

# January 2021 Report

## 1. Administrative Bans, Police Intervention

- 01: Ankara** Women's Defense Network member B.U. was sent to court after being detained due to her social media post, which said, "The days we will burn this city down are close" on femicides on December 31, 2020. She was later released on January 1, 2021 with judicial measures.
- 01: Hakkâri** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.
- 04: Ankara** Someone protesting in front of Çankaya Social Health Center in order to be re-employed after having been dismissed with a Statutory Decree, was detained by the police with physical violence.
- 04: Istanbul** The police detained 2 students protesting the appointment of a rector to Boğaziçi University by the President, using physical violence.
- 04: Van** All protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province were banned for 15 days.
- 05: Ankara** The police intervened against the protest organized by Ankara Women's Platform for the first anniversary of the disappearance of Gülistan Doku, detaining 18 people including journalists. Those detained were released the same day after testifying at the police station.
- 05: Istanbul** Two people, who were detained as they were protesting the rector appointment to Boğaziçi University, were searched naked and and they police used physical violence to take off their clothes because they didn't accept being searched naked.
- 05: Istanbul** The meeting of Boğaziçi University students, who were kept at the police station, with lawyer Eren Keskin wasn't allowed.
- 05: Istanbul** Warrants were issued against 11 students due to the protests at Boğaziçi University.
- 05: Istanbul** Among 17 people detained with house raids due to participating in the protests at Boğaziçi University, three LGBTI+ activists were forced to be searched naked and were threatened with rape, using physical and psychological violence.
- 05: Istanbul** Warrants were issued against 28 Boğaziçi University students and five of them were detained with house raids.
- 05: Istanbul** Mehmet Aslan from Mesopotamia News Agency was detained within an Antalya-based investigation.
- 05: Sivas** Journalist M.B. was detained due to his social media posts and was released on the same day after testifying at the Prosecutor's Office.
- 05: Uşak** Four workers fired from Kaynak Spinning Factory due to organising with Öz Spinning-Labour Union were detained together with the union executives as they wanted to make a statement.
- 06: Ankara** The book reading event organised in front of the National Library to protest the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University was intervened by the police and two

people were detained. Those detained were released the same day after testifying at the police station.

- 06: Ankara** The police intervened against the protest organized at Çankaya Yüzüncü Yıl Neighborhood against the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University, detaining at least 13 people.
- 06: Ankara** The police intervened against the press statement organized in Güvenpark against the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University, detaining at least 28 people using physical violence. Afterwards, two more people were detained in front of their homes and the number increased to 43.
- 06: Istanbul** The Governorate announced that all meetings and demonstrations were banned indefinitely in Beşiktaş and Sarıyer.
- 06: Istanbul** Mısra Sapan was detained after the press meeting organized at the Human Rights Association Istanbul building on the detainment of 36 people over participating in press statements to protest the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University.
- 06: Istanbul** 14 more people were detained due to participating in a press statement to protest the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University.
- 07: Istanbul** The march organised in Kadıköy against the detainment of Boğaziçi University students was not allowed.
- 08: Van** The police intervened against the group, including Democratic Society Congress (DTK) and Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chairs and People's Democratic Party (HDP) MPs, gathering to participate in the press statement organised by DTK, DBP, HDP using tear gas and pressurized water.
- 11: Ankara** The press statement organized in front of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for the one thousandth day of the protests of Cargill workers was prevented by the police. Cargill workers have been fired from work due to their union membership. Afterwards, the police intervened against the workers making a sit-in protest in front of Tekgıda-Labour Union building, detaining 10 people.
- 11: Bitlis** The Governorate revoked the curfew that has been announced on January 26 until second notice in 10 villages of Central Bitlis.
- 12: Istanbul** Three of the four people, who went to the Security Directorate to testify within the investigation started against them due to their participation in the protests at Boğaziçi University, were detained.
- 12: Istanbul** One SGDF member was detained at the Security Directorate after going there to testify within the investigation started against him due to their participation in the protests at Boğaziçi University.
- 12: Urfa** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.
- 13: Ankara** Intervening the press statement organised in front of the courthouse, the police detained five people using physical violence. As the press statement protested the appointed rector at Boğaziçi University, it was also about one protester's leg being broken during the police intervention against the protest.

