



# Think, think...

## Freedom of Expression Weekly Bulletin

(Issue 20/19, 17 May 2019)

### What happened last week?

\*\*\* High Electoral Council (YSK) has denied applications of Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Good (İYİ) Party, requesting the cancellations of all district mayorship elections in Istanbul as well as the Presidential elections on June 24th and the Parliament membership general elections for the 27th Session based on "complete unlawfulness."

\*\*\* President Erdoğan ordered his party organization to hold the re-election campaign for Istanbul to be made on "the votes having been stolen."

\*\*\* Erdoğan has targeted artists supporting Ekrem İmamoğlu: "*Artists are not sycophants,*"

\*\*\* Erdoğan criticised TUSIAD High Advisory Board Chairman Tuncay Özilhan, who said that the country is tired of election marathons and that the economy's recovery requires healing of systems of law and justice in Turkey. "*Everyone hits Turkey from the outside, but I know how to ask account for the hits coming from the inside,*" Erdoğan said.

\*\*\* Following the decision to re-hold mayorship elections in Istanbul, Council of Europe announced that they are planning to send a monitoring delegation. Council of Europe's Local and Regional Administrations Congress Chairman Anders Knape stated that they are in serious worry.

\*\*\* Istanbul Governorate banned banners and slogans that say, "Everything will be well." The phrase has become slogan for İmamoğlu's campaign. **(Details below...)**

\*\*\* Justice Minister stated, "Meeting ban against Öcalan was revoked." The lawyers have requested periodic meetings with Öcalan following the revocation of the unlawful ban.

\*\*\* In the lawsuit filed on the stopping of the trucks belonging to the Turkish National Intelligence, the file against Adalar Mayor Erdem Gül was abated and Republican People's Party (CHP) MP Enis Berberoğlu was not sentenced. The prosecution of Dündar will continue on October 31st. **(Details below...)**

\*\*\* Journalists Yavuz Selim Demirağ and İdris Özyol were attacked. **(Details below...)**

\*\*\* The number of yellow press cards, used as the government as a tool to increase the pressure against journalists, decreased to 14,759 in April 2019. Yellow press cards of 2,397 journalists were annulled in the last three years.

\*\*\* Expected government deficit was 80,6 billion TL in 2019. However, the deficit was 54.5 billion TL only in the first four months of the year.

\*\*\* Unemployment rate was 14.7 percent in February, according to data by the Turkish Statistical Institute. There are 4 million 730 thousand unemployed people in Turkey.

\*\*\* Worries arise that the government may lead to rapid increase in the inflation and currency exchange rates as it tries to compensate the budget with Central Bank resources. Credit rating

organisation Moody's announced that Turkey's credit grade will be lowered in case an active policy to decrease inflationist pressure is not followed.

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## **“Teacher Ayşe” to stand trial again on June 26**

The first hearing of the retrial of Ayşe Çelik, who was released with a Constitutional Decree, will be held on June 26th, Wednesday at Bakırköy 2nd Assize Court, starting at 09:30. The disobedient civilians, who were prosecuted with “Teacher Ayşe,” will continue to take their seats in the

courthouse as defendants in the case, get acquitted and therefore reveal the unlawfulness during the judicial process convicting Ayşe Çelik, not leaving her alone.

## **“Peace Academic” Tuna Altinel arrested**

Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Tuna Altinel, one of the academics on trial due to “making illegal organization propaganda” through signing the “Peace Petition” of the Academics for Peace, was arrested. Lyon-1 University faculty member Altinel was arrested with the allegation of “making terrorist organization propaganda” in accordance with Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Law (TMK) due to participating in a conference organized in France.



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## **Governorate ban against “Everything will be well”**

In the fifth anniversary of the disaster in Soma, where 301 workers have lost their lives, a march was organized in Istanbul. A banner with the writing, “Everything will be well,” on it was not permitted during the march. The police claimed that

the banner was prohibited upon a non-written order by Istanbul Governorate. [Please click here](#) for details.



