

Think, think...



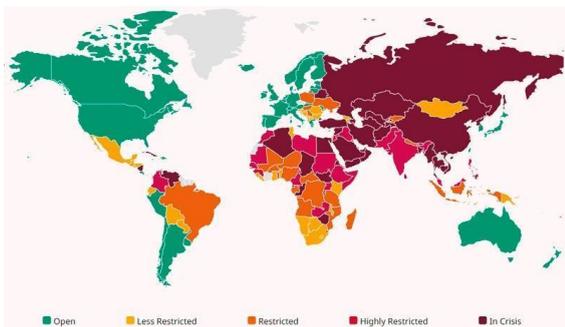
Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 29/22, July 29 2022)

What happened last week?

- The talks of the commission for the lifting of the immunity of Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Co-Chair and Diyarbakır MP Saliha Aydeniz started with discussions. Chairman of the Commission, Justice and Development Party (AKP) MP Yusuf Beyazıt, dismissed the press from the commission meeting. The Commission, by a majority of votes, decided to lift Aydeniz's immunity. Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and Republican People's Party (CHP) MPs voted against the decision. All of the summaries, which led to the dismissal of Aydeniz's immunity, are based on the prosecution's indictments prepared on charges of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstration marches" and "resisting the police to prevent duty".
- The price of eggs increased 100%. Erdoğan insists that things are going well in the economy. Erdoğan claimed that everyone owns a car in Turkey, in the live broadcast he attended. [According to Eurostat data](#), the number of vehicles per 1000 people in Turkey as of the end of 2020 is 281. With this data, Turkey ranks second from the last in Europe, while the Europe average is 602 cars. The Central Bank raised its year-end inflation expectation from 42.8% to 60.4%. In the meantime, USDTRY rate reached 18 this week...
- 202 citizens launched a joint statement and said, "We find the views and suggestions of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)'s imprisoned former Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş, including calls to 'exclude violence and lay down the arms', extremely important, valuable and sincere." The statement called on all political parties, parties and everyone to support peaceful and unifying statements and initiatives on this path.
- Even though Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ says, "There is no torture in our prisons and in Turkey. Those who do will find the law against them", the facts and applications refute this statement. Murat Aba, Diyarbakır Representative of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV), announced that 871 people applied to them in the last year on the grounds that they had been tortured.
- Human Rights Defenders Solidarity Network, of which we are a component, paid a solidarity visit to the Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER), whose 16 members and managers have been imprisoned for about 2 months.
- A deportation decision was made for Mohamed Isa Abdullah, the business owner of the Somali restaurant SAAB, which recently made the news with police raids in Ankara and had to change its signboard many times due to racist/discriminatory treatments and administrative harassment. Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Kocaeli Parliament Member Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu wrote on social media, "His crime was to operate the 'Saab' restaurant in accordance with the law in Kızılay! The police told him to 'Shut this place,' he was subjected to all kinds of racist and discriminatory treatment. He has a risk of death if he returns to his country!". Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA) Istanbul Parliament Member Mustafa Yeneroğlu said, "Mohamed from Somalia faces the threat of deportation because he does not remain

silent about the tyranny faced by blacks... That mentality continues: ‘We don't care about the law; and if we get too stuck, we will adapt it to the book and crush whatever/whoever is in front of us.’ They have determined that he has no so-called work permit... Mohamed is one of the owners of Saab Cafe. His crime is to be visible in the climate of xenophobia, which is resurrected due to the lack of policy of the government. All businesses of black people in Kızılay were treated the same, and all but SAAB gave up and left the country.”

- Peace Petition signatory, city planner and academic Fatma Gül Eryıldız was fired from her job at the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality on the grounds of a security investigation launched against her. Those who were dismissed from public service, and those dismissed from the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, both with Statutory Decrees, were first targeted by Süleyman Soylu and then by pro-government media organizations. It is known that the Metropolitan Municipality has so far dismissed or forced nearly 500 employees to resign for the same reason. Peace Academics and workers, who were dismissed from the municipality, started a sit-in protest in front of the municipality building.
- Cypriot Journalist Aysu Basri Akter, who came to Antalya for a vacation with her family, was sent back after being held at Antalya Airport for 19 hours with her children. Although Akter and her family were stated to have a "visa requirement" for their entry into Turkey, former Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President Mustafa Akıncı's press and communication consultant Ali Bizden, and researcher writer Ahmet An were previously not allowed in Turkey on the grounds that they were “harmful to national security”. Claims that Turkey has a "black list" of Cypriot opposition politicians, journalists and activists await clarification.
- Reactions continue against the warship Sao Paulo, which contains a high amount of asbestos, which is intended to be brought to İzmir Aliğa for dismantling. It was revealed that only 12% of the ship was inspected while the dangerous goods inventory report was being prepared, and certain parts were kept closed for inspection. While the presence of waste in Turkey is increasing day by day, its waste import has increased by 26 times in the last 20 years. 14 billion dollars of waste was imported in 2021 alone and 6.8 billion dollars in the first six months of 2022. The total amount of waste in Turkey is 34 million tons.