- 13: Urfa** Nine people were detained in house raids due to “making illegal organisation propaganda through their social media posts.”
- 14: Batman** In the statement made by the Governorate, it was announced that all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province were bound to permission for 15 days and for those to be organised around the Closed Penitentiary Institute Type-M were banned for 15 days.
- 14: Istanbul** The building of BEKSAV in Kadıköy was raided by the police and all digital material was seized together with the computers.
- 14: Istanbul** The Etkin News Agency office was raided by the police, confiscating all digital material and 6600 TL.
- 14: Izmir** 47 people were detained early in the morning in simultaneous operations organized in various provinces, including members and executives of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP), Socialist Women’s Assemblies (SKM), Socialist Youth Associations Federation (SGDF), Kaldıraç readers and ETHA reporters. In the operation, the police broke down the door of ETHA’s office in Aksaray district of Istanbul and confiscated the memory sticks of the cameras as well as computer harddisks. The police also destroyed the sign of ESP Izmir Provincial Organisation.
- 14: Mersin** One person (G. H.) was detained in Toroslar district due to a protest he/she participated in Izmir in 2016.
- 15: Ankara** Future Party Deputy Chairman Selçuk Özdağ was exposed to the physical attack of five unidentified people, who got out of a vehicle without a license plate, with sticks and ammunition.
- 15: Ankara** The police organised a raid against the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Headquarters and confiscated the documents in the headquarters.
- 15: Ankara** Yeniçağ Daily Ankara Representative Orhan Uğuroğlu was exposed an attack by three unidentified people.
- 15: Istanbul** Bar Association issued a reprimanding penalty against Eren Keskin due to the charge of “insulting Erdoğan” she was convicted of in 2017 after the demand of the Secretary General of the Presidency.
- 16: Hakkâri** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.
- 19: Istanbul** Banners hung on 15 district buildings of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) in order to draw attention to the indefinite hunger strikes started in prisons with the demand for the solitary confinement of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to be revoked, were taken down with a police raid following the Prosecutor’s verdict.
- 19: Van** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.
- 20: Ankara** The police detained two people, who were distributing leaflets to support protest demonstrations against the rector appointment at Boğaziçi University.
- 20: Antalya** Four people were detained in house raids in Alanya due to their social media posts.
- 21: Istanbul** The police intervened against the press statement organised by the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) in Kadıköy in order to draw attention to the indefinite

hunger strikes started in prisons with the demand for the solitary confinement of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to be revoked, detaining nine people.

- 22: Ankara** The press statement organised by the Lawyers for Freedom Association (ÖHD), Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD), Lawyers Group for Social Law and Democracy member lawyers in front of the courthouse due to the “Day of Lawyers in Danger” was prevented by the police based on the measures taken within the COVID-19 outbreak.
- 22: Ankara** The police intervened against the protest organized by health workers at the City Hospital in order to better their working conditions, detaining eight people, including Ankara Medical Chamber (ATO) Chairman Ali Karakoç. The eight people were released on the same day after testifying at the police station.
- 22: Istanbul** The police detained four people in the press statement organised for Gökhan Güneş and two people, who came to support his family in front of the Security Directorate.
- 22: Istanbul** In the press statement organised for Gökhan Güneş, who was not heard from after having been kidnapped by civil police officers, the police detained four people as well as two people, who came to support his family in front of the Security Directorate.
- 23: Istanbul** The police intervened in the press statement organised in front of İkitelli police station for Gökhan Güneş, detaining 12 people.
- 24: Istanbul** The police intervened in the press statement organised in front of Başakşehir Arena Park for Gökhan Güneş, detaining 5 people.
- 24: Istanbul** Esenyurt Municipality shared pictures of the disinfection process of the district on social media. After pictures of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan were seen in the photos on People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Esenyurt district building, the police raided the building and confiscated all documents and flags, detaining co-chairs Dilan Kılıç and Ercan Sağlam.
- 24: Istanbul** The letter written by Şiyar Yıldırım, who is arrested at Silivri Prison, to Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, was confiscated. On the other hand, the letter written by his wife was not handed to Şiyar Yıldırım due to “lack of Kurdish translator.”
- 25: Balıkesir** The security forces made an operation in 10 provinces, based in Balıkesir, against people, most of whom were families of those arrested or convicted. 20 people were detained due to providing financial support for the PKK/KCK.
- 27: Izmir** The security forces have detained 2 Syrians in Menderes and Torbalı districts due to being YPG/PYD/PKK members.
- 27: Tunceli** The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations, rallies, open-air meetings, protest demonstrations, sit-in protests, hunger strikes, booths, petition campaigns, concerts, celebrations, leaflet distributions, posters and banners, marches, conferences and any other events and activities for 30 days, starting on January 27.
- 27: Urfa** The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations, rallies, open-air meetings, protest demonstrations, sit-in protests, hunger strikes, booths, petition campaigns, concerts, celebrations, leaflet distributions, posters and

