

Think, think...

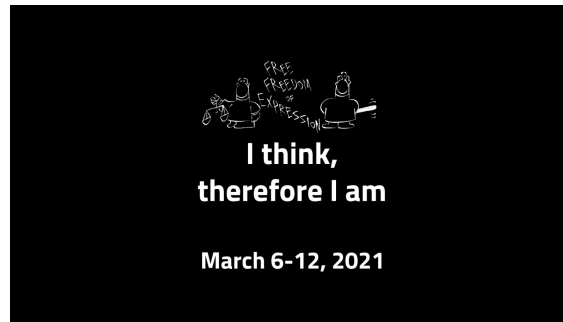


Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 10/21 - March 12, 2021)

What happened last week?

- Hakan Atilla resigned from his position as the Istanbul Stock Exchange's General Manager after he remained under arrest in the United States and came back to the country. Atilla had been arrested in the United States within the lawsuit on the violation of the Iranian embargo as he was the HalkBank Deputy General Manager. Turkish Wealth Fund Administration Incorporated Executive Board Member and General Manager Zafer Sönmez was also dismissed from his position. The Wealth Fund's General Manager became a classmate of Bilal Erdoğan from Kartal Islamic Religious Vocational High School.
- The President announced the Human Rights Action Plan last week and this week he announced the Economic Reformation Package. He stated that his aim is economic investment, production and growth on the basis of employment. New councils and credit supports for investors are included in the package.
- Women went on the streets across the country on March 8, World Women's Day and expressed their claims. The night walk planned to end at Istanbul Taksim Square was prevented by the police and the women had to move their protests elsewhere.
- Journalist Levent Gültekin was attacked by around 25 people in front of the Halk TV headquarters in Bakırköy, where he went to participate in a show, after the targeting of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Deputy Chairman Semih Yalçın. A petition campaign was started with the title, "*This is our call and warning for those governing the country.*" 3,388 people have signed the petition and called the ruling power to stop normalising hate speech. According to the data collected by Bianet, 7 journalists were attacked in the first three months of 2021, 18 journalists were attacked in 2020 and 139 journalists were attacked in the last five years in Turkey. ***Details on our video newsletter...***
- Even though the former Prime Minister of Japan, Naoto Kan, had stated, "*I regret advising Turkey to adopt nuclear energy and I am ashamed of it,*" the construction of the 3rd reactor in Mersin Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant started this week...
- The agenda of the Parliament these days is the revocation of the 10% electoral threshold, which was initially invented by coup organisers in Turkey to exclude "Kurdish political movements" from the Parliament. Justice and Development Party (AKP) Deputy Chairman Hayati Yazıcı stated that the threshold will still be kept above 5%. The 10% electoral threshold is no longer enough to exclude the Kurdish political movement outside the Parliament and now the threshold will be revised in order not to let the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) remain below the threshold.
- According to the data announced by the International Journalists Federation, 65 journalists were killed across the world as they were performing their profession in 2020. At least 229 journalists are arrested; Mexico is the leading country in journalist murders and Turkey is the leading country in the number of imprisoned journalists.

- Only a few days after Erdoğan’s announcement of the Human Rights Action Plan, in which he said that the right to meeting and demonstration will be guaranteed in its most extensive form; the Security General Directorate and the Gendarmerie General Command bound to the Interior Ministry have opened a tender for the purchase of thousands of gas shells, shields, gas solutions to mix with pressurised water as well as handcuffs, sticks and other police gear.
- The ninth hearing of the lawsuit on the bomb attack organised on October 10, 2015 in Ankara against the Labour, Peace and Democracy Rally was held at Ankara 4th Assize Court. 103 people had lost their lives in the attack and hundreds had been left injured. Before the hearing, the court board was changed and the new board ended the hearing after the victim families have expressed their claims for justice. The next hearing was scheduled for March 19.
- Turkey has left one year behind in its fight against the pandemic. Numbers for one year, according to the unreliable data announced by the government, are: more than 2 million 800 thousand cases and more than 29 thousand deaths. During the entire process, the pandemic was not managed based on scientific data but according to the political and economic needs of the government. The second normalisation period is starting these days, with the daily number of cases exceeding 14 thousand already. The bans issued on the pandemic don’t concern Erdoğan and he continues to claim that they are writing “history”.



Our weekly video programme, “[COGITO ERGO SUM](#),” in which we track Turkey’s freedom of expression and thought agenda, is on our [YouTube channel](#) every Friday and on [CanTV](#) every Saturday at 22:00...

[Please click here](#) for all our video newsletters...



