

August 2021 Report

03.09.2021

1. Administrative Bans, Police Interventions

- 01: Istanbul** A vehicle belonging to People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, who were heading towards a demonstration organised in Esenyurt within the "We support the HDP, everywhere" campaign, was stopped. 15 people were detained.
- 01: Istanbul** SINBO worker Dilbent Türker started a march from Küçükçekmece district to Ankara, after having been detained from the company due to trade union membership. The police intervened against the march and detained 2 people.
- 02: Diyarbakır** The press statement organised by the People's Democratic Party (HDP), Democratic Society Congress (DTK), Democratic Regions Party (DBP) and the Free Women's Movement (TJA) to protest the racist attack in Meram district of Konya, where seven people from the Dedeoğulları family died, was prevented by the police. A group, including Parliament members, performed a sit-in protest.
- 02: G. Antep** After the press statement organised to protest the racist attack in Meram district of Konya, where seven people from the Dedeoğulları family died, seven People's Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members (*Ahmet Yıldız, Eray Üçer, Hasan Emre Çelik, Müslüm Şahinsoy, Serhat Karahan, Mustafa Yaşodun and Alper Kulaz*) were detained based on denouncements against them.
- 02: Istanbul** The police intervened against the march organised from Kadıköy district to Ankara. Trade union worker Dilbent Türker, who was dismissed from work, and three others were detained.
- 02: Istanbul** The police intervened against the march towards Ankara from Kartal district, detaining Dilbent Türker and five others. Two people were released after testifying at the Prosecutor's Office and three people were released with travel bans against them.
- 02: Istanbul** Nursel Tanrıverdi, who was previously dismissed from public service with a Statutory Decree issued within the State of Emergency, was detained as she was performing a sit-in protest in Bakırköy district.
- 02: Izmir** Two People's Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Assembly members were detained in Buca due to their party work.
- 03: Ankara** The police intervened against the press statement organised in Çankaya district in front of the municipality building to protest femicides in Antalya and Kahramanmaraş, detaining 15 people.
- 03: Istanbul** BirGün Daily News Director Uğur Şahin was detained by the police as he was trying to cover male violence against a woman in Şişli. Şahin's detainment was based on the circular that banned unpermitted recording of visuals.
- 03: Istanbul** Banners at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Bomonti Campus were taken down due to the writing, "OKAY" on them were found political.

- 03: Mardin** A curfew was declared in four rural neighborhoods (Serinkaya, Erođlu, Görentepe and Yavru köy) of Nusaybin district on August 5 at 04:00 until further notice. The ban was revoked on the same day at 19:00.
- 04: Ankara** Special security forces prevented Health and Social Service Labourers Union (SES) executives from distributing leaflets at the City Hospital.
- 04: Kocaeli** Three people (M. Emin Babaođlu, İlhan Tun and Avras) were detained due to their social media posts.
- 04: Mardin** The Governorate banned all demonstrations and open-air meetings for 15 days. The ban has been ongoing since 2016, with regular 15-day extensions.
- 05: Ankara** Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF) member Devrim Taylan Yılmaz was forced into a car by three people, who introduced themselves as police officers. Afterwards, he was forcefully kept inside a parking area for a few hours.
- 05: Istanbul** The police prevented the press statement organised by the Education and Science Workers' Union Branch No.6 in front of Bođaziçi University.
- 06: Diyarbakır** Four people have previously been detained due to protesting the racist attack in Hasanköy neighborhood of Meram district in Konya, where seven people died. The four people were released.
- 06: Istanbul** The police intervened against the groups dispersing after a protest demonstration against femicides in Kadıköy district, detaining one person due to chanting slogans.
- 06: Van** 10 people have previously been detained during the demonstration organised in Van on July 30 to protest the racist attack in Hasanköy village of Meram district in Konya, where seven people died. Three of the ten people (Nurullah Pekbay, Dilovan Duru and Rojhat Duman) were arrested with the allegation of "resisting the police." Seven people were released on the condition of judicial measures.
- 07: Istanbul** Swiss Alevi Unions Federation's former Chairman Ismail Ateş was detained at Sabiha Gökçen Airport due to his social media posts.
- 08: Van** Banners on the People's Democratic Party (HDP) provincial and İpekyolu district building regarding the racist attack in Konya, where seven people died, were taken down upon the order of the Public Prosecutor's Office.
- 09: Istanbul** Nursel Tanrıverdi was detained with a police intervention in Bakırköy as she was performing a sit-in protest due to having been dismissed from public service with a Statutory Decree issued within the State of Emergency.
- 10: Ankara** Two of four children, who were detained in Mamak, were arrested by the court due to "illegal organisation membership" and "possession of dangerous materials." Two children were released on the condition of judicial measures.
- 10: Bolu** The police intervened against the march started by Dilbent Türker, who was dismissed from work due to trade union membership, towards Ankara on its 11th day. During the police intervention, Dilbent Türker, All Automotive and Metal Workers' Union (TOMIS) Istanbul representative Onur Eyidođan were detained.
- 10: Muđla** Villagers and life advocates, who were keeping watch at Akbelen Forest in Milas, were taken out of the watch zone by the gendarmerie, to a field.
- 10: Ş. Urfa** There were electric cuts by Dicle Electric Distribution Inc. (DEDAŞ). With a tractor and other vehicles, the villagers blocked the road in a village of Haliliye district

and protested the cuts. The Gendarmerie intervened against the protest with gas bombs.

