

Think, think...



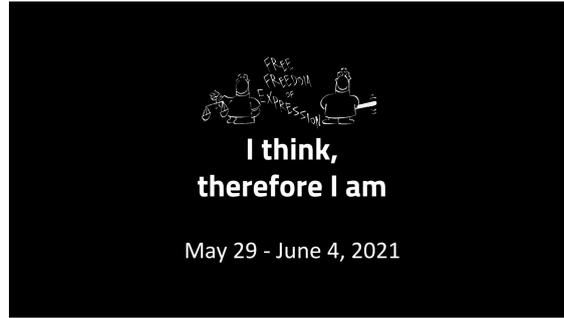
Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 22/21 - June 4, 2021)

What happened last week?

- Turkish Statistical Institute announced the inflation data for May. In May 2021 of the Consumer Price Index, there was an increase by 0.89 percent compared to the previous month, 6.39 percent compared to December last year and 16.59 percent compared to the same month of the previous year. The annual inflation increased to 17.14 percent in April, whereas regressed to 16.59 percent in May.
- The US dollar had seen an all time high (ATH) value against the Turkish Lira after President Erdoğan said during a show at the TRT channel, "I have met the Central Bank Chairman today" and "the interest rates have to fall". As the Turkish lira continues to lose value and the economic crisis strengthens in Turkey, Erdoğan insists that Turkey has continued to grow during the pandemic. Even though the Turkish Statistical Institute announced that Turkey has grown by 7% at the beginning of the week, economists and citizens agree that the Turkish the Statistical Institute's unreliability in the calculation of inflation renders this latest announced data unreliable as well.
- The cabinet gathered on the last day of May, announcing the gradual normalisation period to start on June 1st. Even though all schools started to continue education in normal terms, it is unclear why this decision was made two weeks before the end of the term. Teachers are still not fully vaccinated and no ministry programme was announced on how to compensate for the two-year deficiency in the curriculum, which increases worries on the deepening inequality in education. The curfew will start at 22:00 in all provinces irregarding the case numbers and the full-day curfew was limited to Sunday only, instead of the entire weekend. All sectors now continue their work except stages and cinemas, so artists started to express their reaction on social media. As people struggle to find one dose of vaccine, Erdoğan announced that he has received his third dose.
- It was announced that the Russian technical personnel of the S400s, which caused tensions between Turkey and the NATO, were sent back to their countries before the NATO meeting next week, during which Erdoğan and Biden will meet as well. Russia announced that its flight ban against Turkey was extended until the end of June.
- The government continues to damage and destroy Turkey's nature. The sea snot formation in the Marmara Sea, which is already quite sensitive due to its geological state, reached worrying levels. Experts indicate that the Marmara Sea is no longer able to carry the weight of the industrial wastes around it, is dying and has no more strength to even battle one liter of waste. As the experts said that the waste of Istanbul must be treated fully and released to the deep waters of the Black Sea, Erdoğan announced the start of the Canal Istanbul, which by itself is already a huge threat against the [Marmara and the Black Sea](#).

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- After Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu had stated on a TV show that a politician received \$10,000 per month from a mafia group, the identity of the politician could not be found out. The Turkish Grand National Assembly Chairman Mustafa Şentop could no longer remain silent as well and joined the choir of the citizens, saying that he wants the identity of the politician who receives \$10,000 per month to be announced as well. Meanwhile, the research committee proposal motioned to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the allegations of criminal organization leader Sedat Peker to be researched into, was denied with the votes of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).
 - The ruling power completed the work on the 4th judicial bill prepared within the frame of the Judicial Reformation Strategy Document announced by Erdoğan on May 30th, 2019. The bill involves regulations on access to justice, tax frauds, as well as new applications on the judicial control system. One of the most striking part of the new bill is the new criteria brought for the meetings between lawyers and their clients. In case the bill is enacted as law without an amendment, lawyers will be able to be suspended from meeting their clients in case there is concrete evidence that might risk the purpose of investigation. This clause means that lawyers and their clients will not be able to meet until the reason for the suspension no longer exists.
 - Boğaziçi University's deputy rector Naci İnci has appointed himself as the Director for the Institute of Natural Sciences. Health Sciences University Personnel Office Chairman Nedim Malkoç, who has no relation with Boğaziçi University whatsoever, was appointed as secretary general to Boğaziçi University. Protests against the trustee rector Melih Bulu continue for more than 150 days. In the meantime, the rectorate prevented academic Feyzi Erçin from lecturing at the university. Erçin, who is known for his support for the protests and the students, said that he will continue his support and will not give up. Boğaziçi University students announced that they will boycott the activities of rector Melih Bulu until he resigns.
 - Kurdish politicians and former Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Chairman Kamuran Yüksek and People's Democratic Party (HDP) 26th Session MP Nadir Yıldırım are now wanted by the Interior Ministry due to crimes related to terrorism. A 10-thousand-Turkish-Lira reward was announced to find each politician.
 - According to the Press Ad Institute (BIK) reports, more than 141 million and 932 thousand Turkish Liras worth of public resources were granted to pro-government newspapers. Nine newspapers, including Sözcü and Cumhuriyet Daily, could only receive 22 percent of the government's official ads. Ad bans against newspapers have shown 150 percent increase in 2020. 97 percent of all penalties issued against national newspapers were issued against BirGün, Cumhuriyet, Evrensel, Korkusuz and Sözcü Daily.
 - According to the data compiled by BiaNet, men have killed at least 18 women in May and raped 9 women. On the other hand, the deaths of 25 women reflected in the media as "suspicious". [Please click here](#) for details...
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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...