Detainment against women over participating in March 8 walk

Women participating in the Feminist Night Walk organised in Taksim on March 8 were detained by the police with house raids. The women were charged with “insulting the President” and their reasons for detainment were the slogans they chanted and jumping to

the rhythm. 18 women stood trial and were released on the conditions of judicial measures and travel bans.



March 8 protests...

LGBTI+ activists have participated in the “Great Women’s Meeting” organised by women’s organisations and other non-governmental organisations in Kadıköy district of Istanbul on March 8, World Women’s Day. After the meeting, the LGBTI+ activists were forced out of the taxis they took to go back home and were detained with torture

and beating. Journalists recording the incident as well as women reacting against the incident were also exposed to police violence.



Decree in Yıldız and Dükel Case

In the lawsuit filed against Oda TV Ankara News Director Müyesser Yıldız and TELE1 Ankara Representative İsmail Dükel due to “disclosing confidential information on the security of the state,” Ankara 26th Assize Court sentenced Yıldız to 3 years and seven months

and Dükel to 1 year and 15 days of imprisonment. The journalists were charged due to using the information they obtained from sergeant Erdal Baran in their publications. Müyesser Yıldız has stood trial for the first time after remaining under arrest for 155 days and was released on November 9.



Imprisonment sentence against posts on Afrin

Mücadele Birliği Daily’s Editor-In-Chief Süleyman Acar, Önsöz Magazine’s Editor-In-Chief Songül Yücel and Atılım Daily reporter Serpil Ünal were sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days of imprisonment each due

to “making illegal organisation propaganda” through their social media posts on the Afrin operation in the lawsuit filed against them at Istanbul 36th Assize Court. The court deferred the announcement of the sentences against Yücel and Ünal, whereas didn’t defer the sentence against Acar due to him having received another sentence within another file.



Imprisonment sentence against Mahmut Konuk in first hearing

Public officer Mahmut Konuk, who has been prevented by the police each time in their continuous protests for re-employment after having been dismissed from public service with Statutory Decrees issued within the State of Emergency, was convicted of “insulting the

President” because of a statement he made during a protest organised on April 27, 2020 in

Ankara. Ankara 44th Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced Konuk to 11 months and 20 days of imprisonment in the first hearing of the lawsuit filed against him.



Boğaziçi protests

11 weeks have passed since Justice and Development Party (AKP) member Melih Bulu was appointed as rector to Boğaziçi University; and the protests of the academics and students continue without break. Murat Can Demirci, one of the students arrested due to the protests, was released on the condition of judicial measures. Eight people are still in prison due to

“public incitement towards resentment and hostility” and “resisting to prevent duty” due to the protests at Boğaziçi University. At least 27 people are still serving house imprisonment.



3-year 4-month imprisonment claim against citizen over criticising government

An indictment was prepared against 63-year-old Dürdane Özselgin, who spoke to a woman standing at a Justice and Development Party (AKP) booth opened at a marketplace in Çatalca district of Istanbul in November 2019

and said, “They aren’t full of all the things they have. The people are starving to death, and are you still not ashamed of collecting votes for the AKP?” Özselgin faces an imprisonment for up to 3 years and four months due to “insult” and “public denigration of a part of society based on differences in social class, religion, sect, gender and region.”



Investigation against journalist Yılmaz Özdil

An investigation was started against Sözcü Daily writer Yılmaz Özdil due to an article he wrote on the targeting of Yalova University Faculty of Islamic Studies member Ebubekir Sifil against himself with the words, “Don’t let their corpses enter our mosques after they die.” Özdil is charged with “insult” and “public

denigration of religious values adopted by a part of society” within the investigation.



LGBTI+s on target...

The Presidential Director of Communications stated, “We are against the degeneration of notions like freedom and tolerance for homosexuality propaganda (...) Such ugliness is an attack against our social order (...) We will not allow it.” **Details on our video newsletter...**



Imprisonment sentence against Edirne Mayor

Edirne Mayor and Republican People's Party (CHP) member Recep Gürkan was sentenced to 2 months and fifteen days of imprisonment due to "praising the crime and the criminal" based on the visuals of him recorded on the evening of July 15 coup attempt, in which he was seen singing a song on the stage at a bar. Edirne 8th Criminal Court of First Instance deferred the announcement of the verdict.



