

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 7/24, February 16, 2024)

What happened last week?

- Mountains of cyanide and sulfuric acid collapsed at the Çöpler gold mine site in İliç, Erzincan, operated by Anagold Mining; according to official figures, 9 mine workers were trapped under the landslide. The mine, which was meters away from the Euphrates water basin, which had previously come to the agenda with news of "cyanide leakage" and which the public had called for its closure, was not closed, and the capacity was allowed to be increased with the approval of Murat Kurum, then Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. Experts are worried that the accident will result in an even bigger environmental disaster.
 - Istanbul 11th Administrative Court ruled that the action of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change was not in accordance with the law and canceled the zoning plan in the annulment case filed by IBB regarding the zoning plan of Canal Istanbul.
 - President Erdoğan paid a visit to Egypt after 11 years. General Abdulfettah al-Sisi, who ousted the Muslim Brotherhood from power in a military coup in the days following the Arab Spring, was targeted by Erdoğan with the words "murderer". In a joint press statement, Erdoğan said that he expected his "brother" Sisi to visit Ankara as soon as possible.
 - Prof. Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of the Turkish Medical Association, has once again been targeted for her 2005 Forensic Medicine report in which she described the torture of detainees in the 1999 investigation into the Adnan Oktar sect. [A letter](#) of solidarity has been published for Fincancı, who has built her academic and professional experience on "documenting torture", of which our initiative is a signatory...
 - Following the decision of the 5th Chamber of the Council of State to reinstate more than 400 judges and prosecutors, Erdoğan once again targeted the high judiciary. "It is not possible for us to remain silent on this decision of the Council of State," Erdoğan said, also targeting the Constitutional Court in the same speech: "I can't digest these decisions of the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court's frequent decisions of this kind seriously disturb us"...
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Members and executives of Göç İz Der acquitted

The verdict was announced in the trial of 23 members and executives of the Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER) who were accused of being members of an illegal organization due to their activities, statements and reports. All defendants were acquitted in the case held at Istanbul 26th High Criminal Court. The lawsuit filed for the dissolution of the association continues.



6 media workers detained in Izmir

Mezopotamya Agency reporters Semra Turan, Delal Akyüz and Tolga Güney, JINNEWS reporter Melike Aydın, Gazete Duvar reporter Cihan Başakçioğlu and Mezopotamya Agency reporters Semra Turan, Delal Akyüz and Tolga Güney, JINNEWS reporter Melike Aydın and Gazete Duvar reporter Cihan Başakçioğlu were

detained in house raids by Izmir police in the morning. Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) press worker Fatma Funda Akbulut was also detained during the raids.



İHD "İliç Observation Delegation" detained

IHD Dersim Branch Co-Chairs Gürbüz Solmaz and Gönül Sonbahar, along with association members Nilüfer Akdağ and Gökmen Yeşil, who were part of the Human Rights Association's observation committee formed to observe the site of the mine collapse in Erzincan İliç, were detained.



İliç anti-gold mine activist detained

Sedat Cezayirlioğlu, an environmental activist known for his statements against the gold mine in İliç, Erzincan, which had previously come to the agenda with news of cyanide leakage, was detained for the last video he posted on his social media account after the latest accident at the mine. In his statement, Cezayirlioğlu said, "Right now you have dragged not only Turkey but the

world into a disaster. The 3rd largest gold mine in the world. The world's biggest disaster is happening at Çöpler Gold Mine. Billions of tons of 39 different carcinogenic deadly

chemicals exploded. It was the biggest disaster not in Turkey, but in the world. Go and pay for it now," he said.



Economist Mustafa Sönmez acquitted

Economist Mustafa Sönmez, who faced the judge at Istanbul 30th Criminal Court of First Instance on charges of insulting President Erdoğan, was acquitted. The economist, who was on trial for 3 social media posts, was acquitted of the fifth case he was tried for "insulting Erdoğan" with this decision.



Police intervention against "Great Freedom March" protest in Urfa

The police intervened in Urfa on the 14th day of the "Great Freedom March", which was launched from Van and Kars provinces to demand an end to the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan.



Third verdict in the Gülen Movement Media Structure case

Istanbul 26th High Criminal Court announced its third verdict in the trial held after the Court of Cassation's second reversal. Journalists Nazlı Ilıcak was sentenced to 5 years and 3 months, Ahmet Altan to 6 years, 3 months and 18 days, Fevzi Yazıcı to 1 year and 13 months on the

charge of "knowingly and willingly aiding and abetting the organization without being a member of the hierarchical structure within the organization". The court acquitted Yakup Şimşek.



Four detained lawyers arrested

Nazan Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı, Seda Şaraldı and Didem Baydar Ünsal, headquarters executive of the Contemporary Lawyers Association and People's Law Office lawyer Nazan Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı, Seda Şaraldı and Didem Baydar Ünsal, who were detained within the investigation launched after the armed attack on Istanbul Çağlayan Courthouse, were arrested.



Journalist Şükran Ekinci called to testify

Journalist Şükran Ekinci was summoned to testify on charges of "disseminating misleading information" due to her social media post on the allegations that the number of workers trapped under the cave-in after the landslide at the İliç Gold Mine was higher than official figures.



