

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 32/21 - August 20, 2021)

What happened last week?

- With the new social media regulation, which is still being prepared by the ruling power, those who “create, spread false news and insult others” on social media will be able to be penalised in accordance with the Turkish Criminal Code. The criminal code will involve new crimes such as “disinformation and misinformation.” Penalty increases in currently existing crimes will be effective for crimes committed through social media as well. There are also debates about a “Social Media Directorate” to be established within the Information Technologies and Communication Institute or the Radio and Television Supreme Council.
- As the government is calculating on how to strengthen tools of censorship more with the claim of battling against “false news,” the [Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression, “False News,” Disinformation and Propaganda](#) prepared under the leadership of Article 19 in 2017 summarises our worries on the “new social media regulation” of the ruling power.
- Erdoğan said, “The Turkish economy has left its roundup period behind and proven that it has entered its victory period.” The total reserves of the Central bank decreased 1 billion and 911 million dollars compared to the previous week, to 107 billion 00 million dollars.
- The migration wave from Afghanistan, which has recently been taken over by the Taliban, affects Turkey as well. A 295-km wall is being constructed to the Iranian border to prevent the passage of refugees. Erdoğan indicated that the statements made by the new Taliban administration have been regarded positively by Turkey and said, *“Turkey’s existence in Afghanistan will be able to make it easier for the new administration.”*
- Speaking at the opening ceremony of IDEF 21’ International Defense Industry Fair, Erdoğan said, *“If you want peace, you must always be ready for war.”*
- 18 non-governmental organisations made a declaration on the attack against Syrians in Altındağ district of Ankara, and called the entire society to “stay away from hate speech and not fall under the trap of discrimination and racism.” The organisations stated that the discriminative language against refugees has to stop immediately, and that the public has to be informed about the politics on migration, clearly and transparently. Furthermore, the organisations demanded an end to the arbitrariness and unclarity of what will happen to the refugees and migrants, which turned into a threatening element against them.
- The authority span of the Government Monitoring Council was extended with a Presidential decree. Associations, foundations, cooperatives, unions and all partnerships of such organisations will now be able to be monitored by the Government Monitoring Council. [Please click here](#) for details.

- The Manavgat Assize Court Chief Judge was suspended after he was photographed on the same dinner table with the defendant, whom he prosecuted due to criminal organisation membership and issued a decree of acquittal for him, at the defendant's hotel.
- The Health Minister, who said, "There are 750 Delta variants" only a month ago, said, "90 percent of the Delta variant is now over." The Turkish Medical Association warned that case numbers and deaths increased significantly since July 1 and that the fourth peak is on its way, saying, "In this variant, the infectability rate increases to at least 5 to 7 people per person, which is quite high. This is why, for social immunity, the vaccination rate must be around 80-85 percent." According to the examination made by Prof. Dr. Onur Bařer by comparing the numbers of deaths among provinces in the last three years, even though the officially recorded numbers due to COVID-19 were 53 thousand, the actual number is over 110 thousand.
- The number of deaths in the flood disaster in the Western Black Sea increased to 81. The Republican People's Party (CHP) board made an examination in the region. In their preliminary report, the board indicated that the disaster was caused by factors such as wrong policies of construction and urbanisation, wrong policies of water management, hydroelectric power plants and stream remediation work.



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...



We continue to record violations of freedom of expression in Turkey with monthly video conferences organised in collaboration with the Human Rights Association and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. [Please click here](#) for our "[What's Goin' On? July 2021](#)" report...



EngelliWeb 2020 Report

According to the data launched by the Freedom of Expression Association within the EngelliWeb 2020 report, access bans were issued against 467,011 websites, 150,000 URLs, 7,500 Twitter accounts, 50,000 tweets, 12,000 YouTube videos, 8,000 Facebook posts and 6,800 Instagram posts in the last 14 years.

The number of websites banned from access only in 2020 were 58,809. On the other hand, 5,645 news websites were censored with 819 different decrees issued by 236 criminal judicatures of peace. [Please click here](#) for the full report.



Investigation against social media posts

Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against the social media content on the Altındağ incidents, which was shared by the Refugee Media Association through news portal multecimedyasi.org, due to "public provocation through resentment and hostility." The incidents started with the news

on a Syrian refugee attacking two people with knives on August 10, later continued with the looting of many homes and stores belonging to refugees in the entire region of Altındağ. One person, who was injured in the initial incident, had died.



Investigation started against book "Heartstopper"

The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against the comic book, "Heartstopper" by English writer Alice Oseman, due to "obscenity." The Prosecutor's Office requested for the book to be examined by the Council to Protect Children from

Obscene Publications. D&R and idfix stopped the sale of the book. The book is about a character named Charlie, who is bullied at school due to his sexual orientation, meeting another character named Nick.