Yeni Asya carries Press Ad Institute embargo to judiciary

Yeni Asya Daily announced that the Press Ad Institute has been applying an official ad ban against themselves for 407 days and stated that they have started a legal battle against this discriminatory application. *Details on our video newsletter...*

Two-day ad ban against Birgün

The Press-Ad Institute (BIK) penalised Birgün Daily with 2 days of official advertisement ban due to the news article on Wushu Federation responsible Veliöğlu having served in prison due to charges related to the Hizbullah. Wushu Federation's Deputy Chairman Rıdvan Duran is also the General Manager at the Press-Ad



Institute.



Berkin Elvan commemorated on 7th anniversary of his death

Berkin Elvan was commemorated at his grave in Feriköy, Şişli on the 7th anniversary of his death. Elvan was shot with a tear gas shell during the Gezi Park protests and lost his life afterwards. The claim for justice on the case was repeated once again during the

commemoration. *Details on our video newsletter...*



Justice watch by Şenyaşar Family

Emine Şenyaşar lost her husband and two children in the attack of the Justice and

Development Party (AKP) Parliament member İbrahim Halil Yıldız's guards and relatives in Suruç district of Urfa during the June 24, 2018 general election process. She went to the Prosecutor's Office to meet the Prosecutor, and after she was rejected by the Prosecutor, she started a sit-in protest in front of the courthouse. Stating that she wants justice, mother Şenyaşar called out, "They have killed my family and imprisoned my child. What kind of justice is that?"



ECtHR decrees...

The application of former Union of Judges and Prosecutors (YARSAV) Chairman Ömer Faruk Eminağaoğlu was concluded at the European Court of Human Rights and the court issued that Eminağaoğlu's right to fair trial, right to privacy as well as his right to freedom of expression were violated. Eminağaoğlu's

phone calls had been unlawfully tapped; his social media posts and statements had been made subject to disciplinary investigations against him in 2012 and he had been exiled to Çankırı.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Hakan Aygün Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Hakan Aygün due to "denigrating religious values adopted by a part of society" based on a tweet...

Court: Bodrum 3rd Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for March 16.

Kibriye Evren Case

The lawsuit filed against JinNews reporter Kibriye Evren with a claim of imprisonment for up to 20 years due to "illegal organisation membership" and "making illegal organisation propaganda"...

Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for June 24.

Selda Manduz Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Selda Manduz, who was detained in the operation against Kars Municipality and HDP in October, due to "illegal organisation membership"...

Court: Kars 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for April 8.

Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu Case

The lawsuit filed against journalists Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu, who were arrested in December 2019 based on the lawsuits previously filed against them as well as their trips abroad and were released in March 2020 at the first hearing of the lawsuit filed against them due to "illegal organisation membership"...

Court: Istanbul 22nd Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for June 8.

Hakan Dirik and Erk Acarer Case

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily's Izmir reporter Hakan Dirik and BirGün Daily writer Erk Acarer, who were charged with "slandering" former Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ through reporting the allegation of the Republican People's Party (CHP) MPs on Turkey transporting sarin gas for ISIS on a press meeting they organised on October 21, 2015...

Court: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The hearing was postponed due to the defendant lawyers' excused absence.

Ali Ekber Barmağıc Case

The lawsuit filed against environmental rights activist and Munzur Environment, Culture and Solidarity Association Chairman Ali Ekber Barmağıc due to "making illegal organisation propaganda" based on his social media posts and the publications found in his home...

Court: Tekirdağ 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for May 18.

Nagehan Alçı Case

The lawsuit filed against Nagehan Alçı due to insulting Istanbul 37th Criminal Court of First Instance judge Hakan Yalçınkaya on a column she wrote that was published in HaberTürk on June 15, 2018...

Court: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for March 31.

Seyhan Avşar and Necdet Önemli Case

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Seyhan Avşar and Sözcü Daily's Managing Editor Necdet Önemli due to "targeting a public officer taking part in the fight against terrorism" through a news article...

Court: Istanbul 29th Assize Court

Verdict: The Prosecutor presented their opinion on the basis and claimed an imprisonment sentence against the journalists for up to 3 years each. The next hearing was scheduled for March 16.

Hakkı Boltan Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Hakkı Boltan due to "insulting the President" and "insulting a public officer because of his duty" through a statement he made in 2016 on journalist Rohat Aktaş, who was killed during a curfew...

Court: Diyarbakır 12th Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The Prosecutor claimed an imprisonment sentence against Boltan for up to seven years. The next hearing was scheduled for June 29.

Serife Oruç Case

The lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Dicle News Agency (DIHA) reporter Şerife Oruç due to "illegal organisation membership"...

Court: Batman 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The hearing Prosecutor claimed for the investigation conducted by Batman Chief Public Prosecutor's Office against Oruç with the allegation of "disrupting the unity and the territorial integrity of the state" to be merged with the case file. The journalist's lawyer stated that there is no such charge against Oruç and that the Prosecutor is trying to lengthen the prosecution. The court board decided to write to Batman Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on the status of the investigation and scheduled the next hearing for June 26.

