

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 13/24, April 5, 2024)

What happened last week?

- Turkey left the March 31 local elections behind. For the first time in its history, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) failed to emerge as the first party. The Republican People's Party (CHP), which became the first party for the first time in 47 years since 1977, won 35 provincial municipalities, including 14 metropolitan municipalities. CHP also won the majority of the municipal councils in metropolitan cities, especially in Istanbul and Ankara, where it had won the mayoralty in the previous local elections but failed to secure a majority in the municipal councils.
 - In many provincial and district municipalities that have fallen to the AKP, the ruling party's objections are delaying the issuance of the winning candidates' mazbatas. The opposition sees these appeals as an attempt to buy time to remove documents that would expose irregularities by former municipal administrations.
 - In his "balcony speech", which has become a tradition on election nights, President Erdoğan took the stage only with his wife Emine Erdoğan. "We got the message, the elections are behind us, there will be no polls for four years," Erdoğan said in an attempt to forestall demands for early elections.
 - DEM Party candidate Abdullah Zeydan, who won the Van Metropolitan Municipality elections by a landslide, was denied his mazbat by the provincial election board. Citing an old conviction against Zeydan and claiming that he "did not have the right to vote", the board wanted to give it to the AKP candidate who came second in the elections. The decision was protested in Van and elsewhere in the country. After appeals to the Supreme Electoral Board, it was announced that Zeydan would be given the mazbat.
 - In most Kurdish provinces, especially Şırnak, Mardin, Ağrı, Kars, Siirt and Kars, information and images of voters who had moved from out of the provinces casting ballots raised doubts about the security of the elections.
 - The Constitutional Court annulled the 2020 Law on the Prevention of Terrorism Financing, which allowed the Ministry of Interior to appoint trustees to associations.
-



Conviction verdict for Erdem Avşar

Yeniçağ Daily's Editor-in-Chief Erdem Avşar, who was put on trial due to a news article about the allegations raised by Sedat Peker against Serhat Albayrak, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of Turkvaz Media Group, which is known to be close to the government, was acquitted of

"insult" and sentenced to 1 year and 15 days in prison for "slander".



Judicial fine for Dilan Esen

In the lawsuit filed against journalist Dilan Esen due to "insulting a public official" upon the complaint of Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy, Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced the journalist to a judicial fine.



Prison sentence for Uğur Koç

Uğur Koç, Managing Editor of BirGün newspaper, was sentenced to 11 months and 20 days in prison for "insulting the President" due to Erdoğan's picture in the background of a news article. Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance suspended the sentence.



Prison sentences for ETHA partners

Lawyer Sezgin Keleş filed a criminal complaint against ETHA News Agency for "making terrorist organization propaganda under the guise of journalism" about news reports published by the news agency, which were not related to him, and agency partners Mehmet Acettin and Pınar Gayıp were

convicted. Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance postponed the 6 months and 7 days

imprisonment sentence given to Pınar Gayıp and issued a supervision order for the journalist, but did not postpone the 7 months and 15 days imprisonment sentence given to Acettin.



Journalist Bascan acquitted

BirGün newspaper editor Gökay Başcan, who was charged with "insult" due to a news report on an amendment to the Environmental Law that authorized the Environment Agency, established under Emine Erdoğan's patronage, to award tenders for all coastal areas, was acquitted.



Concert ban decision canceled

The appeal against the ban on the concert that the Mesopotamia Cultural Center wanted to hold in Adana in 2021 as part of its 30th anniversary celebrations has been concluded. Adana Regional Administrative Court annulled the governorate's ban on the grounds that it "eliminates the essence of the right".



6 detained in Bayram Street

6 participants of Yeryüzü Sofraları, who wanted to organize a fast-breaking meal in solidarity with the residents of Bayram Street in Taksim, Istanbul, where transgender people reside and which was recently evacuated by police force, were detained.



Post-election detentions

The Interior Ministry announced that a large number of people were detained in Kurdish provinces, especially Van, the day after the elections. According to the figures announced by the Ministry, 26 citizens were detained in Van, 29 in Yüksekova, 9 in Hakkari, 5 in Batman, 10 in Şırnak and 6 in İzmir. On April 3, 132 people, including

lawyers and rights defenders, were detained during the protests in Van after the elected mayors were denied their mazbat.



Rojin Akın acquitted

Journalists Emrah Erdoğan and Rojin Akın were charged with "illegal organization membership" for their interviews and photographs taken in Rojava region in 2015. The court acquitted Rojin Akın, while Emrah Erdoğan's case was separated.



Hacı Bogatekin acquitted

Journalist Hacı Boğatekin, who was arrested and convicted on charges of "praising the criminal" (TCK 215) for his article "FETÖ and APO" published in the Gerger Fırat newspaper, was acquitted in the trial held after the Constitutional Court's retrial decision.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Eren Keskin & Gülistan Yarkın Trial

The lawsuit filed against IHD Co-Chair/TIHV Founders' Founding Member Eren Keskin and IHD Commission Against Racism & Discrimination member Güllistan Yarkın for the Armenian Genocide commemoration organized in 2021...

Court: Istanbul 51st Criminal Court of First Instance

Trial outcome: The prosecution asked for the defendants to be convicted of "insulting the Turkish nation". The next hearing will be held on May 2.

Furkan Karabay Case

The lawsuit filed against journalist Furkan Karabay, a reporter for the news website Gerçek Gündem, due to "insulting" Deputy Justice Ministers Akın Gürlek and Hasan Yılmaz and Constitutional Court Member İrfan Fidan through a tweet he shared...

Court: Ankara 16th Criminal Court of First Instance

Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on September 18.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Elif Akgül Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Elif Akgül due to "chained illegal organization propaganda" for two tweets she shared five years apart...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on June 27.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ETHA Reporters Trial</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 23 people, including Etkin News Agency (ETHA) reporters İsmi naz Temel and Havva Cuştan, Law Office of the Oppressed (EHB) lawyers Sezin Uçar and Özlem Gümüşt aş and Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) members, on charges of "membership to an armed terrorist organization" and "making propaganda for an illegal organization"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 27th High Criminal Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on July 3.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Osman Akın and Veysi Sarısözen Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against former Yeni Yaşam newspaper Managing Editor Osman Akın and columnist Veysi Sarısözen due to "making illegal organization propaganda"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on September 5.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Saturday Mothers Trial</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 46 people who were detained during the 700th week meeting of Saturday Mothers demanding justice by staging sit-in protests at Galatasaray Square since 1995, due to "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 21st Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on September 13.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ferhat Tunç Trial</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against artist Ferhat Tunç due to "making illegal organization propaganda" through his social media posts...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 37th Assize Court Hearing outcome: The trial will continue on June 28.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Perihan Kaya Case</u></p> <p>The retrial of journalist Perihan Kaya, who was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in prison for "making illegal organization propaganda" due to her social media posts and journalistic activities...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 10th Assize Court Hearing outcome: The trial will resume on November 1.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Case Against Bosphorus Pride March</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 70 students, who were beaten and detained by the police during the Pride March organized at Boğaziçi University in 2022, due to "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 58th Criminal Court of First Instance Hearing outcome: The prosecutor declared his final opinion on the case and demanded that the students be sentenced. The trial will continue on October 4th.</p>	

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

There will be no hearings due to the holiday week.

**All news of the week is available at dusun-think.net;
You can also access the pdf format of the bulletin at dusun-think.net/bultenler.**