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



Lawsuit against actress Ezgi Mola over insulting Musa Orhan

Actress Ezgi Mola will be prosecuted at Ankara 31st Criminal Court of First Instance due to the tweet she posted on Sergeant Musa Orhan, who was charged with raping and dragging İpek Er to suicide. The actress is facing an imprisonment sentence for up to 2 years and 4 months due to "insult". After the letter left behind by İpek Er indicated that she

was raped by Musa Orhan as well as approving chat histories between Orhan and other soldiers, the defendant was still released. As a reaction to Orhan's release, Mola wrote on Twitter, saying, "Drown in your conscience that released a rapist bastard. You took everything away from us - the law, prayers, wishes, hopes, everything! What else can I say - Shame on you!" with a hashtag campaign for Musa Orhan to be arrested once again.



Permission for prosecution requested for lawyer

Lawyer Kemal Aytaç stood trial due to his speech during the press statement organised at Çağlayan Courthouse against the regulation for multiple Bar Associations. In the first hearing at Istanbul 60th Criminal Court of First Instance, the court decided to apply to the

Ministry of Justice for a permission of the lawyer's prosecution.



Lawsuit against journalist Alican Uludağ due to insult

A lawsuit was filed against journalist Alican Uludağ due to "insulting" the Criminal Judge of Peace on duty with his words, "the new address of conspiracies is the Çağlayan Courthouse" as he was evaluating the arrests of Barış Terkoğlu, Barış Pehlivan and Murat Ağirel.



Rainbow investigation against Boğaziçi University students

The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against 8 students, who were detained due to protesting for their 4 arrested friends, as well as due to carrying a rainbow flag, was held at Istanbul 24th Criminal Court of First Instance. The students are charged with violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911. The

next hearing of the lawsuit will be held on June 28th.



Investigation against Community Centers Chair

An investigation was opened against Community Centers Chair Nebiye Merttürk due to "insulting the President" through her tweet, in which she reacted against Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and said, "What does your opinion matter, you ordinary man." Merttürk is further charged due to provoking the people through another tweet she posted on the detained university students

during the protests at Boğaziçi University.



Investigation against Leftist Party executives

The Leftist Party Istanbul Provincial Organisation announced that 10 Central Executive Board members, Provincial and District organisation executives were summoned to testify due to "insulting the President." The statement made by the party's Twitter account explained, "10 of our colleagues, who were Central Executive Board

members, Provincial and District organisation executives, were summoned to testify due to insulting the President following the protest we have organized as well as the posters we hung."



Artist Yılmaz Çelik acquitted

Artist Yılmaz Çelik was acquitted in the lawsuit filed against him at Tunceli 2nd Assize Court. The artist had been arrested in December 2019 due to "making illegal organisation propaganda" and "illegal organization membership" through his social media posts and was released in the first

hearing held 3.5 months after his arrest.



Fahrettin Altun files criminal complaint against citizen

Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun filed a criminal complaint against the expressions of Gökhan Akkaya due to "insult". Akkaya wrote on social media, "which land are you now trying to buy for cheap, you swine." After the Prosecutor's suggestion for reconciliation, Altun's lawyer

demanded a written apology from the citizen as well as 15 thousand Turkish Liras of compensation.