Sevin Alaca Case

The lawsuit filed against Kars Co-Mayor Şevin Alaca, who was detained, replaced with a trustee and was arrested on October 8, 2020, due to “illegal organisation membership” based on the “Sister Family Campaign” started by the municipality within the pandemic, the protests and events she participated in as well as the Co-Mayorship system in the municipality...

Court: Kars 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The court denied the release claim of Alaca and scheduled the next hearing for April 6.

Case Against ‘Peace Mothers’

The lawsuit filed against 15 ‘Peace Mothers’ due to “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations” and “resisting the police” after they were detained as they wanted to make a statement in front of Bakırköy Prison in order to point out to the hunger strikes in prisons in 2018...

Court: Bakırköy 13th Criminal Court of First Instance

Verdict: The court issued a warrant to force Peace Mother Zeliha Gün to be present in the hearing and decided to send the visuals in the file to an expert in order to identify whether the police made a warning announcement before intervention. The next hearing was scheduled for July 13.

Case Against Those participating in Funeral of Dilan Kortak

The lawsuit filed against 25 people, including Dilan Kortak’s father İbrahim Kortak, due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” after participating in the funeral ceremony of Dilan Kortak, who was killed by the police during a house raid in Sancaktepe district of Istanbul...

Court: Izmir 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The final hearing of the case was scheduled for May 7.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

Hakan Aygün Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Hakan Aygün due to “denigrating religious values adopted by a part of society” based on a tweet he posted...

March 16, Tuesday at Bodrum 3rd Criminal Court of First Instance

Seyhan Avşar and Necdet Önemli Case

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily reporter Seyhan Avşar and Sözcü Daily’s Managing Editor Necdet Önemli due to “targeting a public officer taking part in the fight against terrorism” through a news article...

March 16, Tuesday at Istanbul 29th Assize Court

Case Against News on Train Station Massacre

The lawsuit filed against Cumhuriyet Daily Managing Editor Olcay Büyüктаş and journalist Alican uludağ due to “disclosing the identity of an intelligence officer taking part in the fight against terrorism” through a news article...

March 16, Tuesday at Istanbul 32nd Assize Court

Mehmet Özer Case

The lawsuit filed against photographer and poet Mehmet Özer due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” through six Facebook posts he made between the years 2012 and 2015...

March 16, Tuesday at Ankara 2nd Assize Court

Case Against Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Daily

The lawsuit filed against journalists Aziz Oruç and Ersin Çaksu due to “denigrating the government” in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code based on the news articles and columns published in previously shut-down Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Daily between the dates October 21 - November 1, 2016...

March 16, Tuesday at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Barış Barıştıran Case

The lawsuit filed against Özgür Gün Daily’s Editor-In-Chief and Manager Barış Barıştıran due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” after broadcasting the Democratic Society Congress on March 26, 2016 in Diyarbakır live...

March 16, Tuesday at Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court

Engin Eren Case

The lawsuit filed against Dicle News Agency’s Batman reporter Engin Eren due to “illegal organisation membership,” “aiding and abetting an illegal organisation,” “participating in illegal meetings and demonstrations,” “violating the Law on Military Zones and Security Regions” and “to use force and threat against a public officer with the aim to prevent duty” through following the “human shield” protest organised in Kelhesan Village’s rural area in Sason district of Batman on September 18, 2015 in order to react against the clashes in the region...

March 16, Tuesday at Batman 2nd Assize Court

Ali Ergin Demirhan Case

The lawsuit filed against sendika.org editor Ali Ergin Demirhan due to “insulting the President” based on the news shared on the website’s social media account about the Afrin Operation between January and March 2018...

March 17, Wednesday at Istanbul 24th Assize Court

Adil Demirci Case

The lawsuit filed against 22 people, including Etkin News Agency (ETHA) reporter Adil Demirci and other members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) and its youth organisation (SGDF) due to “making illegal organisation propaganda” and “illegal organisation membership”...

March 17, Wednesday at Istanbul 25th Assize Court

Arif Aslan Case

The lawsuit filed against Arif Aslan due to “illegal organisation membership” after he was detained as he was following news information in Van in 2017...

March 18, Thursday at Van 5th Assize Court

Murat Sekmen Case

The lawsuit filed against 11 people, including Yeni Yaşam Daily’s former worker Murat Sekmen, due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda”...

March 19, Friday at Mersin 7th Assize Court