

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 26/22 - July 1, 2022)

What happened last week?

- The government's budget for 2022 did not last 6 months. A total of 880 billion 474 million and 775 thousand TL appropriation will be added to the budgets of the administrations within the scope of the general budget. On the other hand, the increase in the salaries of MPs, which corresponds to approximately 4 minimum wages, passed the Parliamentary committee in 1 minute without a dispute.
- Advising the citizens to "be patient", Erdoğan claimed that inflation will fall in 2023. The fate of the natural gas discoveries, which he had heralded many times before, is unknown, but this time, he announced that new oil reserves were found!
- The Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency announced that new conditions were introduced for TL commercial loans. With the decision called "transition to the controlled foreign exchange market", a foreign currency asset limit was imposed on companies in the use of TL loans. The step taken is considered by international rating agencies and economists as policies for 'capital control'. The USD/TRY exchange rate, which fell after the decision, came back to the same level after a week.
- The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce calculated that inflation in Istanbul rose to 94.2% annually in June. This figure is the highest of the last 24 years.
- The foreign trade deficit reached a record \$10.6 billion, with an annual increase of 155%. According to official data, exports increased by 15.3% in May compared to the same month of the previous year; imports increased by 43.5%. The ratio of exports to imports decreased from 79.8% to 64.2%.
- A large number of tax exemptions and discounts were brought to companies operating in the Istanbul Finance Center, which is under the Turkey Wealth Fund, of which Erdoğan is the Chairman of the Board.
- 16 new reports prepared against 11 MPs were sent to the Parliament.
- The Turkish Statistical Institute, which has stopped publishing death statistics for the last two years with the pandemic, has postponed the release of the 'Death and Cause of Death Statistics' report once again. The reason for the postponement was announced as "continuation of the work in the administrative records", whereas the experts evaluate the issue as, "they do not announce because their lies and the extra deaths will be exposed in numbers".
- Discussions on the new 'censorship law' proposed by the government with the claim of "fighting disinformation" were postponed to the new legislative period.
- The Truth Justice Memory Center (Memory Center) published the book titled "Because We Care: 11 Civil Society Successes", which highlights the positive legacy left by the fight for human rights, which was prepared within the scope of the Supporting Human Rights Organizations and Defenders program. In the book written by journalist Gökçer Tahincioğlu, the stories of 11 struggles, including our initiative, are included with their testimonies. You may find the book on "hakikatadalethafiza.org".

- The 2022 edition of the [Istanbul Protocol](#), which brings new international standards in the fight against torture, was shared with the public at the meeting held in Geneva with the participation of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet as well as Human Rights Foundation of Turkey's Executive Board member and Turkish Medical Association President Şebnem Korur Fincancı.
 - The Human Rights Association (IHD) and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) said in a statement on June 26, the Day of Solidarity with the Tortured, "*The practices of torture and other ill-treatment in the streets and open spaces, and in unofficial places of detention and outside detention have reached a level that has never been seen before.*"
 - Members of the Lawyers for Freedom Association, who went to the Yüksekova District Gendarmerie Command to see the villagers detained during the military operation launched in the rural area of Yüksekova district of Hakkari, were beaten and dragged on the ground by the soldiers. Hakkari Bar Association requested an investigation and dismissal of the soldiers who battered lawyers at Yüksekova District Gendarmerie Command.
 - The Human Rights Association has announced the "Rights Monitoring Report in Turkish Prisons for the Year 2021". In one year, 901 prisoners applied just to the headquarters of the association. It has been determined that thousands of applications, including those who have reached 27 branches and 8 representative offices of the association, concentrate on violations of rights against right to health, torture, ill-treatment and discrimination.
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Imprisonment sentence against journalist Abdurrahman Gök

Journalist Abdurrahman Gök, who photographed the moment of the murder of Kemal Kurkut by the police during the 2017 Newroz celebration in Diyarbakır, was acquitted of "terrorist organization membership" in the lawsuit where he was tried on charges of "armed terrorist organization membership" and "making propaganda for a terrorist organization". He was sentenced to 6 months and 22 days in prison. Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court did not defer the sentence.



Police attack against Pride Parade

Events organized within the scope of LGBTQI+ Pride Week were banned throughout Turkey. 373 people, including 30 children and journalists, were detained during the Istanbul Pride Parade. 12 people were detained during the İzmir Pride Parade. 530 LGBTQI+ and LGBTQI+ rights defenders have been detained in Pride Month events since May 20. LGBTQI+s have been the target of hateful threats and were tortured throughout this period.