Ministry defends arrests at Boğaziçi University

In the reply given by the Ministry of Justice to the Constitutional Court on the arrests within the investigation started after a visual of the Kaaba was on the floor during an exhibition at Boğaziçi University, the Ministry targeted the

LGBGQ+s by calling them “haram.” According to the Ministry, homosexuality is “haram” according to Islam and thus, the arrest warrants are in total compliance with the law...



Nol-pros for life advocates in İkizdere

Alt ses E: The investigation opened against six people, who wanted to protect nature against the stone quarry project to be constructed by Cengiz Construction Company in Işkencedere Valley of İkizdere district in Rize, was concluded with non-prosecution. There was an argument between the villagers and security guards, who were protecting company workers

entering the valley, in the resistance that has been ongoing since April 20, 2021. After the argument, an investigation was started against six villagers due to “resisting to prevent duty” and “public denigration of the state’s military and security organisation.”



VALİLİK - VAN İLÇELERİMİZ HİZMETLERİMİZ - GÜNDEM - İLETİŞİM

16.08.2021 Tarihli Yasaklama Kararı...

16.08.2021

Anayasamızda ve kanunlarda öngörülen sınırlarında ve yasaklama şartlarını doğrudan ve açıkça oluşturduğu değerlendirilen eylemler ile saldıran olayların önüne geçmek, vatandaşlarımızın can ve mal güvenliğini sağlamak, terör örgütlerinin planlarını bertaraf etmek ve bu bağlamda, milli güvenliğin sağlanması, kamu düzeni ve genel sağlığın korunması, suç işlenmesinin önlenmesi, temel hak ve özgürlükler ile başkalarının hak ve özgürlüklerinin ve genel asayişin devranını temini ile şiddet olaylarının yaygınlaşmasının önlenmesi amacıyla; Van il coğrafi sınırları içerisinde 17/08/2021 tarihinden geçerli 31/08/2021 tarihi de dahil olmak üzere (15) gün süre ile; 2911 sayılı Toplantı ve Gösteri Yürüyüşleri Kanunu hükümlerine göre düzenlenecek gösteri yürüyüşü ve açık hava toplantıları 2911 Sayılı Kanunun 17. Maddesine istinaden **YASAKLANMIŞTIR.**

İlimizde düzenlenecek olan basın açıklaması, oturma eylemi ve anket yapılmasının, cadde ve sınırlı kurulmasının/olupması, imza kampanyası düzenlenmesi, bildiri, broşür ve el ilanı dağıtılması, 5442 sayılı İl idaresi Kanununun 11. Maddesinin (a) ve (c) fıkra hükümleri gereğince belirtilen tarihler arasında **MÜLKİ İDARE AMİRİNİN İZNİNE BAĞLANMIŞTIR.**

Kamuya Saygıyla Duyurulur...

Protest ban extended in Van

The Governorate in Van banned all meetings, demonstrations, rallies and sit-in protests to be organised within the province between August 17 and 31, 2021. The Governorate further issued a prerequisite of permission by local administration in the organisation of press statements. The protest and demonstration ban

in the province was initially declared in November 2016 due to the State of Emergency declared after the coup attempt on July 15, 2016 and has been ongoing ever since with continuous extensions. With the ban being extended due to “security reasons” with varying durations from 15 days to a month, a basic human right that is protected by the Constitution is being restricted by the ruling power for more than 1700 days.



Investigation against journalist Merdan Yanardağ

An investigation was started against TELE1 TV channel’s Editor-In-Chief and journalist Merdan Yanardağ due to “denigrating the government and the ruling power” in his article, “The System Turning Into a Mafia” that was published on BirGün Daily’s May 23 issue.



11 farmers released after detainment over protesting DEDAŞ

Farmers gathered to protest Dicle Electric Distribution Inc. due to the electric cuts in Urfa and their inability to water their crops. During the gendarmerie intervention against the

farmers' protest, the farmers were detained after being exposed to tear gas. 11 farmers stood trial at Akçakale Courthouse with arrest claims. Afterwards, they were released on the condition of judicial measures.



Social media operation in Ankara

Six people, including workers of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Headquarters, were detained with police operations against their homes early in the morning in Ankara due to their "social media posts." Their lawyers announced that there was a confidentiality order on the file. Those detained include Azadi Kaya, who was recently in the media with his

expressions, "hard capitalism" during a street interview.



DÜŞÜNCE SUÇU DURUŞMALARI

- There were no hearings due to the judicial recess period.