banners, marches, conferences and any other events and activities for 30 days, starting on January 27.

- 28: Batman** Seven people, including People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, were detained through house raids due to their social media posts.
- 29: Artvin** The gendarmerie intervened in the commemoration organised in Hopa for İhsan Hacimuratoğlu, who died after the attack against him in 1980 in Trabzon, due to the banners carried during the commemoration.
- 29: Batman** The police intervened in the mass march organised by the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Free Women's Movement (TJA), Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and the People's Democratic Party (HDP). 23 citizens were detained in the intervention and were taken to the Provincial Security Directorate.
- 29: İzmir** The police prevented the press statement organized by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) member women in front of Izban in Karşıyaka district at 16:30 to say, "TJA can not be prosecuted."
- 30: Istanbul** Five people were detained with the allegation that a picture of Kaaba was put on the floor during an exhibition at the Boğaziçi University campus. Afterwards, the LGBTI+ studies club was searched and the banners were confiscated. Targeting four of those detained on social media, Soylu wrote, "Four obscene LGBTIs were detained."
- 31: Istanbul** Journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu was threatened with death by a social media account, named, "Invisible."

## **2. Investigations and Prosecutions**

- 04: Ankara** Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against former Republican People's Party (CHP) Mersin MP Fikri Sağlar due to "public incitement towards resentment and hostility or denigration" through his statements, "I have doubts that she will defend justice when I stand before a judge wearing a headscarf. Some act in a militant and ideological way, this must be fought against."
- 06: Ankara** OdaTV Ankara News Director Müyesser Yıldız, Erdal Baran and TELE1 Ankara Representative İsmail Dükel were prosecuted at the 26th Assize Court. After the defense statements were presented, the court decided for Erdal Baran to remain arrested and scheduled the next hearing for February 5, 2021.
- 07: Ocak** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against poet Ahmet Telli was held at the 22nd Criminal Court of First Instance with the allegation of "insulting the President" due to a social media post made from an account that didn't belong to him. The court issued the acquittal of Ahmet Telli.
- 11: Ankara** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against five people, including 4 Middle East Technical University (METU) students, was held at the 11th Criminal Court of First Instance due to the banner they carried during the graduation ceremony on

July 6, 2018, that depicted the cartoon, "World of Tayyips." The court issued the acquittal of five people of the charge of "insulting the President."

**27: Ankara** Acun Karadağ, Nazan Bozkurt, Alev Şahin Mehmet Dersulu, Mahmut Konuk and Armağan Özbaş were prosecuted at the 28th Assize Court due to their re-employment protests after they were dismissed from public service with Statutory Decrees issued within the State of Emergency. The court decided for the release of Acun Karadağ. The next hearing was scheduled for April 5, 2021.

**28: Ankara** Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against 23 lawyers with the allegation of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911" over participating in a protest organised against the law that allows for multiple Bar Associations.

**28: Sinop** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against 37 life advocates was held at the Criminal Court of First Instance due to participating in protest demonstrations against the thermal power plant planned to be constructed in Gerze. The court sentenced 37 people to a total of 42 years, 9 months and 27 days of imprisonment and 63 thousand TL penalty fine due to "violating the freedom of labour and work", "resisting the prevent duty", "damaging public property", "ransom in public land", "armed participation in illegal meeting and demonstration", as well as "organising and managing illegal meetings and demonstrations."