Judicial fine against Nagihan Yılın

Journalist Nagihan Yılın was sentenced to a judicial fine of 7 thousand Turkish Liras in the "insulting a public official" case in which she was prosecuted for her news article titled "Corruption and bribery network revealed in the governorship" upon the complaint of former Gaziantep Governor Davut Gül. The news article was blocked from access upon the application of Governor Gül.



Zafer Arapkirli convicted

Journalist Zafer Arapkirli was sentenced to 442 days in prison in a lawsuit filed due to "insult" upon the complaint of former Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu and Gendarmerie General Commander Arif Çetin. The sentence was converted into a fine of 8,840 TL. Arapkirli's social media post, which was published in BirGün newspaper, read: "This is how 7 thousand people passed the Gendarmerie exam. FETÖ members were deciphered." He had quoted and commented on the news article.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

<p><u>Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Trial</u></p> <p>The retrial of journalists İhsan Yaşar, İshak Yasul, Mehmet Ali Çelebi, Mizgin Fendik, Pınar Tarlak, Reyhan Hacıoğlu and Hicran Urun on charges of "illegal organization membership", "printing or publishing the publications of terrorist organizations", "inciting the public to hatred and hostility", "making illegal organization propaganda" and "praising the crime and the criminal"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 23rd High Criminal Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on May 9th.</p>	<p><u>Case Against Eskişehir Pride March</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 8 people who were beaten and detained during the 2022 Eskişehir Pride March due to "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations"...</p> <p>Court: Eskişehir 4th Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The trial will resume on March 1.</p>
<p><u>Ramazan Ölçen Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Ramazan Ölçen, the owner of Azadiya Welat newspaper, which was shut down by a state of emergency decree, due to "being an illegal organization member"...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 11th Assize Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on July 17.</p>	<p><u>Bülent Kılıç Case</u></p> <p>In 2021, the lawsuit filed against AgenceFrance-Presse (AFP) photojournalist Bülent Kılıç, who was detained under torture while covering the Istanbul Pride March, due to "resisting to prevent the execution of his duty" and "insulting a public officer for his duty"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 19th Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on September 19.</p>
<p><u>Left Party Declaration Case</u></p> <p>2023 general elections, four members of the SOL Party were charged with "insulting the president" for distributing a leaflet before the general elections.</p> <p>Court: Bolu 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The participation request of Erdoğan's lawyer was accepted. The trial will continue on May 6.</p>	<p><u>Case Against HDP Statement</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 11 members of the party's Central Executive Committee (MYK) due to the HDP's April 24, 2021 statement titled "Face the shame of the Armenian Genocide!" on charges of "denigrating the state" (Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code)...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 48th Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on March 21.</p>

Metin Cihan Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Metin Cihan and his news source accused of "unlawfully obtaining and disseminating personal data" for sharing documents showing the corruption of TÜGVA...

Court: Istanbul 22nd Criminal Court of First Instance

Hearing outcome: The hearing was held over the file upon the excuse of the parties.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

<p><u>Özgür Gündem // Eren Keskin, Hüseyin Aykol, Reyhan Çapan</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Özgür Gündem newspaper, which was shut down by the Decree Law (KHK) and whose defendants include Eren Keskin, Hüseyin Aykol, Reyhan Çapan, Ayşe Batumlu and Hasan Başak...</p> <p>Tuesday, February 20; Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court</p>	<p><u>Lawsuit Against Journalists</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed in 2015 and 2018 against journalists Haluk Kalafat and Elif Akgül, who were charged with "publicly degrading the Turkish nation" (Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code) due to their news articles published on bianet about research books on the Armenian Genocide...</p> <p>Tuesday, February 20; Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p><u>Hayko Bağdat Trial</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Hayko Bağdat due to "insulting the President" and "public incitement to hatred and hostility"...</p> <p>Wednesday, February 21; Istanbul 50th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p><u>Hayri Demir Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Hayri Demir due to "membership to a terrorist organization" and "terrorist organization propaganda" on the grounds of his journalistic activity in northern Syria...</p> <p>Wednesday, February 21; Ankara 15th High Criminal Court</p>
<p><u>Journalists Accused of "Insulting" Erdoğan's Lawyer</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 2 journalists and Independent Turkish Editor-in-Chief Nevzat Çiçek, accused of "insulting" and "slander" President Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal due to the interview conducted by journalist Can Bursalı about the allegations in the book "Metastaz 2: Cendere" written by journalist Barış Terkoğlu and published on Independent Turkish website on December 3, 2020...</p> <p>Thursday, February 22; Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p><u>Journalist Fırat Bulut Trial</u></p> <p>On February 6, the lawsuit filed against journalist Fırat Bulut on charges of "publicly disseminating misleading information" due to his social media posts about the earthquakes...</p> <p>Thursday, February 22; Elbistan 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>

Safiye Alağaç Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Safiye Alağaç on charges of "terrorist organization", citing the news she wrote and JinNews' editorial policy as "evidence"...

Thursday, February 22; Diyarbakır 5th High Criminal Court

Gökhan Yavuzel Case

The lawsuit filed against writer Gökhan Yavuzel, who was charged with "insulting the President" for his post about Deniz Poyraz, who was murdered in the attack on the HDP building...

Friday, February 23; Şanlıurfa 4th Criminal Court of First Instance

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