

Think, think...

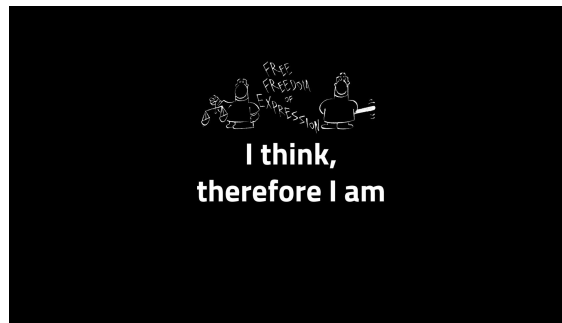


Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 49/21 - December 17, 2021)

What happened last week?

- The country started the week with record-breaking depreciation in the Turkish Lira, yet again. The results of the central bank's intervention in the market four times in two weeks turned out to be limited and temporary. President Erdoğan had an extraordinary meeting with Central Bank Manager Kavcıoğlu, managers of the Public Banks and the Minister of Treasury and Finance Nebati, that lasted for 5 hours. Nabati said during the day that “external forces did not play a role” in the exchange rate increases...
- Legislative expert İzzet Özgenç, who is known for his close relations with Erdoğan, announced that a State of Emergency could be declared on the grounds of an “economic depression” and that the citizens should be ready for it. Özgenç apologized after reactions from the public.
- As the Turkish Lira lost more than 100 percent in value before the end of the year, the Central Bank did not "surprise" in interest rate decisions; cutting the rate by another 100 basis points from 15 to 14 percent.
- President Erdoğan announced the minimum wage for the year 2022 as 4 thousand 250 liras. Although Erdoğan says that they have made a historic increase in the minimum wage, despite the 50 percent increase, even with a rough calculation, a person earning minimum wage has lost 30 percent of his income. Although Erdoğan says we should not “calculate anything with dollars”, the minimum wage, which was 384 dollars when it was announced a year ago, is only 272 dollars despite an increase of 1425 liras. Even after the declaration of the minimum wage, the amount decreased for another 10 dollars in less than 24 hours.
- The EU Council of General Affairs confirmed that the negotiations with Turkey will “remain frozen” at the preparatory meeting for the EU leaders' summit. "The European Council notes with regret that Turkey is increasingly moving away from the EU," [the statement said](#).
- With the call of the Turkish Medical Association and the Health Workers' Union, health workers went on strike across the country, saying "we want what is our right, not excuses". The strike decision was taken after the “regulation on personal rights” was not referred to the General Assembly of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. According to Turkish Medical Association data, more than 1200 physicians [left the country](#) in 2021.
- The annual report of Reporters Without Borders (RSF), which reflects the balance sheet of press freedom in the world, has been published. It was pointed out that in Turkey, which was ranked 153rd in the report on press freedom among 180 countries, approximately 90 percent of the media is under government control. [Please click here](#) for details.

-
- Contemporary Journalists Association launched its November Media Monitoring Report. According to the report, access to 6 news content and 127 news sites, in which the news were published, was banned in November. Prosecutions of 93 people continued with media-related charges. 2 press members were detained, 3 press workers were sentenced to a total of 5 years, 5 months and 10 days in prison; 3 of them were threatened and targeted; 1 was attacked. 19 press workers were fired. [Please click here](#) for details.
- The latest hearing of the Meram Massacre case, in which 7 members of the Dedeoğlu family were killed, was held. Murder suspect Mehmet Altun as well as 11 members from the Keleş and Çalık families stood trial, and the case was adjourned to February 8, 2022. The court [denied](#) the "arrest requests" of the victims' lawyers.
- Prisoner Garibe Gezer passed away in Kandıra Prison; the prison administration claimed that Gezer committed suicide. Gezer has been stating through her lawyers that she was being kept in a solitary cell, was systematically tortured and raped by female guardians. Gezer's lawyers announced that confidentiality orders were issued against the investigations regarding both the suspicious death and the torture she was subjected to.
- Halil Güneş, who was treated for lung and bone cancer, passed away in prison; despite the report of Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital that he "cannot stay in prison", which the Forensic Medicine Institute later revoked and said "he could remain in prison". According to the data of the Human Rights Association, there are 1,605 ill prisoners, 604 of whom are seriously ill, while the number of ill prisoners has increased approximately 6 times in the last 10 years. In addition, from the beginning of 2020 until today, at least 59 ill prisoners have died, 7 of them shortly after the deferral of execution.