District Governorate ban against Gezi Park commemoration

The statement organized in front of the Human Rights Association Istanbul office and the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects office for the commemoration of those having lost their lives during the Gezi Park protest was banned by Beyoğlu District Governorate. The district governorate stated

that the area the statement was organized at was not included in the allowed route for meetings and demonstrations, adding the conditions of the pandemic as the reason for the ban.



"Rainbow" investigation at METU

The Middle East Technical University Rectorate opened an investigation against 45 students, who painted the stairs in the campus to the colour of the rainbow, as well as against the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen) workplace representative. The

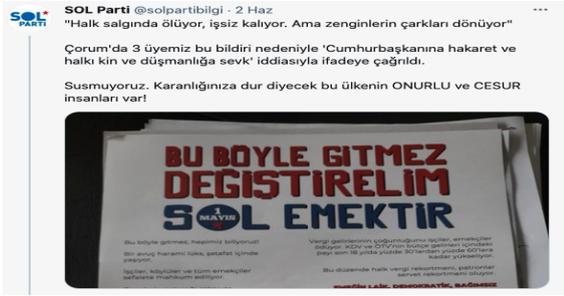
rectorate justified the investigation by saying, “it is no freedom for a group of students to paint some place inside the campus according to their wish and this can not represent the idea of a majority.”



Investigation against İmamoğlu

An indictment was prepared against Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Chairman İmamoğlu due to “publicly insulting the Higher Electoral Council members”. In the press statement he made on November 4, 2019 at Üsküdar Fethipaşa Coppice, İmamoğlu had said, “Those who cancelled the elections on

March 31 are dumb.” İmamoğlu faces a sentence of imprisonment for up to 4 years and 1 month.



Investigation against Leftist Party petition

An investigation was opened against the Leftist Party members due to “insulting the President” and “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” through criticising the ruling power’s political and economic applications during the Coronavirus pandemic. Three people were summoned to testify due to the written petition

that carried the title, “This can’t go like this, let’s change it” and said, “the people are dying in the pandemic, left unemployed, but the rich keep getting richer.”



Erdoğan's threats "just political dispute", according to RTÜK

The Radio and Television Supreme Council has sentenced Halk TV to an administrative fine due to the evaluation of show host Şirin Payzın on the expressions of President Erdoğan following Meral Akşener’s visit to Rize. Payzın

has evaluated Erdoğan’s threats against Akşener as “violence against women.” According to the Radio and Television Supreme Council, Payzın has “exhibited the fight of two politicians as an issue of violence against women and thus violated broadcasting principles.”



Access ban against Sedat Peker's videos

Following the application of the Gendarmerie General Command, Ankara 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the 2nd and 3rd videos of Sedat Peker, which were shared on YouTube and Twitter, as well as the comments under the video and tweet. The related videos and comments discussed the allegation that the Justice and

Development Party (AKP) Parliament Member Tolga Ağar had raped journalist Yelda Kaharman, who was killed afterwards, as well as the close relations between the Ağar family and the Gendarmerie General Commander Arif Çetin.



Protest bans in Hakkari and Rize

Hakkari Governorate extended the ongoing protest and demonstration ban in the province and Rize Governorate extended the protest and demonstration ban ongoing in İkizdere district until June 15th. Both bans were based on the protection of public safety and order, as well as measures against the pandemic. In addition,

Rize Governorate claimed that the ongoing resistance in İkizdere district against the construction of a stone quarry was under risk of propaganda by marginal groups.



Bans extended in Van

The protest and demonstration ban in Van that has been ongoing since November 21st, 2016 was extended by the Governorate for another 15 days. With the ban decree issued to hold between June 3rd and June 17th, the continuous protest ban will be ongoing for 1670 days.



Police prevention against SES Ankara statement

Health Labourers Union executives and members were intervened by the police after they wanted to hold a statement in front of Ankara Courthouse to react against the detainment of the Health Labourers Union Chairman and many other members on May

25th. The police prevented the union members' statement.