## **Teachers protesting dismissals with emergency decrees arrested for the fifth time**

Teachers Nursel Tanrıverdi and Selvi Polat, who were protesting for re-employment at Bakırköy square after having been dismissed from public

service with emergency decrees, were arrested for the fifth time. The two teachers have previously been arrested four times and released due to “organizing illegal meetings and demonstrations” and were detained for more than 30 times during their protest in Bakırköy. Six different lawsuits they stood trial on due to the same charges related to the protests have been concluded with acquittal.

## **“MIT Trucks” Case: Lawsuit against Erdem Gül abated, Enis Berberoğlu not sentenced**

In the lawsuit filed on the stopping of the trucks belonging to the Turkish National Intelligence, the file against Adalar Mayor Erdem Gül was abated and Republican People’s Party (CHP) MP Enis Berberoğlu was not sentenced. The prosecution of Dündar will continue on October 31st. [Please click here](#) for details.



## **Journalist Seda Taşkın convicted due to “propaganda,” acquitted of “aiding illegal organization”**

6th Criminal Chamber of Erzurum Regional Court (Appeal Court) reversed the 7.5 years of imprisonment issued by the local court against Mezopotamya Agency reporter Seda Taşkın. The appeal

court sentenced an imprisonment sentence against Taşkın for 1 year, 11 months and 11 days due to “making terrorist organization propaganda” and deferred the announcement of the verdict. [Please click here](#) for details.



## Another lawsuit filed against arrested journalist İdris Yılmaz

A new lawsuit was filed against arrested journalist İdris Yılmaz due to “terrorist organization membership” and “making terrorist organization propaganda.”

Yılmaz indicated that he is being avenged due to reporting the unlawfulness in Erciş district of Van, saying, “They will continue performing the unlawfulness, I will continue pursuing journalism.” [Please click here](#) for details.



## Attacked journalists

Türkiyem TV producer and Yeniçağ Daily writer Yavuz Selim Demirağ was attacked in front of his house. Seriously beaten with sticks, Demirağ was taken to the hospital. Six detained people were released upon order by the Prosecutor’s Office after legal processes at the Security office.

An unidentified group has attacked Akdeniz’de Yeni Yüzyıl Daily writer İdris Özyol in Antalya. Özyol was wounded in the attack organized in front of the newspaper building. Özyol was also threatened by Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) District Chairman Talu Bilgili because of this. [Please click here](#) for details.



## Summaries against MPs

Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office prepared two separate summaries, demanding the revocation of People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Ahmet Şık’s Parliamentary immunity. The first summary asserted that Şık has committed an offense in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) through

denigrating the Turkish government and judiciary. The other summary was prepared due to “insulting the President.” [Please click here](#) for details. 33 new summaries were sent to the Parliamentary Speaker’s Office with the claim to revoke the legislative immunities of 21 MPs, including HDP MP Leyla Güven, to be revoked. [Please click here](#) for details.



## Lawsuit against Osman Baydemir due to speeches in 2017

A lawsuit was filed against People's Democratic Party (HDP) former MP Osman Baydemir due to the speeches he gave at the group meeting in Van as well as at the "Conscience and Justice Watch." [Please click here](#) for details.



## Police attack 9th Pride March in METU

The police took Middle East Technical University (METU) campus under blockade before the 9th Pride March, that was banned by the Rectorate, and attacked students participating in the March. Intervening the students, who started to gather for the Pride March, the police detained 17 students and one

student was injured in the head with a rubber bullet shot by the police.



## Access bans

Istanbul Bakırköy 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace has brought an access ban against the news on AKP member Esenler Mayor Tevfik Göksu targeting CHP member Istanbul Mayor Candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu with hate speech. The access ban was issued following the request of Göksu, based on the allegation that the

AKP mayor's "personal rights" were attacked with the news. An access ban was brought against the website of woman-focused JinNews agency by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) with a decree issued by Ankara 6th Criminal Judicature of Peace.



