association (ÇGD) Istanbul Representative Uğur Güç continued at the Anatolian 29th Criminal Court of First Instance. The court scheduled the next hearing for November 17.

12: Istanbul Leftist Party members Osman Toprak and Mehmet testified at the police station within the investigation opened due to hanging a poster on the party building, that said, “We Haven’t Forgotten October 10, We Will Not Forgive,” in order to reprimand the October 10 Massacre.

13: Dersim Ovacık Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office started an investigation against 81 people, who participated in the human chain made with the call of Munzur Protection Council against the “paysage project” on Munzur Springs.

13: Istanbul The prosecution of five journalists, including former Taraf Daily workers Ahmet Altan and Yasemin Çongar, continued at the 13th Assize Court.

13: Istanbul In the summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against former Democratic Nation Daily’s Managing Editor Arafat Dayan at the 23rd Assize Court, the court sentenced Dayan to 5 years and ten months of imprisonment.

13: Istanbul The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against journalist Deniz Yücel was held at the 24th Assize Court due to “insulting a public officer.” The next hearing was scheduled for September 9, 2021.

13: Istanbul The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against BirGün Daily writer Barış İnce, Writers’ Council member Bülent Yılmaz, Writers’ Council Chairman İbrahim Aydın and Cansever Uğur was held at the 32nd Assize Court. The court issued the acquittal of all defendants.

13: Istanbul The prosecution of previously shut-down TV10 workers Kemal Karagöz and Kemal Demir continued at the 28th Assize Court.

13: Istanbul The prosecution of artist Ferhat Tunç continued at Küçükçekmece 16th Criminal Court of First Instance.

13: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial and District Chairs at Gaziosmanpaşa 5th Criminal Court of First Instance due to having visited a cemetery, was concluded with their acquittal.

15: Istanbul The prosecution of Mesopotamia News Agency reporters Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu continued at the 22nd Assize Court. The court decided for the judicial measures against them to be revoked and for the travel ban against them to remain.

15: Istanbul The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against previously shut-dwn Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Daily’s Editor-In-Chief Yılmaz Yıldız and Managing Editor İshak Yasul was held at the 26th Assize Court. The court decided for İshak Yavuz to be sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment and for the file against Yılmaz Yıldız to be separated.

15: Mardin The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against former Nusaybin Co-Mayor Cengiz Kök due to “illegal organisation membership” was held. The court sentenced Kök to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”

16: Ankara The prosecution of former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Figen Yüksekdağ continued at the 10th Assize Court due to “insulting the President” in her statement on the arrest of journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül. The court scheduled the next hearing for November 12, 2020.

17: Manisa Miners in Soma wanted to march towards Ankara for the compensations that were never paid to them after the Coal Mine Disaster. They were prevented and detained by the police in Salihli.

18: Istanbul Serhat Yıldırım testified at the Anatolian Public Prosecutor’s Office’s Press Crimes Office within an investigation started against him due to “insulting the President” through a cartoon he shared on his social media account.

20: Istanbul The prosecution of 19 lawyers continued at the 13th Assize Court due to protesting the October 10, Ankara Massacre at the courthouse building.

21: Izmir 10 people, including teachers and municipality workers, were detained due to making PKK/KCK propaganda on social media.

21: Kahramanmaraş 12 people, including a People’s Democratic Party (HDP) District Chair and a Human Rights Association (IHD) member, were detained with house raids due to their social media posts.

21: Ordu The gendarmerie intervened against the villagers protesting the drilling activities for mining in Yeşiklent village of Ünye district. The gendarmerie used tear gas and detained ten people.

22: Istanbul The prosecution of Human Rights Association (IHD) Co-Chair Eren Keskin continued at the 36th Assize Court due to her social media posts in 2015. The next hearing was scheduled for December 24.

22: Istanbul The prosecution of 22 people continued at the 5th Criminal Court of First Instance due to resisting the police during the raid against Özgür Gündem Daily on August 16.

22: Istanbul The prosecutions of Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Alican Uludağ and Managing Editor Olcay Büyüktaş Akça continued at the 32nd Assize Court due to the news published in the newspaper on the October 10 Massacre.