ARTICLE 19 Global Freedom of Expression Report: “Turkey in Crisis”

Article19 published the 2022 Global Freedom of Expression Report. According to the report, Turkey, which lost 3 points compared to last year and a total of 24 points in the last 10 years, ranked 141st among 161 countries with 7 points out of 100. Turkey is considered to be among the countries where freedom of

expression is in 'crisis' and ranks on the same level as Egypt, Iran, Myanmar and Burundi. Turkey is currently behind countries such as Russia, Iraq, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, Sudan and Afghanistan. [Please click here](#) for the full report.



Imprisonment claim against Demirtaş

The prosecution of former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş, who was charged with "targeting" the former Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Yüksel Kocaman due to his defense statement during a trial of a case filed against him, continued at the Ankara 25th Assize Court. Demirtaş has been sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in prison for "targeting a public official involved

in the fight against terrorism" within the scope of the case, but the appeal court found the sentence to be low and overturned the verdict. In the retrial, the prosecutor's office claimed a prison sentence of up to 8 years for Demirtaş. The hearing was adjourned to September 16.



DIAYDER Case adjourned

The latest hearing of the lawsuit filed against 23 members of the Religious Scholars Assistance and Solidarity Association (DIAYDER) was held at the Istanbul 14th Assize Court on charges of "terrorist organization membership" and "aiding a terrorist organization" on the grounds of taking part in activities of the association, and that they gave sermons in Kurdish. The request for

release of Ekrem Baran, the arrested president of the association, was rejected, the hearing was adjourned to October 21. Meanwhile, in the closure case against the association at the Bakırköy 1st Civil Court of First Instance, the court decided to stop the association's activities "as a precaution". The police went to the association building and sealed the door of the association.



Constitutional Court approves penalty against "mother tongue" action in school

The Constitutional Court ruled on February 21, World Mother Language Day, that the disciplinary sanctions imposed on teachers who taught the importance of mother tongue in class were not a violation of freedom of expression.

In 2016, upon the call of the Education and Science Workers' Union (Eğitim-Sen), 22 educators explained the importance of the mother tongue in their classes and were thereby punished with reprimands and deductions from their salaries for "faulty fulfillment of the assigned duty or negligence". The supreme court argued that the educators "treated a subject that was not included in the curriculum in class, contrary to the policies and the principles determined by the state in this area", and that a proportional intervention was made with lighter sentences instead of the heaviest penalization for such actions.



Compensation against news article returns from Constitutional Court

The Constitutional Court ruled that it was a violation of press freedom and freedom of expression that journalist Hacı Boğatekin was sentenced to compensation for his article titled "Imam's dream failed" published in Gerger Fırat Daily in 2012. The file was sent to the Gerger Civil Court of First Instance for a retrial in order to eliminate the consequences of the violation. The Constitutional Court also ruled

that the journalist's right to a fair trial within a reasonable time was violated with the trial lasting 6 years within the scope of the file, deciding 30,000 TL to be paid to Boğatekin in non-pecuniary damages.



Access block against two news of ours

The Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Court of Peace imposed an access block on the news article, titled, "Journalists Ergün and Sezer's trial adjourned" published on our website on December 23, 2021 regarding the lawsuits and investigations against the journalists due to their news on the bribery allegations against the former lawyer of the President, Mustafa Doğan İnal; as well as on the news, titled, "Investigation into Bianet's news about the lawsuit against journalists" published on May 25, 2022. With the same decree, 130 different

news articles and social media content, including 2 of our news articles, were censored as well.