## RTÜK penalties

Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) issued a penalty of primetime news blackout for two days against TELE1 channel. The penalty was based on the channel broadcasting the speech of People's Democratic Party (HDP)

Chairman Sezai Temelli at the Parliament. Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) has penalized journalist Zafer Arapkırlı's show Seyr-i Sabah on RS FM with 5 administrative fines and 5 blackouts. The penalty was based on the criticisms against police violence during the Gezi Park protests. [Please click here](#) for details.



## “Security threat” suggested as reason for Cumhuriyet and Evrensel Daily not permitted inside prison

The objection made by convicts Talet Şanlı and Tamer Korkmaz in the High Security Prison in Van due to not being allowed to read Cumhuriyet and Evrensel

Daily in prison was denied. The prison administration had prevented the two newspapers from being given to the convicts due to reporting hunger strikes in the issues on March 19th. Van Executive Judicature denied the application and claimed that the two newspapers have “endangered prison security with the publishing policy and the reported news.” [Please click here](#) for details.

### Haluk Savaş Yaşasın! Let Haluk Savas, M.D. Live!



## Petition campaign for Haluk Savaş

Prof. Dr. Haluk Savaş has previously been dismissed with an emergency decree, imprisoned for a while and was later prosecuted and acquitted. Despite the travel ban against Savaş was revoked, he can't leave the country for his cancer

treatment. Psychotherapist Savaş has been dismissed from his position at Gaziantep University Medical Psychiatry Faculty with an emergency decree and he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer as he was arrested. His passport was not handed to him and therefore his “right to medical access” is being violated. The academic announced on Twitter that he can not leave the country for his medical treatment, sating, “Emergency decrees convict us to die inside the country.” [Please click here](#) to join the petition campaign started for Savaş with the title, “Let Haluk Savaş Live”.



## TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- The second hearing of the lawsuit filed against former Evrensel Daily Editor-In-Chief Fatih Polat due to copying the exact news of journalist Craig Shaw that was initially published on “The Black Sea” website following the criminal complaint of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in accordance with Articles 299/1 and 53/1 of the Turkish Penal Code was held at Bakırköy 31st Criminal Court of First Instance. The next

hearing was scheduled to September 17, 2019 to start at 09:40.

- The appeal case of the decree against Mezopotamya Agency reporter Seda Taşkın, who was sentenced to 4 years and two months of imprisonment due to “aiding and abetting an illegal organization without being a member” as well as to 3 years and four months of imprisonment due to “making illegal organization propaganda,” was held at Erzurum Regional Court. The court acquitted Taşkın of the charge of “aiding an illegal organization” and sentenced Taşkın to 1 year, 11 months and 10 days of imprisonment due to “making terrorist organization propaganda.” The announcement of the verdict was deferred.
- The summary judgment of the lawsuit filed against Republican People’s Party (CHP) MP Enis Berberoğlu and journalist Erdem Gül due to “aiding a terrorist organization” through publishing visuals of trucks belonging to the Turkish National Intelligence, allegedly carrying ammunition for ISIS, was held at Istanbul 14th Assize Court. The court abated the case against Erdem Gül due to time limitations and issued a verdict of non-prosecution for Berberoğlu due to having received a penalty through conceptual aggregation.
- The fourth hearing of the retrial of former Cumhuriyet Daily Editor-In-Chief Can Dündar due to “obtaining confidential information with the purpose of espionage” was held Istanbul 14th Assize Court. Dündar has previously been sentenced to 5 years and 10 months of imprisonment in the lawsuit he was on trial due to “announcing confidential information and documents” regarding visuals of trucks belonging to the Turkish National Intelligence, heading towards Syria. Dündar is currently on retrial following the decree of 16th Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation that reversed the verdict and decided that Dündar must be convicted of “obtaining confidential information with the purpose of espionage” and sentenced with imprisonment from 15 years up to 20 years. In the hearing, the court has scheduled the next hearing to October 31, 2019 to await the results of the extradition request for Dündar and for an example and translation of the letter presented by Syria to the United Nations in June 2015.
- The prosecution of soldier Adem Çiftçi continues in the lawsuit on the death of Medeni Yıldırım, who lost his life due to the fire opened by the soldiers during the protest against police fortresses built in Kayacık (Hezân) village of Lice district in Diyarbakır on June 28, 2013. Çiftçi has stood trial with an imprisonment claim for up to 18 years due to “homicide with eventual intent under unjust provocation” and has been acquitted. Following the verdict’s reversal by the appeal court, Çiftçi is now on retrial. The sixth hearing of the retrial was held at Diyarbakır 7th Assize Court. The next hearing was scheduled to October 17, 2019 to start at 09:25 in order to await the expert report on the crime scene visuals.
- The next hearing of the lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily Editors-In-Chief Hüseyin Akyol, Zana Kaya and the newspaper’s Managing Editor İnan Kızılkaya and Hatip Dicle due to “public denigration of the government, its judicial bodies or the security organization” as well as “public denigration of the Turkish Nation, the Republic and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey” was held at Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance. The next hearing was scheduled to October 10, 2019 to start at 11:05.
- Prosecutions of the Peace Academics, who are on trial due to “making terrorist organization propaganda” through signing the Peace Petition of the Academics for Peace, continued this week as well. No verdicts were issued in the hearings this week; prosecutions will continue next week.

## HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

- The fourteenth hearing of the lawsuit filed against previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily executives and workers Eren Keskin, Hüseyin Aykol, Reyhan Çapan, Filiz Koçali, Ayşe Berktaş, Nuray Özdoğan, Celalettin Can, Ayşe Batumlu and Reyhan Hacıoğlu due to “making terrorist organization propaganda” will be held on May 21st, Tuesday at Istanbul 14th Assize Court.
- A lawsuit was filed against Betül Celep, who performed a sit-in protest for 66 days after its start on January 23, 2016 at Kadıköy Khalkedon Square after having been dismissed from her job at Istanbul Sovereignty Agency with an emergency decree issued on January 6, 2016, following the complaint of Deputy Governor Ahmet Önal (who initially fired Celep) due to “insulting and threatening a public officer” through sharing Önal’s unlawful applications at the public demonstration area as well as on social media accounts. The first hearing of the lawsuit will be held on May 22nd, Wednesday at Istanbul 8th Criminal Court of First Instance, starting at 10:10.
- The seventh hearing of the lawsuit filed against 27 Etkin News Agency (ETHA) workers, including editor and translator Meşale Tolu, due to “terrorist organization membership” and “making terrorist organization propaganda” will be held on May 23rd, Thursday at Istanbul 29th Assize Court.
- The lawsuit filed against Hilmi Bulutoğlu, one of the intellectuals gathering in front of Istanbul Çağlayan Courthouse and making a criminal complaint against themselves at the Prosecutor’s Office, stating that they partake in the crime of the Peace Academics to support the academics on trial for signing the “Peace Petition” of the Academics for Peace Initiative, will be held on May 23rd, Thursday at Istanbul 14th Assize Court.
- The third hearing of the lawsuit filed against JinNews News Director Safiye Alağaç due to the news published on the newspaper following the complaint of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) with the charge of “making illegal organization propaganda” will be held on May 23rd, Thursday at Diyarbakır 4th Assize Court.
- The next hearing of the lawsuit filed against the police officers detaining Yüksel Street protester Perihan Pulat with torture will be held on May 24th, Friday at Ankara Courthouse’s 14th Criminal Court of First Instance, starting at 09:35.
- Prosecutions of the Peace Academics, who are on trial due to “making terrorist organization propaganda” through signing the Peace Petition of the Academics for Peace, will continue next week at Istanbul Courthouse in Çağlayan as well as in various courthouses throughout Turkey.