Second acquittal in “Ciao Bella” Case

Republican People’s Party (CHP) executive Banu Özdemir, who was tried on charges of "public incitement to hatred and enmity" for sharing the images of the song "Ciao Bella" being played from mosques in İzmir, was acquitted once again. Özdemir was previously arrested, tried and acquitted within the scope of

the case, and was being tried again at the Izmir 50th Criminal Court of First Instance after the appeal court decree to overturn the acquittal upon the objection of the prosecutor's office.



Human Rights Association (IHD) Co-Chair acquitted of insulting Interior Minister

The lawsuit filed against Human Rights Association (IHD) Co-Chair Öztürk Türkdoğan at the Ankara 60th Criminal Court of First Instance on the charge of "insulting a public official" due to the written statement, titled, "Mandatory Statement Regarding the Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu" that was published

on the website of the Human Rights Association (IHD) on June 29, 2018, concluded with acquittal.



Saturday Mothers detained

Asking the fate of their relatives disappeared in custody for years and demanding justice, the Saturday Mothers gathered at the Galatasaray Square, which has been under police blockade for the 200th week, in the 900th week of their protest. The Saturday Mothers and 16 rights defenders, who came to the square with photos of their disappeared relatives and flowers in

their hands, were detained.



Lawsuit against Xwebûn Daily owner Esen

A lawsuit was filed against Xwebûn Daily Owner Kadri Esen on the allegation of "making propaganda for a terrorist organisation" based on a photo he shared on his social media account on April 9, 2018. The first hearing of the case will be held on September 21 at the Diyarbakır 10th Assize Court.



Former HDP MP Demirel stand trial

The trial of former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Parliamentary Group Deputy Chairman Çağlar Demirel, who said in a speech he made at a rally in Diyarbakır in 2016 in response to Erdoğan's words targeting his party, "we return everything he said to him," has started at the Diyarbakır 5th Criminal Court of First Instance. The arrest warrant for Demirel, who was accused of "insulting the President", was lifted. The hearing was adjourned to December 20.



10-month imprisonment against woman wearing shawl during Newroz

The first hearings of two separate lawsuits filed against 67-year-old Menci Orman and her daughter Şahide Orman Özak for allegedly carrying yellow, red and green shawls during Newroz celebrations in Hatay were held at the Hatay 3rd Assize Court. Menci Orman was sentenced to 10 months in prison and the announcement of the verdict was deferred, and the hearing of her daughter was adjourned.



'Sedat Peker Case' against Uğur Dündar

A lawsuit was filed against journalist Uğur Dündar on the charge of "praising the crime and the criminal" following the complaint of the Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu. In the indictment, which was accepted by the Istanbul Beykoz Criminal Court of First Instance, Dündar was charged due to a tweet he posted about criminal organisation leader Sedat Peker, who made statements on many issues from drug trades to unsolved murders, from mafias to bribe-taking parliament members, as well as due to Dündar's evaluation of the matter on a television program.



Journalists stand trial again

The retrial of journalists Çağrı Sarı and Arif Koşar started at the Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance with charges due to the news titled "Police opened fire against the public in Nusaybin: 3 injured", published in Evrensel Daily on March 15, 2016. The initial verdict on the journalists, who were sentenced to 5 months in prison for "publicly insulting the military or security forces of the state" (in

accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code - TCK) due to the news in question has previously been overturned by the Court of Cassation. The next hearing in the case was scheduled for November 15.



Prosecutor requests abatement in torture lawsuit filed 9 years later

The first hearing of the lawsuit filed after 9 years on dokuz8Haber Editor-In-Chief Gökhan Biçici being subjected to police violence as he was following the news during the Gezi resistance in 2013, was held. 5 police officers were prosecuted at the Istanbul 48th Criminal Court of First Instance. The prosecutor called the torture "simple injury" and requested that

the case be abated on the grounds of "time limitation". The next hearing will be held on September 13.



Kader Kevser Ertürk, who was killed in a clash, and destroyed tombs. The Istanbul 14th Assize Court did not defer the sentence.

1-year 6-month 22-day imprisonment against social media post

A citizen named Nazife Başkan was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days in prison on charges of "making propaganda for a terrorist organization" in the trial where she was tried for her social media posts about murdered Kurdish politician Sakine Cansız, as well as



Access block against Deutsche Welle and Voice of America websites

Deutsche Welle and Voice of America (VOA) news websites, which did not apply for a license to the Radio and Television Supreme Council, were blocked from access by the Ankara 1st Criminal Court of Peace. All pages of Germany's international media organization DW, broadcasting in 32 languages, and the Turkish website of VOA were censored. The

news websites had declared that they would not apply against the license imposition, saying "its purpose is to enforce censorship".