Our weekly video program, “[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...

NELER OLUYOR?

What's goin' on?

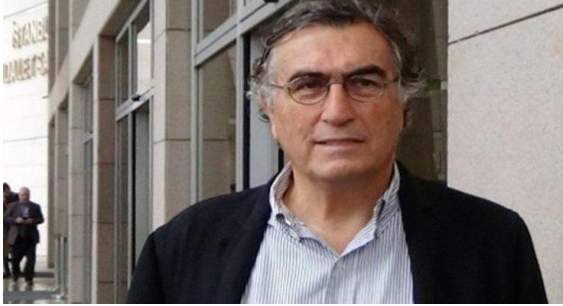
We continue to record violations of freedom of expression with the monthly video conferences we organize together with the Human Rights Association and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. [Please click here](#) to see what happened in November.



Lawsuit against Boğaziçi protests

A lawsuit was filed against 14 students, including Berke Gök and Perit Özen, who were arrested after being detained during protests against the appointed rector of Boğaziçi University, Prof. Dr. Naci İnci. In the indictment, İnci was considered the victim and the complainants were the official chauffeur and 2 security guards, and it demanded that the

students be sentenced to prison on charges such as "participating in illegal meetings and demonstrations" and "resisting to prevent duty". The first hearing of the case will be held on January 7.



Lawsuit against Hasan Cemal due to "insulting Erdoğan"

Journalist Hasan Cemal was prosecuted on charges of "insulting the President" based on two tweets he posted in 2014 and 2016; the first hearing of the case will be held on April 12. Cemal tweeted, "The only criterion of democracy is not only to oppose the military

coup attempt, but also to say no to the deepening Erdoğan coup!" and said, "If the caliphate is to come back, the Caliph will probably be Tayyip Erdoğan."



RTÜK penalties

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) decided that the last episode of Hasan Can Kaya's show, 'Speaking', which was broadcast on Exxen TV Channel was against the national and moral values as well as the

general morality of the society, ordering the show's cancellation. The Council further imposed an administrative fine on the platform on the grounds of broadcasting the Spanish film "Donde Caben Dos", which is in the category of "LGBTQ+ Films" on the digital platform Netflix, "contradicted the moral values and general morality of the society", also ordering the cancellation of the movie's broadcast. In addition, Tele 1 and Halk TV channels were fined 210 thousand liras in total for their broadcasts that criticized President Erdoğan, Director of Religious Affairs Ali Erbaş and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli.



Another investigation against Ferhat Tunç

An investigation was launched against artist Ferhat Tunç on the charge of "inciting the public to hatred and enmity" because of his social media post, in which he evaluated the massacre perpetrated by ISIS at the Reina nightclub at the beginning of 2017. In his post, Tunç said, "It is this government itself that

targets New Year's celebrations. Those who could not even tolerate a snowman, prepared the #Reina attack."



Three street-interviewer YouTubers detained

İlave TV YouTube channel owner Arif Kocabıyık, who conducts street interviews on Youtube, Mehmet Koyuncu, owner of Sade Vatandaş channel, and Hasan Köksoy, owner of Self-Reporter channel, were all detained. Three YouTubers, who were detained during the

operations carried out with the complaint of Justice and Development Party (AKP) Central Executive Board member Mücahit Parlak, were released after 24 hours of detention by the Criminal Judicature of Peace under house arrest and a travel ban issued against them.



More than 90 detained in protests for shelter

In order to draw attention to the inadequacy of the dormitories and the increase in rents, the protest that the students wanted to organise in Ankara on December 12, gathering from different cities, was banned by the Governorate. Journalists Nebiye Arı, Yağmur Kaya and Hilal Işık were detained while following the protesters who were stopped at

their entrance to Ankara. "We Can't Find Shelter Movement" announced that more than 90 people were detained throughout the province.



Investigation against Ender İmrek

An investigation was launched against Evrensel Daily writer Ender İmrek for his article titled "Turkey is on fire, the palace is watching" published on July 30. İmrek is charged with "insulting the President" and "public incitement to hatred and hostility" within the scope of the investigation opened upon a complaint by the Gendarmerie General Command.



Police intervention against students' forum on economic crisis

The police attacked the university students, who wanted to organize a forum about the economic crisis in the country and the housing problem of the students at the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University. 25 students were beaten and detained, and the campus was surrounded by the police. Accusations were brought against the students,

such as "disrupting education by singing the Property Anthem" while they were in custody.