**08: Van** Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation against the press statement organised by the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and the People's Democratic Party (HDP) as well as that DBP Van Provincial Co-Chairs Gülderen Varlı and Çetin Uyar were summoned to testify. Furthermore, journalist Ruşen Takva, who followed the press statement, testified at Van Security Directorate within the same investigation.

**08: Van** An investigation was started against Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chair Berdan Öztürk, Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chairs Saliha Aydeniz, People's Democratic Party (HDP) MPs Şevin Coşkun, Abdullah Koç, Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, Muazzez Orhan, Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki, Habip Eksik and Hüseyin Kaçmaz over participating in a mass demonstration. The investigation was started by Van Chief Public Prosecutor's Office based on "organising and managing illegal meetings and demonstrations." The investigation file was sent to Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office Parliamentary Crimes Investigation Office due to "lack of jurisdiction."

**12: Hakkâri** The last hearing of the lawsuit filed against People's Democratic Party (HDP) member Hakkari Co-Mayor Cihan Karaman, who was replaced with a trustee, at Hakkari 2nd Assize Court, was held on January 12. The court sentenced Karaman to 2 years and one month of imprisonment due to "willfully aiding an illegal organisation without membership."

**13: Diyarbakır** Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office opened an investigation against Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) Co-Chair Dicle Müftüoğlu with the allegation of making illegal organisation propaganda through her social media posts and Müftüoğlu testified at Diyarbakır Security Directorate on January 13.

**14: Diyarbakır** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against former Diyarbakır Bar Association Chairman Mehmet Emin Aktar was held at the 4th Assize Court due to him

participating in the events organised by the Democratic Society Congress (DTK). The court sentenced Aktar to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”

- 15: Bitlis** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against 24 people, including Tatvan Co-Mayor Abdullah Ok, former Mutki Co-Mayor Esma Gümüő and former Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Bitlis Provincial Co-Chair Enver Barin was held at Bitlis 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance was held on January 15 due to their participation in the march, “Say No to Violence Against Women” organised by the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) on January 6, 2016 in Bitlis. The court sentenced all 24 defendants to 1 year and three months of imprisonment each due to “unarmed participation in illegal meetings and demonstrations and not dispersing despite warning”, deferring the announcement of the verdict.
- 21: Diyarbakır** The prosecution of journalist Zeynel Abidin Bulut started on January 21 at the 4th Assize Court due to his participation in the commemoration of journalist Mazlum Erenci, who died in Tunceli in 2011. The court sentenced Bulut to 10 months of imprisonment due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” after receiving the defense statements in the first hearing.
- 22: Diyarbakır** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against Free Women’s Movement (TJA) activist Fatma Gül was held at the 10th Assize Court on January 22. The court sentenced Gül to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”
- 22: Diyarbakır** The final hearing of the lawsuit filed against Mahmut Demir within the investigation against the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) was held on January 22 at the 5th Assize Court. The court sentenced Demir to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”
- 02: Balıkesir** Bandırma Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office prepared an indictment against journalist Cem Bahtiyar due to “insulting the President” through his social media posts as well as the comments he made on a tweet he quoted from the President.
- 04: Istanbul** The prosecution of Selahattin Demirtaő continued at Bakırköy 7th Criminal Court of First Instance due to insulting former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutođlu.
- 04: Istanbul** Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office started an investigation against journalist Can Ataklı due to his expressions, “Would Tayyip Erdoğan leave with an election” on a YouTube broadcast.
- 05: Istanbul** The indictment prepared by the Anatolian Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office on Republican People’s Party (CHP) Provincial Chair photographing the house of Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun was accepted by the 13th Criminal Court of First Instance.
- 06: Istanbul** An investigation was started against journalist Pelin Ünker and Deutsche Welle Director Peter Limbourg following the complaint of Aktif Bank due to the news published in Deutsche Welle with the headline, “Accusation from U.S. Banks”. Ünker testified at the Financial Crimes Enforcement Unit.
- 07: Istanbul** In the final hearing of the lawsuit filed against journalist Ayten Akgün due to her social media posts at the Anatolian 6th Criminal Court of First Instance, the court

sentenced Akgün to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment and deferred the announcement of the verdict.