Police intervention against commemoration for Ethem Sarısülük

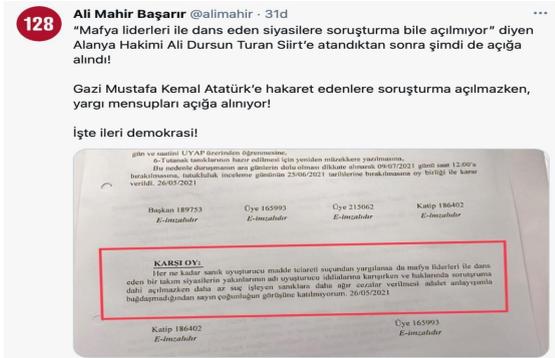
The police intervened against the commemoration organised in Kızılay district of Ankara on the anniversary of the death of Ethem Sarısülük, who was killed with a police bullet during the Gezi Park protests in Ankara. Many people were detained in the commemoration. The police officer killing

Sarısülük had been sentenced to 15,200 Turkish Liras of administrative fine only.



News on potatoes may disrupt public peace!

Seven access ban decrees issued by different Diyarbakır Criminal Judicatures of Peace against the Mesopotamia News Agency, which was banned from access 34 times in total, were revealed to have been taken following the application of Diyarbakır Provincial Gendarmerie Command. The news article with the headline: “Governorate blames people in chaos for potatoes,” was considered to be “heavy criticism” and “against the protection of public order.” News on the Diyarbakır Bar Association report regarding sexual abuse and torture against villagers by soldiers were also made subject to the access bans.



Judge Ali Dursun Turan suspended

Judge Ali Dursun Turan has put an annotation in the decree of conviction issued on the drug trafficking lawsuit filed at Alanya Assize Court and stated, "Even though the defendant is prosecuted due to activities related to drug trafficking, during a time that connections of some politician's relatives with drug trafficking are revealed through their dances with mafia leaders and no investigation is opened against

them, penalising defendants who commit lighter crimes do not fit the definition of justice. This is why I do not agree with the opinion of the respected majority of the court board." Republican People's Party (CHP) Mersin Parliament Member Ali Mahir Başarır announced that Turan was exiled to Siirt and was later suspended from his profession.



Lawsuit against journalist Ayşe Kara

The indictment prepared against journalist Ayşe Kara due to “illegal organisation membership” was accepted by Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court. The indictment claimed that Kara was a member of the Free Women’s Congress (KJA) and the Free Journalists Association, and that she conducted activities within the Democratic Society Congress. The indictment further considered Kara following the demonstration

of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in Mardin in 2016 for news as a criminal element and claimed 15 years of imprisonment against Kara due to “illegal organisation membership”.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Osman Akın and Veysi Sarısözen Case

The lawsuit filed against Yeni Yaşam Daily's Managing Editor Osman Akın and writer Veysi Sarısözen due to "making illegal organisation propaganda" through three news articles and one column published in the October 8, 2018 issue of Yeni Yaşam Daily...

Court: Istanbul 13th Assize Court

Verdict: The case was postponed.

Taraf Daily Case

The lawsuit filed against Taraf Daily reporter Mehmet Baransu and executives Ahmet Altan, Yasemin Çongar and Yıldray Oğur due to the news on the "Egemen Operation Plan" published in the newspaper...

Court: Istanbul 13th Assize Court

Verdict: The court scheduled the next hearing for October 18-19.

Abdurrahman Gök Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Abdurrahman Gök due to "illegal organisation membership" and "making illegal organisation propaganda" through his phone calls with news resources, social media posts and the news he reported...

Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for September 30.

Lawsuit Against Documentary Nû Jîn

The lawsuit filed against director Veysi Altay and Dicle Anter after they were convicted of "making terrorist organisation propaganda" through the screening of the documentary movie Nû Jîn (2014) and were on retrial after the reversal decree of the appeal court...

Court: Batman 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for October 7.

Reyhan Çapan Case

The lawsuit filed against Özgür Gündem's former Managing Editor Reyhan Çapan due to "making illegal organisation propaganda through press" and "publishing or printing terrorist organisation statements" after the merging of 18 different indictments against her...

Court: Istanbul 2nd Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for November 30.

Rojda Oğuz Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Rojda Oğuz, who was detained in the mass operation organised on January 8, 2016 due to the protest demonstrations organised by Van Yüzüncü Yıl University students on different dates and was released after four months under arrest, with the charges of "armed terrorist organisation membership" and "making terrorist organisation propaganda"...

Court: Van 4th Assize Court

Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for October 12.