Police intervenes 'justice watch' by KESK in Ankara

The police intervened in the press statement that was organized in front of the Human Rights Monument in Ankara within the scope of the "Justice Watch" protest initiated by the members of the Confederation of Public Workers' Unions (KESK). The Confederation Headquarters was taken under a police

blockade. The trade unionists, who were not allowed to leave the building, were prevented from going in front of the Human Rights Monument with police shields and tear gas.



Police intervenes against Uyghur Turks voicing their demands

The police intervened against the Uyghur Turks, who could not contact their relatives living in China since 2016 and who came in front of the Eyüpsultan Mosque, where President Erdoğan holds his Friday prayers, to make their voices heard. The police said that they would not allow 81-year-old Mahmut

Tohti Amin, who was holding the Eastern Turkestan flag, to open the flag. Amin's finger was broken and his eyebrow was wounded after he wanted to raise the flag and fell on the ground during the brawl.



Young people detained over banner

A team took to the field at the Kemal Kurkut Soccer Tournament organized by the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly in Istanbul and opened a banner about the Roboski and Zaho massacres, so the police battered and detained 11 people. 7 Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members, who held the banner that said, "Detainments cannot intimidate the youth" to

protest the detainments in Istanbul, were also detained in Antalya.



Mersin Pride Week events banned

LGBTQI+ themed events were banned in Mersin for 15 days. The Mersin Governorate banned all protests and activities such as demonstration marches, meetings, press statements, film screenings, festivals, leaflet distributions, conferences, seminars, and sports competitions to be held throughout the

province within the scope of Pride Week for 15 days.



11 villages detained in Fatsa

11 of the villagers, who protested against the redirection of the water source of Fatsa Sefaköyü to a private trout farm, were detained during the gendarmerie intervention. During the intervention, remarks of the gendarmerie drew attention, who said, 'There is no press freedom at the moment. Do not take a video,

we will show you how the law works'.



Police violence against women and journalists during protest for Istanbul Convention

The Confederation of Public Workers' Unions (KESK) member women, who wanted to organize a protest in Ankara against the decision of the Council of State that approved the annulment of the Istanbul Convention, were

prevented by the police. The police did not allow a statement to be made, battered women and journalists.



Book on those died in Suruç Massacre banned

The book "Going to Kobane with the Language of Those Who Remain in Suruç", written by journalist Arzu Demir and published by Ceylan Publishing, which tells the lives of 33 people who died in the Suruç Massacre, was confiscated on the grounds of "making

terroristic propaganda". Another book of the same publishing house, called "Women's Revolution," was pulled off shelves.



Journalist Kerem Kırpaç attacked

Journalist Kerem Kırpaç was attacked and battered by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Birecik Mayor Mahmut Mirkelam for covering the press statement of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Birecik District Organization regarding the incomplete work on the Birecik Halfeti Cultural Road in Urfa.



Journalists detained and battered

Journalists Vedat Örüç and Elif Kurttaş, who went to Adana Recycling Industrialists' Site to follow up news on waste imports, were detained by the bosses and employees of recycling companies. They were threatened and battered.



Access block against Etkin News Agency

Diyarbakır 4th Criminal Court of Peace imposed an access block on the website of Etkin News Agency on the grounds of "protection of national security and public

safety". Thus, the agency's website was censored for the second time in a week, for the 44th time in total.



Festival canceled due to 'alcohol and music ban'

The Kozlu Music Festival, which was organized for the second time in the Kozlu district of Zonguldak between July 28 and 31, was canceled by the district governorate on the grounds of "prohibition of alcohol sales

between 22.00 and 06.00" and the "music ban after 12 a.m.".



Governorate cancels Gülşen concert in Şile

The concert of singer Gülşen, who was recently targeted for her stage outfits, that was organized in Şile was banned by the district governorate. In the statement made by the district governorate, it was shown that the business that wanted to organize the concert did not have a 'Live Music Permit'.



HDP Provincial Chair and municipal assembly members detained in Mersin

Warrants were issued against 31 people in Mersin, including the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Chair Bedriye Kuş, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Assembly members of the Akdeniz Municipality, Nevzat Baran, Ali Tanrıverdi, Nuriye Aslan and

Mehmet Bitkin on charges of 'terrorist organization membership' and 'making propaganda for a terrorist organization'.



Constitutional Court rules rights violation in mandatory religious course

The Constitutional Court (AYM) ruled that the rejection of the application of an atheist student, who wanted to be exempted from the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course, was unconstitutional and decided to pay the student and their parents 20 thousand TL in

non-pecuniary damages.