Access block against our news story

The Izmir 7th Criminal Court of Peace has imposed an access block on our news published in February about the threat messages sent to Etkin News Agency (ETHA) Reporter Ertürk

Yılmaz, who shared the news about suspended Assize Court Judge Hacım Çiftçi. Along with the same decrees, news with the same content published on Gazete Duvar, İz Gazete and direnisteyiz.org were also censored.

access to four databases containing personal information of academic staff, administrative staff, students and alumni, was a suspect in a bribery operation in İzmir in 2014.

Anatolian 8th Criminal Judicature of Peace also blocked access to the news on the access block imposed against the video and content regarding anecdotes on Justice and Development Party (AKP) Parliament Member Alpay Özalan at the time when he was a football player.



Access block against Çiğdem Toker's column

Sözcü Daily columnist Çiğdem Toker's article on the Halkalı-Ispartakule railway line tender, titled, "They secretly repeated the same tender twice the size," was censored by the Istanbul Küçükçekmece 1st Criminal Court of Peace.

Access block against news on Boğaziçi University Information Processing Center Director

Upon the request of Boğaziçi University Rectorate, the Istanbul 10th Criminal Judicature of Peace blocked access to the news revealing that the director of Boğaziçi University Information Processing Center, who came to the fore when he gave a company

Access block against news on access block

After the Freedom of Expression Association announced the access block against news articles regarding the allegation of President Erdoğan's lawyer Ahmet Özel threatening a businessman, the related content on their website was also blocked with a decree issued by the Istanbul Anatolian 6th Criminal Court of Peace. In addition, the same judiciary also blocked access to the news about the court verdict to summon President Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal by force. Istanbul

RTÜK penalties

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) fined Halk TV and KRT upon the complaint of Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu. HALK TV was also sentenced to a second fine

based on the complaint of the Gendarmerie General Command for its news titled "Controversial Image in Van Başkale". RTÜK also fined TELE1 for broadcasting on male violence against 6 women in Bahçeşehir, Istanbul. On the other hand, the Supreme Council imposed administrative sanctions on TGRT for a broadcast that did not comply with the broadcast ban issued by the Bakırköy 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace, and on Radio Sputnik on the grounds of "broadcasting in a way that encourages the use of alcohol by specifying an alcoholic beverage type and brand".



Turkey". The report highlights the crackdown on rights defenders and shows that state bodies use administrative procedures and sanctions to stigmatize and silence human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations in retaliation for their activities in the field of human rights. You may find the full report on www.fidh.org/tr. Please click here for the full report.



his acquittal.

FIDH: Administrative harassment used as weapon to silence civil society in Turkey

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (FIDH-OMCT) and its member organization, the Human Rights Association (IHD) published a report titled "Stifling Procedure, Dooming it to Failure: Administrative Harassment of Civil Society in

Turkey". The report highlights the crackdown on rights defenders and shows that state bodies use administrative procedures and sanctions to stigmatize and silence human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations in retaliation for their activities in the field of human rights. You may find the full report on www.fidh.org/tr. Please click here for the full report.

Journalist Vedat Örütç acquitted

Journalist Vedat Örütç, who was detained while following a protest that took place on February 8, 2020, stood trial at the Istanbul 18th Criminal Court of First Instance on charges of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911" and "insulting a public official". The case was concluded with



his acquittal.

Muhammed Cihad Cemre arrested

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul MP Hüda Kaya's son Muhammed Cihad Cemre, who was detained on charges of "taking pictures with PKK leaders" and was released under judicial measures, was detained once again and arrested by the court he was sent to, upon the objection of the Çanakkale Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. Cemre is accused of his journalistic activities during the resolution process.



Another police intervention against Justice Watch

The "Justice Watch" organized every week in front of the Istanbul Çağlayan Courthouse in order to draw attention to the problems experienced in prisons by the relatives of the prisoners, and the police intervened in the statement that was intended to be made this week as well. While the press was forcibly removed from the area by being battered, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Bahçelievler District Co-Chair was detained.



Musician detained over singing in Kurdish at wedding

Musician Veysi Belketin, who sang in Kurdish at a wedding in Aydın's Efeler district, was detained on the charge of "making propaganda for a terrorist organisation".