Zeynep Altıok Akatlı Case

The lawsuit filed against Republican People's Party (CHP) 26th Session Izmir MP Zeynep Altıok Akatlı due to "insulting the President" on social media...

Court: Izmir Urla 1st Criminal Court of First Instance
Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for September 28.

Lawsuit Against News on Economy

The lawsuit filed against Bloomberg reporters Kerim Karakaya and Fercan Yalınkılıç due to the news they reported on the loss of value of the Turkish Lira, as well as 38 people, including journalists and economists, who shared the news on Twitter, due to “damaging the economy”...

Court: Istanbul 3rd Criminal Court of First Instance
Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for July 9.

"Yüksel Protests" Case

The lawsuit filed against “Yüksel Street Protesters” Mehmet Dersulu, Armağan Özbaş, Acun Karadağ, Nazan Bozkurt, Mahmut Konuk and Alev Şahin after organising a re-employment protest on Yüksel Street in Ankara due to having been dismissed from public service through Statutory Decrees issued within the State of Emergency...

Court: Ankara 28th Assize Court
Verdict: Architect Alev Şahin and teacher Mehmet Dersulu, who have been arrested within the file, were released.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

Sevda Çelik Özbingöl Case

The lawsuit filed against lawyer Sevda Çelik Özbingöl, who was detained and arrested in Urfa in March 2020, due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” based on her meetings with clients in prisons...

June 7, Monday at Urfa 6th Assize Court

Ahmet Altan Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist-writer Ahmet Altan due to “insulting a public officer” through his article published in Taraf Daily’s March 2008 issue with the headline, “Coup Preparation or Shutting Down Kemalism”...

June 8, Tuesday at Istanbul Anatolian 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Case Against News on Berkin Elvan

The lawsuit filed against journalists Canan Coşkun, Ali Açar and Can Uğur due to “targeting those taking part in the fight against terrorism” through the news published in Cumhuriyet and BirGün Daily on the investigation regarding the death of 15-year-old Berkin Elvan during the Gezi Park protests...

June 8, Tuesday at Istanbul 34th Assize Court

Melike Aydın Case

The lawsuit filed against JinNews Izmir reporter Melike Aydın, who was arrested in November 2019 and was released two months later, due to “acting on behalf of an illegal organisation” through the news she reported...

June 8, Tuesday at Izmir 2nd Assize Court

Ruken Demir Case

The lawsuit filed against Mesopotamia Agency reporter Ruken Demir due to “illegal organisation membership” through the meetings he held with news resources...

June 8, Tuesday at Izmir 9th Assize Court

Rüstem Batum Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Rüstem Batum due to “insulting the President” through his expressions on a show on IMC TV, which was previously shut down with a Statutory Decree, on September 10, 2015...

June 8, Tuesday at Istanbul 41st Criminal Court of First Instance

Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu Case

The lawsuit filed against journalists Sadiye Eser and Sadık Topaloğlu, who were arrested in December 2019 due to the lawsuits previously filed against them and their travels abroad and then were released in the first hearing of the case filed against them in March 2020...

June 8, Tuesday at Istanbul 22nd Assize Court

Nurcan Yalçın Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Nurcan Yalçın due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda” within the investigation conducted against the Rosa Women’s Association...

June 9, Wednesday at Diyarbakır 9th Assize Court

Case Against Las Tesis Demonstration

The lawsuit filed against six women, who protested male violence through the ‘Las Tesis’ demonstration organised in Kadıköy, Istanbul on December 8, 2019, due to “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911”...

June 10, Thursday at Istanbul Anatolian 29th Criminal Court of First Instance

Ruşen Takva Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Ruşen Takva due to “illegal organisation membership” through following the press statement organised by the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) on January 8...

June 10, Thursday at Van 2nd Assize Court

Turgut Öker Case

The lawsuit filed against the Confederation of European Alevi Unions (AABK) Honorary Chairman Turgut Öker due to “insulting the President” through his social media posts between 2012 and 2015 as well as the speeches he gave during the events organised by the confederation...

June 10, Thursday at Istanbul Anatolian 10th Criminal Court of First Instance

Engin Korkmaz Case

The lawsuit filed against Contemporary Journalists Association (ÇGD) Mediterranean Branch Chairman and Antalya Körfez Daily’s Managing Editor Engin Korkmaz due to “insulting the President” through his social media posts...

June 11, Friday at Antalya 19th Criminal Court of First Instance