Investigation against expression: “Hunger equals Recep Tayyip Erdoğan”

An investigation has been launched against Republican People’s Party (CHP) Assembly Member of Parliament Eren Erdem for insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for posting on Twitter with the caption, "Hunger equals Recep Tayyip Erdoğan". In his post in January, Erdem has written, "While the Justice

and Development Party (AKP) Chairman and the palace society lived a luxurious and pompous palace life with the taxes of the nation, the taxpayer nation was condemned to poverty and misery. The palace society does not care. Only a populist ruling would think of its citizens. That’s why, #HungerEqualsRecepTayyipErdoğan.”



Police department orders rectorate to launch investigation against student

Ankara Provincial Police Department sent a letter to the Middle East Technical University (METU) Rectorate requesting that an administrative investigation be launched against Political Science and Public Administration student Tunahan Gözlügöl,

following the Prosecutor verdict on “non-prosecution”, with the demand that the university Rectorate launch an administrative investigation against the student. The Rectorate, on the other hand, mixed the incidents and asked the student’s defense statement for another student activity.



Commerce ministry censors LGBTQI+ supporting ad

The Advertising Board of the Ministry of Commerce decided to stop the H&M clothing company's advertising video, titled, "The Family I Chose." Stating that the word "LGBTQ" in the advertisement requires the warning "18+", the board claimed that this

situation "negatively affects the mental, moral, psychological and social development characteristics of children and young people, and is intended to disrupt or change cultural and moral social behaviours". Opposition annotations were not included in the decision on the official website of the Ministry, and it was portrayed that the decision was taken unanimously. However, the decision was taken with 10 votes against 8, including the Turkish Medical Association (TTB). [Please click here](#) for details.



Access blocks

With two separate decrees issued by the Sivas 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace, the news article published on Diken News Portal on Sivas Governor Yılmaz Şimşek, who faced complaints at the Interior Ministry on the grounds that he had unlawful relations with Izmir-based Sintan Inc., as well as the news on the access block imposed against that news

article, were censored.

The tweets of journalist Metin Cihan, who shared the allegations and correspondence regarding Justice and Development Party (AKP) Deputy Chairman Nurettin Canikli's eviction of companies transferred to the Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF), were blocked from access by Istanbul Anatolian 1st and 2nd Criminal Judicatures of Peace.

The news about the suspicious death of Yılmaz Ekinci, who was held in Aydın Type-E Prison, was blocked with a decree issued by the Aydın 1st Criminal Court of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of Peace imposed an access block against the news published with the title, "Tender society!" on the website of BirGün Daily on July 14 regarding the tenders won by the President of Science Dissemination Society President Yusuf Tülün's relatives from public institutions.

The Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace imposed an access block against the news about the management of the company that bought the giant land of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in Levent included the managers of companies that received numerous tenders from the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) period, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

Bursa 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace imposed an access block against the news about the child locked in the garbage house in Bursa upon the request of the Bursa Family and Social Services Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

Istanbul 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace imposed an access block against the news about the interview video of artist Selçuk Ural and related news, in which he made some statements about his son Hakan Ural, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.



Court of Cassation overturns life sentence against torturer police officers

The Court of Cassation overturned the life sentence for the police officers who tortured and killed Murat Konuş, who was detained in Istanbul in 2009, on the grounds of "incomplete investigation". In the case that was concluded in 2019, the Istanbul 2nd Assize Court acquitted 3 of the police officers on trial, and 4

police officers were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment for "causing death as a result of torture", but reduced the sentence and sentenced them to life imprisonment, also not issuing an arrest warrant for the defendants and imposing the condition of 'judicial measures'. In order to better understand the local court decree in terms of determining which defendants were involved in the injuries that led to cerebral hemorrhage; the 8th Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals requested that the police station images be examined in detail

and a report to be prepared by an expert. The family's lawyer Nuri Köse, emphasizing that the murder of Konuş as a result of torture is proven with camera recordings, witness statements and Forensic Medicine reports, said, "The fact that the perpetrators of the murder have been walking freely on the street for about 13 years without facing any judicial or administrative sanctions, and the uncertainty of when the trial will end has increased the pain of our clients many times over."



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

* There are no hearings for the cases we are following next week due to the judicial recess.