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

<p><u>Case Against Boğaziçi Protests</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 14 Boğaziçi University students protesting the university's trustee rector Naci İnci...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 22nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The court decided for the file to be sent to the Prosecutor for an opinion to be prepared on the file, adjourning the hearing to November 14.</p>	<p><u>Case Against Montreux Statement</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 103 retired colonels on the charge of "agreeing to commit a crime against the Constitutional order" due to the statement they made, drawing attention to the importance of the Montreux Convention...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 20th Assize Court</p> <p>Verdict: The court allowed time for the Prosecutor to prepare an opinion on the basis. The hearing was adjourned to September 19.</p>
<p><u>Gökhan Yavuzel Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against writer Gökhan Yavuzel on the charge of "public incitement towards resentment and hostility" due to a social media post...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 7th Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The court decided to wait for the execution of the warrant issued against the</p>	<p><u>Ismail Saymaz Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Ismail Saymaz on the charge of "illegally obtaining personal data" due to an article he wrote on a Prosecutor raiding a hospital in Kayseri...</p> <p>Court: Niğde 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for October 4.</p>

<p>writer, who resides abroad, adjourning the hearing to December 1.</p>	
<p><u>Case Against Protest on Hunger Strikes</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalists Irfan Tunççelik, Ümit Turhan Coşkun and 11 Peace Mothers Initiative members on charges of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations” and “committing a crime on behalf of a terrorist organization” due to a protest organized in front of the Bakırköy Women’s Closed Prison regarding the hunger strikes in prison, that started in 2018...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 23rd Assize Court Verdict: The court decided to send the file to the Prosecutor for an opinion to be prepared on the basis, adjourning the hearing to October 25.</p>	<p><u>Case Against Hasankeyf Protest</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 31 people, including Jıyan News Editor-In-Chief Sonya Bayık, who were detained during the press statement organized by the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members on June 12, 2019 with the demand that the water procedures of the Ilısu Dam, which left Hasankeyf underwater, be stopped, on the charge of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations”...</p> <p>Court: Batman 1st Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for December 27.</p>
<p><u>Zaman Daily Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Mümtazer Türköne, Şahin Alpay, Ali Bulaç, Ahmet Turan Alkan and Mehmet Özdemir after the verdicts issued for them in the Zaman Daily Case were overturned by the Court of Cassation...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 13th Assize Court Verdict: The travel ban against Türköne, Alpay, Bulaç and Alkan was lifted. The next hearing was scheduled for November 2.</p>	<p><u>Case Against 19 People Detained During Press Statement</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 19 people, including journalist Zehine Türkeri, Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul Provincial Co-Chairs Elif Bulut and Erdal Avcı, who were detained during the press statement organized by the HDP on November 21, 2021, on the charge of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911”...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 49th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for December 13.</p>
<p><u>Ferhat Tunç Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against artist Ferhat Tunç on the charge of “public incitement towards resentment and hostility” due to a social media post that criticised the referendum in 2017...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul Büyükçekmece 4th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The court decided to wait for the execution of the warrant issued against the artist, who resides abroad, and adjourned the hearing to October 26.</p>	<p><u>Hayko Bağdat Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Hayko Bağdat on the charge of “insulting the President” due to his expressions during a Bugün TV broadcast in 2015...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 51st Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The court decided to wait for the execution of the warrant issued against the journalist, who resides abroad, and to wait for a reply to the letter of rogatory, adjourning the hearing to February 16.</p>
<p><u>Hayri Demir Case</u></p>	<p><u>Newspaper Distributors Case</u></p>

<p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Hayri Demir on charges of “terrorist organisation membership” and “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” due to his journalistic activities in northern Syria...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 15th Assize Court Verdict: The next hearing was scheduled for September 28.</p>	<p>The lawsuit filed against newspaper distributors Mikail Tunçdemir and Ferhat Duman on charges of “wilfully aiding and abetting a terrorist organization” and “making propaganda for a terrorist organization”...</p> <p>Court: Van 5th Assize Court Verdict: The tribunal was excused from the hearing. The next hearing was scheduled for September 27.</p>
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HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

<p><u>Case Against Boğaziçi Protests</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 52 Boğaziçi University students on charges of “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911” and “depriving one of their freedom”...</p> <p>July 4, Monday at Istanbul 49th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p><u>Case Against Union Executives</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against the Health and Social Services Workers’ Union (SES) Co-Chair and 8 union executives on charges of “terrorist organisation membership” and “making propaganda for a terrorist organisation”...</p> <p>July 4, Monday at Ankara 22nd Assize Court</p>
<p><u>Nurcan Yalçın Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Nurcan Yalçın on charge of “wilfully aiding and abetting a terrorist organisation” due to the interviews she made during the curfews in Sur district of Diyarbakır...</p> <p>July 5, Tuesday at Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court</p>	<p><u>Case Against Protest on Canal İstanbul</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Community Centers Central Executive Council member Rüya Kurtuluş on the charge of “insulting the President” with a speech she gave after the protest organized by the “Either Canal, Or İstanbul Coordination” against the Canal İstanbul project was prevented on September 17, 2021...</p> <p>July 7, Thursday at Istanbul 48th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>