- 07: Kocaeli** An investigation permission was given for the police officers, who committed mistreatment against the mothers making press statements in front of the prison in Gebze during the hunger strikes started in prisons last year.
- 12: Istanbul** The prosecution of lawyer Oya Arslan continued at Istanbul 37th Assize Court. Arslan has been arrested since December 27 and the court decided for Arslan to remain arrested.
- 13: Edirne** The prosecution of mayor Recep Gürkan continued at Edirne 8th Criminal Court of First Instance due to an alleged expression he used on the July 15 coup attempt.
- 13: Istanbul** The indictment prepared by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office against journalist Melis Alphan with the allegation of "making illegal organisation propaganda" due to her social media posts on the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır in 2015 was accepted by the 32nd Assize Court.
- 19: Istanbul** In the hearing of the lawsuit filed against journalist Cengiz Çandar at the 30th Criminal Court of First Instance with the allegation that he "praised the crime and the criminal" through a social media post in 2017, a warrant was issued against Çandar.
- 19: Bursa** In the final hearing of the lawsuit filed against journalist Emrah Çağan and People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Chair Aynur Yılmaz, together with seven others, due to their social media posts, the court issued the acquittal of Çağan and Yılmaz; whereas sentenced 1 person to 3 years and two months and one other to 1 year and six months of imprisonment.
- 21: Istanbul** The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against Sefer Selvi was held at the 18th Criminal Court of First Instance due to "insulting the President" through a cartoon that was published in Evrensel Daily.
- 26: Istanbul** The prosecutions of journalist Alev Şahin and Hazal Ocak continued at the Anatolian 14th Criminal Court of First Instance due to the news article published with the headline, "Luxury annex with Bosphorus view."
- 26: Istanbul** The prosecution of journalist Reyhan Çapan continued at the 2nd Assize Court.
- 26: Istanbul** The prosecutions of TV10 workers Kemal Karagöz and Kemal Demir continued at the 28th Assize Court.
- 26: Istanbul** The prosecution of journalist Derya Okatan continued at the 39th Assize Court due to a news story she had reported.
- 26: Istanbul** In the final hearing of the lawsuit filed against Samanyolu TV Editor-In-Chief Osman Çalık at the 13th Assize Court, the court sentenced Çalık to 7 years and six months of imprisonment.
- 26: Istanbul** The prosecution of cinema actress Nilüfer Aydan continued at the Anatolian 37th Criminal Court of First Instance due to "insulting the President" through a social media post.
- 26: Istanbul** In the final hearing of the lawsuit filed against People's Democratic Congress (HDK) Co-Spokesperson Sedat Şenoğlu at the 36th Assize Court, the court issued the acquittal of Şenoğlu.

- 27: Istanbul** The prosecution of journalist Veysi Sariözen and Osman Akin continued at Istanbul 3rd Assize Court.
- 27: Edirne** The prosecution of MHA reporters Naci Kaya and İdris Sayılğan continued at the 8th Criminal Court of First Instance over following news information on the refugees crossing borders.
- 17: Izmir** 47 people were detained on January 14 due to illegal organisation membership; 5 of them were arrested, 4 were sentenced to house imprisonment and three were sentenced with judicial measures.
- 22: Izmir** Lawsuits were filed against 24 women due to the Las Tesis protests. The prosecutions of 13 of them continued.
- 23: Izmir** 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace sentenced one person to house imprisonment with electronic handcuffs due to denigrating a part of society on social media.
- 26: Izmir** In the Ankara-based operation against former and new People's Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly members and Central Executive Board (MYK) members, the police detained two people with house raids.
- 26: Isparta** Süleyman Demirel University Student İrfan Beyazıt was arrested due to participating in the press statements organised on November 1, World Kobanê Day, which is also the anniversary of the Roboski Massacre.