22: Istanbul The prosecutions of Cumhuriyet Daily reporters Alican Uludağ and Duygu Güvenç continued at the 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance due to the news they reported on the house imprisonment sentenced against U.S. citizen pastor Andrew Brunson.

22: Istanbul The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against journalist Sabiha Temizkan was held at the 35th Assize Court due to her social media posts. The court sentenced Temizkan to 1 year and three months of imprisonment.

23: Antalya The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against former People's Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly member Nihat Akkaya was held at the 9th Assize Court due to the speech he gave during the Newroz celebration organized in the province in 2019. The court sentenced Akkaya to 10 months of imprisonment due to "making illegal organisation propaganda" and deferred the announcement of the verdict.

23: Istanbul The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against journalist Hayri Tunç was held at the 22nd Assize Court due to sharing the photos he took on his social media accounts. The court sentenced Tunç to 2 years of imprisonment.

26: Siirt 2nd Assize Court sentenced former Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Siirt Co-Mayor Tuncer Bakırhan to 10 years, 10 months and 14 days of imprisonment in total due to "illegal organisation membership," "making illegal organisation propaganda" and "denigrating the Turkish nation, the Government of the Republic of Turkey as well as the bodies of the government."

27: Istanbul The summary judgement of the lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Hazal Ocak was held at the 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance due to the news she reported. The court issued the acquittal of Ocak.

28: Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against Mesopotamia News Agency reporters, journalists, managing editor and owner after the news reported on the agency regarding the judge insulting Bar Association Chairman Cihan Aydın during a hearing, as well as against Atty. Bektaş Şarklı, Atty. Polat Balkan, Atty. Hanife Kandemir due to sharing the related news article on social media with the allegation of "targeting a judge on duty for terrorist organisations through revealing his identity information."

28: Istanbul The prosecution of former Gazete Karınca Daily owner Necla Demir continued at Bakırköy 8th Criminal Court of First Instance.

28: Istanbul The indictment prepared against journalist Burhan Ekinci due to his social media posts was accepted by the 30th Assize Court. A warrant was issued against Burhan Ekinci.

29: İzmir A lawsuit was filed against 12 women, who protested the murder of Pınar Gültekin, due to “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911” and “resisting to prevent duty.” The first hearing is on January 20, 2021.

30: Diyarbakır People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Diyarbakır Provincial Co-Chairs Zeyyat Ceylan and Hülya Alökmen were arrested due to “armed terrorist organisation membership” after having been detained in the operation conducted on October 22. Yenişehir District Co-Mayors Remziye Sızıcı and Kasım Kaya were released with travel bans and judicial measures.

3. Other Violations

02: Ankara 42 summaries prepared against 26 Parliament members from the People’s Democratic Party (HDP), Republican People’s Party (CHP), Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey with the claim for their Parliamentary immunities to be revoked.

02: Ankara Kars Co-Mayor Ayhan Bilgen was dismissed from duty by the Interior Ministry after having been arrested within the “Kobanê investigation” conducted by the Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office. Bilgen was replaced with Kars Governor Türker Öksüz as trustee.

07: Ankara Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) penalised Halk TV with an administrative fine from the upper limit due to the expressions on Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev during the show, “Two Perspectives, Two Interpretations. The related expression was: *“Is Azerbaijan really a government? There is no tradition, no democracy, no law, only authoritarian administration, no elections. They swim on money and they haven’t established a proper government until today.”*

09: Ankara The strike to be started by the Oil-Labour union bound to the Turkish-Labour at the factories of Turkish Bottle and Glass Factories in Mersin and Adana was postponed for 60 days with a Presidential Decree due to “being disruptive against general health and national security.”

14: Ankara 10 summaries prepared against six People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MPs with the claim for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

14: Ankara Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) sentenced Halk TV with an administrative sanction penalty due to the expressions used against the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chairman during the show, “Present-Time Politics.”

17: İzmir Many Bar Association member lawyers gathered at Kültürpark Hall No.3 for their General Assembly after they found the banning of General Assembly meetings unlawful. The police took the hall under blockade and prevented entrances into the hall.

21: Ankara 25 summaries prepared against 11 People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MPs with the claim for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).

21: Ankara Journalist Hayri Demir was threatened with a message that was sent from the social media account “Codename: GREEN (jitem.turkey)”. The message stated, “Şewbaş hewal, death will find you.”