Imprisonment sentence over sharing cartoon

A citizen was prosecuted for sharing two separate cartoons of President Erdoğan on social media and was sentenced to 1 year, 2 months and 17 days in prison by the Istanbul Anatolian 43rd Criminal Court of First Instance on the charge of "insulting the President". The court deferred the announcement of the verdict.



Acquittal in lawsuit against news on soldier

Yeni Çizgi Daily's Managing Editor Bekir Şahin was acquitted in the lawsuit filed against him at the Burdur 4th Criminal Court of First Instance on the charge of "seizing and disseminating personal data" for his coverage of news of a soldier murdering his wife and committing suicide with a public photograph.



Protest and demonstration bans

The Hakkari Governorate announced that it has banned all protests and demonstrations throughout the province for 15 days as of December 13. The protest ban, that has been ongoing in Van for more than 2,000 days, has been extended for another 15 days as well.

Kahramanmaraş Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days before the 43rd anniversary of the Maraş Massacre on the grounds of “public safety”. On the other hand, Tunceli Governorate declared a 15-day protest ban across the province.



Imprisonment sentence against cameraman Kemal Demir

The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against previously shut-down TV10 cameraman Kemal Demir and employee Kemal Karagöz was held at the Istanbul 28th Assize Court on the charge of "terrorist organization membership". Demir was sentenced to 3 years and 9 months in

prison for "aiding a terrorist organization". Karagöz was acquitted.



Lawsuit against Bar Association after reacting against hate speech

The prosecution of the Ankara Bar Association executives started at the Ankara 16th Assize Court after they launched a statement following the targeting of Director of Religious Affairs Ali Erbaş against LGBTQI+s and unmarried couples living together during his Friday Sermon at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Mosque

on April 24, 2021. The court delegation denied the request for the acquittal of Ankara Bar Association Chairman Erinç Sağkan and the members of the Board of Directors, who were charged with "insulting a public official due to his statements on religious beliefs, thoughts and convictions", adjourning the case to March 9, 2022.



Lawsuit against journalist Namık Koçak

The prosecution of journalist Namık Koçak started at the Istanbul 22nd Assize Court on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" on the grounds of his social media posts between the years 2015-2020. The

second hearing of the case was scheduled for March 3.



Investigation against HDP's Istanbul Provincial Congress

Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation on the grounds that "chants in favor of Abdullah Öcalan were shouted and organizational anthems were sung" during the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul Provincial Congress.



Lawsuit against transgender women on streets

The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against four transgender women living in Istanbul on the charge of "disgraceful act" for standing on the street will be held on March 8, 2022. In the indictment, the appearance of legs and breasts, and even facial expressions, were considered

criminal elements.



Investigation against protesting dog murder

Animal lover Hayrettin Bulan, who brought a mother dog, who was killed with a rifle, and her 4 puppies before the Konya Governorate to protest the murder, was detained on charges of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations".



Arrest over throwing President's photo on ground

In Zonguldak, the person who was detained due to throwing the photograph of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the ground at the entrance of the District Governorate building was arrested.



Acquittal after detainment over defending İkizdere

The lawsuit filed against 9 young people, who were detained for protesting the ban against protests and demonstrations declared by the Rize Governorate to prevent the protests of the

villagers resisting against the stone quarry in İkiçdere, in Istanbul, with the allegation of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911", resulted in acquittal.



Journalist Aslan acquitted

Mesopotamia Agency reporter Mehmet Aslan was acquitted in the lawsuit filed against him at the Istanbul 24th Assize Court on charges of "terrorist organization membership" and "news coverage to agitates/provokes the masses" due to his news and interviews with news resources.



ECtHR rules 'rights violation' for Nazlı Ilıcak's arrest

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) evaluated the application of Nazlı Ilıcak, who was arrested after the coup attempt in 2016, as a violation of rights and sentenced Turkey to pay 16,000 Euros in compensation.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Durket Süren Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Durket Süren on charges of "wilfully aiding a terrorist organization" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization"...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 11th Assize Court Verdict: The Prosecutor's Office requested the journalist's acquittal of the charge of "knowingly and wilfully aiding a terrorist organization"; whereas requested that he be penalised for "making propaganda for a terrorist organization". The case was adjourned to February 21.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cameraman Rojhat Doğru Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Gelî Kurdistan TV former cameraman Rojhat Doğru on charges of "damaging the unity and integrity of the country", "terrorist organization membership" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization"...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court Verdict: The Prosecutor's Office requested that Doğru be punished for "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" and "damaging the unity and integrity of the state". The next hearing was scheduled for January 6.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Newspaper Distributors Case (Retrial)</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Veysi Altın and Ercan Yeltaş, who distribute Rojeva Medya Daily and Özgürlükçü Demokrat Daily published in Kurdish, after they were tried and acquitted on</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Solidarity with Prisoners Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against the relatives of detainees and the Peace Mothers, who were detained during the vigil in front of Bakırköy Prison in 2019...</p>