### **3. Other violations**

- 02: Tekirdağ** Serving his compulsory military service at the 3rd Armoured Brigade Command in Çerkezköy, Hasan Düdük didn't participate in the cleaning activities. Because of that, a cigarette was put out on his skin, he was exposed to torture and mistreatment.
- 03: Ankara** Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services Council to Protect Children from Obscene Publications decided for the book, "Magical Rainbow" to be bound to the restrictions described in Article 4 of the Law No. 1117 due to "having the quality to make inappropriate effects on the morality of children under 18."
- 04: Ankara** The Ministry of Commerce sentenced Evrensel Daily to 20,953 TL administrative fine due to its TV advertisement for the 25th anniversary involving a child wearing a scarf that was green, yellow and red.
- 05: Ankara** Four summaries prepared against four People's Democratic Party (HDP) MPs with claims for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).
- 08: Istanbul** A sexual assault experienced by a woman was shared from the social media account of the Lawyers' Rights Group. Afterwards, the Anatolian 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the account.
- 11: Istanbul** 11th Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the video published on the news website of t24, in which Deva Party's Deputy Chairman Mustafa Yeneroğlu expressed his opinions.

- 12: Ankara** The Press Ad Institute (BIK) penalised Evrensel Daily with a 3-day advertisement ban due to the news with the title, "Cumhuriyet summoned to testify due to news on unlicensed villa."
- 13: Ankara** 10 summaries prepared against 10 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).
- 13: Ankara** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) sentenced Halk TV with an administrative fine due to the expressions of former Republican People's Party (CHP) MP Fikri Sağlar on a show: "I have doubts that a judge wearing a headscarf will be able to provide justice when I stand before her."
- 13: Ankara** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) sentenced TELE1 channel with an administrative fine due to the statements on the primetime newscast: "And now we will watch how the Directorate of Religious Affairs is intervening with our femininity, our home, family, having children and our work life and how it intervenes in them as well. It seems like such murders will continue as long as this happens."
- 15: Ankara** 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the website <http://marksistteori1.org> of the Marxist Theory Magazine.
- 18: Istanbul** Four books sent to Reyhan Coşmuşlu at Bakırköy Prison were sent back by the prison administration due to the books being in Kurdish.
- 25: Ankara** Four summaries prepared against four Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Republican People's Party (CHP) and People's Democratic Party (HDP) MPs with the claims for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).
- 28: Istanbul** Marmara University opened an administrative investigation against Marmara University Faculty of Economics member Dr Bülent N.N. due to a final exam question having the choices, "Tayyip always wins" and "ask Tayyip" as answers.
- 29: Ankara** People's Democratic Party (HDP) MP Kemal Bülbür was threatened with death by a social media account, named "Invisible."
- 29: Ankara** Criminal Judicature of Peace issued access bans against the news and content on <https://eksisozluk.com>, <https://t24.com.tr>, <https://www.birgun.net/> regarding someone, who shot his neighbor's dog dead, due to violation of personal rights.
- 29: Istanbul** Anatolian 26th Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against Yeniçağ Daily's website due to the column of journalist Murat Ağirel with the title, "TRT expenses taken off monitoring."
- 29: Sakarya** 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace issued access bans against three news articles on BirGün Daily's website regarding Turkey Wushu Federation Deputy Chairman.
- 30: Izmir** Six workers at Omya Mining in Kemalpaşa were fired from work without compensation after they barbecued in the factory garden, not eating the rotten food offered to the workers.
- 31: Ankara** Journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu was threatened with death by a social media account, named "Invisible."

## **4. Comments and Suggestions**

### **Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (Coşkun Üsterci)**

The most prominent incident of January is the President appointing a trustee rector to Boğaziçi University on January 4, 2021 and the entire university community protested against this - from the students to the academics and staff. When we look at the progress of events, it seems to be likely that it will be one of the most prominent incidents of the entire year.

Security forces have intervened in almost all peaceful protests and demonstrations, especially organised by the students, using violence that almost reached to a level of torture and mistreatment. Student houses were raided, doors were broken and searches were made. Many people were detained, both during the interventions against the meetings and demonstrations as well as during house raids. Torture and other mistreatment happened as well, some were injured.

Istanbul Governorate banned all meetings, demonstrations and marches indefinitely in Beşiktaş and Sarıyer districts, where the university campus is located.