22: Ankara Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) decided for an administrative sanction penalty to be issued against TV5 due to the expressions used by the show guest at “Kulis Ankara”.

24: Şırnak According to a Mesopotamia News Agency news, intelligence officers searched two thousand people living in Cizre district and asked them questions like, “Why do you go to the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) building?” “Would you like to benefit from the Repentance Law due to supporting HDP?” “Would you like your child, who joined the PKK, to come back?”

4. Comments and Suggestions

Coşkun Üsterci (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey - TIHV):

The highlight of violations in October were the pressures against rights journalism. Journalists reporting news on rights violations were detained, arrested or penalised in the lawsuits filed against them in October.

Mesopotamia News Agency reporters Adnan Bilen, Cemil Uğur and JinNews reporters Şehriban Abi and Nazan Sala were detained during house raids organized in Van on October 6, 2020. Among those detained, journalist Cemil Uğur had reported the incident on two villagers being thrown off a military helicopter in Çığlıca town of Çatak district in Van, which caused great public turmoil. Four detained journalists were later arrested.

Ban decrees issued by local administrations against the freedom of meeting and demonstration continued in October as well. I have indicated in our session in September that I would like to keep the application in Van on agenda in the sessions each month, as it gained the quality of being a permanent State of Emergency that is unnamed. Due to the Van Governorate decree, taken on October 21, 2020, on a ban against meetings and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days; more than 1 million and 300 thousand citizens are officially deprived from their freedom of meeting and demonstration for a total of 3 years, 11 months and 13 days in total, without break.

Another prominent violation in October was an art event, namely the staging of the theater play written by Italian actor Dario Fo translated into Kurdish, being banned by Gaziosmanpaşa District Governorate due to the possibility that it might disrupt “public order” on October 13, 2020. This ban carries a special significance due to showing the worrying dimensions of the intolerance of officials against freedom of expression and thought.

Workers wanting to use their rights to meeting and organisation in order to make their economic and social rights better under heavy conditions of crisis the country was in, faced bans and preventions as well. One highlight of this issue was the strike to be started by the Oil-Labour union bound to the Turkish-Labour at the factories of Turkish Bottle and Glass Factories in Mersin and Adana being postponed for 60 days with a Presidential Decree due to “being disruptive against general health and national security.”

Violations against social media in October gained a cross-border dimension, becoming tragicomic as well. An access ban was brought against the social media account of French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo due to “violation of personal rights” with the Ankara 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace decree, dated October 28, 2020. On the other hand, Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office announced that an official investigation was started against Charlie Hebdo Magazine.

Osman İřçi (Human Rights Association - IHD Headquarters - Ankara)

As long as violations against freedom of expression, meeting and demonstration continue in different forms, reporting, documenting and advocacy also have to continue. A better identification of the target of such work will contribute to the efficiency of the work. Regular reporting, documenting and advocacy is still the most effective method we have in hand for the prevention of violations.

Leman Yurtsever (Human Rights Association - IHD Istanbul)

October was a month full of pressure and preventions against the right to information. Detainments, arrests, investigations, threats and attacks against journalists continued throughout the month. There were journalists facing investigations and arrests due to following news and sharing their news on social media. Some journalists were sentenced to imprisonment as a result of prosecutions. Access bans were brought against news websites.

Ahmet Çiçek (Human Rights Association - IHD Izmir)

1. I would like to speak about two incidents: One is the marching attempt of a few people, who were allegedly Syrians, on October 25 due to the France-Turkey crisis. They were prevented by the police. The second incident was the police attack against the statement of Community House members with the demand of a “more human life” on the same date. The police used physical violence and reverse handcuffs against the Community House members, detaining them with torture. These examples reveal the government’s hostile and biased attitude against the opposition.
2. Despite the ban that stated that organisations except political parties may not hold general assemblies due to the pandemic, Izmir Bar Association received a decree from the local court that stated that the ban isn’t lawful. This decree was later denied by the Higher Electoral Council (YSK), which is an indicator for the unlawfulness. The security forces not recognising the court decree is another terrible consequence of this incident.

3. Opportunistic evaluation of the consequences created by the pandemic and the biased penalisation of those making press statements due to not complying with rules of social distance are other issues.