<p>the charge of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization", but were tried again after the reversal decree of the court of appeals...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court Verdict: Presenting their opinion on the merits, the Prosecutor's Office requested that the defendants be penalised for "aiding a terrorist organization". The next hearing was scheduled for March 22.</p>	<p>Court: Bakırköy 13th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The hearing could not be held at Bakırköy 13th Criminal Court of First Instance due to the excused absence of the court judge. A new hearing date will be scheduled on the file.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Engin Korkmaz Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Contemporary Journalists Association (ÇGD) Mediterranean Branch Chairman and Antalya Körfez Daily's Editor-in-Chief Engin Korkmaz, on charges of "insulting the President" due to his social media posts...</p> <p>Court: Antalya 19th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The case was adjourned to January 2, due to the court judge's leave of absence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Aslı Erdoğan Case (Retrial)</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily's columnist and Editorial Advisory Board member Aslı Erdoğan on the charge of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization"... (The case was closed due to time limitation and the appeal court issued a retrial.)</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 23rd Assize Court Verdict: The court decided to ask the Cyber Crimes Bureau for the URL of Erdoğan's articles published on the Internet, adjourning the case to February 10.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Vedat Dağ Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Diyarbakır Provincial Organization's Press Advisor Vedat Dağ on charges of "terrorist organization membership" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" on the grounds of his participation in Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) events he followed up on, sharing the events on his social media account and secret witness statements against him...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 11th Assize Court Verdict: The prosecutor requested that Dağ be penalised for "terrorist organization membership" and "threat" charges. The next hearing of the case was scheduled for March 16.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Derya Okatan Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Derya Okatan due to the news, titled "Mersin Women's Platform states they are exposing abusive lawyer Onur Kale", which was published while he was the Editor-in-Chief of Aktif News Agency (ETHA)...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 39th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The hearing could not be held due to the judge's leave of absence. The case was adjourned.</p>

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hayri Demir Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Hayri Demir on charges of "terrorist organization membership" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" on the grounds of his journalism activities in northern Syria...</p> <p>December 21, Tuesday at Ankara 15th Assize Court</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Özgür Gündem Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 22 journalists after being detained on charges of "resisting to prevent duty" and "insulting" in the Özgür Gündem raid...</p> <p>December 21, Tuesday at Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ahmet Sever Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against the former Chief Press Advisor of 11th President Abdullah Gül, Ahmet Sever on charges of "insulting the President" and "insulting a public official" because of his book, "I Will Pour Out My Heart/Me As A Witness"...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Can Dündar Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Can Dündar on charges of "printing or publishing the statements of terrorist organizations" for participating in the Özgür Gündem Substitute Editing-In-Chief campaign in 2016...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Istanbul 22nd Assize Court</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Doğan Ergün and İzel Sezer Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against İleri Haber's former Editor-in-Chief Doğan Ergün and current Editor-in-Chief İzel Sezer, who was the Managing Director at the time, for their news coverage of tweets about alleged bribery bargaining by Mustafa Doğan İnal, former lawyer of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Istanbul 33rd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ferhat Tunç Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against artist Ferhat Tunç on charges of "terrorist organisation membership" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organisation"...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>KCK Main Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 36 Kurdish politicians, including Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MPs Tayip Temel and Pero Dündar after the verdict issued for them in the KCK Main Case was reversed by the Court of Cassation...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Diyarbakır 2nd Assize Court</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Eren Keskin and Reyhan Çapan Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily's former Co-Editor-In-Chief Eren Keskin and Managing Editor Reyhan Çapan due to the news published in the newspaper about Berkin Elvan...</p> <p>December 23, Thursday at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Meşale Tolu Case</u></p>	

The lawsuit filed against 23 people, including Etkin News Agency reporter and translator Meşale Tolu, on charges of “terrorist organisation membership” and “making propaganda for a terrorist organisation”...

December 24, Friday at Istanbul 29th Assize Court