Students have organised an open-air exhibition at the university campus within the protest demonstrations. 5 people were detained with the allegation that a picture of the Qaaba was placed on the floor at the exhibition, 2 students were arrested. A corner of the picture, depicting the Qaaba, also involved the LGBTI+ flag. This situation caused hate speech from pro-government names on social media. The Interior Minister himself has tweeted on the people who were detained, saying, "4 LGBTI deviants were detained!" This discriminatory and hateful tweet was restricted by Twitter. In hate speech, the major target is the social group that the individuals are part of, instead of the individuals themselves. The Interior Minister has done just that without leaving room for doubt, targeting the LGBTI+ as a social group.

In short, the rights to academic freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom of meeting and demonstration, freedom of organisation, discrimination ban, torture ban etc. many rights and freedoms were violated as a whole during this period. All these incidents are meaningful in the sense that how the political ruling in Turkey has come to such a dangerous level with its initiatives to take everything in the country under control and make them suitable to their own mentality.

Another significant incident of the month was the harsh intervention of the security forces against the peaceful meetings and demonstrations organized across the country, from Istanbul

to Van, in order to draw attention to the indefinite hunger strikes started in prisons on November 27, 2020 with the demand for the solitary confinement against PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to be revoked.

Another worrying development was the recent increase in forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions. A new and striking example of this has happened last month. A young worker, Gökhan Güneş, was forced into a vehicle by a group of unidentified people in Başakşehir district of Istanbul and was kidnapped. He was not heard from for six days. His family found the records identifying the moment of his kidnapping and shared the records with the officials, whereas no concrete and satisfactory investigation or search action was initiated. This incident is related to our topic as such: His family and friends organised peaceful press statements etc. in order to find out about the state of Gökhan Güneş and to prompt the officials to conduct searches and investigations. However, security forces have made harsh interventions against these meetings. As a result of these interventions, many people were detained. Thus, it was prevented to organise a meeting and demonstration in order to express a heavy and serious right violation, that threatens the right to life as well as the torture ban. This situation carries importance due to the fact that even the activities of right advocacy have become inconductable in the country.

An ongoing lawsuit against 37 life advocates due to participating in protests against the thermal power plant to be constructed in Gerze district of Sinop was concluded with penalty. The 37 defendants were sentenced to 42 years, 9 months and 27 days of imprisonment as well as 63 thousand TL judicial fine due to “violating the freedom of labour”, “resisting to prevent duty,” “armed participation in illegal meetings and demonstrations” as well as “organising and managing illegal meetings and demonstrations.” However, the police had intervened in the protest organised against the thermal power plant in Gerze on September 5, 2011, using tear gas, pressurised water and sticks; injuring at least 18 people. What is even more tragic is that as the prosecution of the 37 advocates was ongoing, the thermal power plant project was cancelled in 2015 due to violating the Law of Forestry.

Lastly, as I do every month, I will mention the protest and demonstration bans declared by the Governorates. Batman, Van, Tunceli, Urfa and Hakkari Governorates have issued protest bans throughout January, restricting the right to meeting and demonstration. Of course I will make special emphasis on the situation of Van: Van Governorate banned all demonstrations and open-air meetings to be organised in the province twice, on January 4 and 9, for 15 days each. As a result, the protest and demonstration ban that was initially declared in Van on November 21, 2016 is ongoing for 1534 days without break.

### **Human Rights Association (IHD) Ankara (Osman İşçi)**

Violations in this period are seen to be intensifying around physical interventions, prosecutions and claims for the revocation of Parliamentary immunities. We observe that the reflections of the shrinkage in the social sphere on the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) has led to

many claims of Parliamentary immunity revocations against especially oppositional Parliament members.

Besides Parliament members, oppressive policies and applications continue against journalists, union members and workers as well. It would be beneficial for human rights organisations and advocates to conduct documentation and advocacy activities specific to these fields.

### **Human Rights Association (IHD) İzmir (Ahmet Çiçek):**

Many workers have recently been fired from work due to reasons like professional union membership. Unemployment has reached a peak during the pandemic, and is now increasing even more with more workers being fired. Another reason why they are fired from work is that, especially in our region, Governorates require municipalities to conduct “security investigations” and this has led to 100 workers from being dismissed from work. Despite the Constitutional Court decree on security investigations being unnecessary, the Governorate insists on such an application - which is both unlawful and arbitrary.