11: Adana United Resistance Forces (BMG) and United Youth Assemblies (BGM) members were intervened by the police as they were distributing anti-racist leaflets. Five people were detained.

11: Ankara Journalists Seda Taşkın and Büşra Taşkırın were covering racist attacks against the homes, stores and cars of Syrian refugees in Altındağ district and were taken away from the area by the police.

11: Muğla The gendarmerie intervened against those keeping watch next to Milas/Ören highway for Akbelen Forest and took them away from the area.

11: Ş. Urfa After the detainment of People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Co-Chair Belma Nergiz, the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial building was searched.

12: Şırnak The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.

13: Ankara The police intervened against the press statement organised by former SINBO workers in Çankaya district, detaining 14 people.

13: Mersin Four people were detained with house raids due to their social media posts.

13: Ş. Urfa An investigation was opened against the protest demonstration organised in Haliliye district to protest Dicle Electric Distribution Inc. (DEDAŞ). 18 people were detained at the Provincial Gendarmerie Command after they went to testify within the investigation. Afterwards, 13 of those detained were released on the condition of judicial measures.

14: Bitlis The police intervened against those resisting the evacuation of around 700 buildings due to risky terrain with rubber bullets and tear gas, detaining 70 people.

14: Hakkari The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.

14: Kocaeli Human Rights Association Kocaeli representative Azize Adıgüzel was detained during the house raid organised due to her social media posts.

15: Bursa Four people were detained during house raids based on their social media posts.

16: Istanbul Nursel Tanrıverdi was detained during the police intervention as she was performing a sit-in protest in Bakırköy district against her dismissal from public service with a Statutory Decree issued within the State of Emergency.

16: Van 3 of the 15 people (*Ferhat Azan, Çetin Temel ve Rojin Varhan*), who were detained with house raids due to their social media posts, were arrested. 12 were released on the condition of judicial measures.

16: Van The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days. The distribution of leaflets was bound to permission by the local administration.

17: Istanbul Six people were detained over hanging posters with the writings, "Border is honour" and "I don't want refugees in my country."

17: Istanbul 11 people, including 4 children, were detained during the celebration organised by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in Esenyurt district with the allegation of illegal organisation propaganda having been made.

18: Ankara Six people were detained due to their social media posts.

18: Diyarbakır The police prevented the visit of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) board for shopkeepers in Silvan district, surrounding the board with shields.

- 18: Istanbul** Three journalists (Ahmet Yeşilmen, Kubilay Öze and Erdal Caniçelli) were exposed to physical violence by guards as they were covering news.
- 18: Ş.Urfa** 11 people were detained due to participating in the demonstration organised to protest electric cuts by the Dicle Electric Distribution Inc. (DEDAŞ) in Akçakale district. They were later released by the court.
- 20: Istanbul** 19 people, including People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, were detained with house raids.
- 20: Istanbul** Good Party Provincial Chairman Buğra Kavuncu was attacked after he left the Halk TV studio, where he was for a show he attended.
- 20: Mardin** The event organised by Kızıltepe Labour and Democracy Platform at Freedom Square to call for vaccinations against the COVID-19 pandemic was banned by Kızıltepe District Governorate based on the Governorate ban against protests and demonstrations.
- 22: Hatay** The police intervened against the press statement organised in front of the house of Edibe Özçelik, who died as a result of the heart attack she had during the police raid against her home in Samandağ on January 20, 2020. Four people were detained.
- 23: Istanbul** 25 people, including People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, have been detained on the grounds of sending money to their relatives in prison. 7 of the 25 were arrested by the court they were taken to; 18 were released, 12 on the condition of judicial measures.
- 23: Istanbul** The police intervened against the press statement organised in front of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Sarıyer District building to protest Naci İnci's appointment as rector to Boğaziçi University by the President himself. Ozan Acidere and nine others were detained.
- 26: Izmir** A Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) and People's Democratic Congress (HDK) member was harassed by the police in Alsancak district. The police demanded them to either stop the work they are doing or collaborate with them.
- 29: Hakkari** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised in the province for 15 days.
- 31: Istanbul** Bakırköy District Governorate banned all demonstrations, meetings, marches, press statements and sit-in protests across the district for five days.

2. Investigations and Prosecutions

- 01: Kayseri** Mahmut Günel from Germany was detained based on a denouncement against him and was later arrested by the court due to "making illegal organisation propaganda."
- 04: Istanbul** 10 Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University students and graduates were summoned to testify at the Anti-Terror Unit within the investigation opened against them four years after the protest organised at the university's Bomonti campus on March 8, 2017.
- 05: Ankara** An investigation was opened against those posting on social media with the hashtag #HelpTurkey for the wildfires happening all across the country, but especially in Antalya and Muğla.

- 05: Muğla** The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry filed a criminal complaint against Batuhan Onur Maz, who participated in the firefighting efforts in Delikliyol, Marmaris and shared his observations on social media, due to "social media posts that could mislead the public and put public institutions under suspicion".
- 06: Istanbul** PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's lawyers Rezan Sarıca, Baran Doğan, Ali Maden, Cengiz Yürekli, Mahmut Taşçı, İnan Akmeşe and M. Selim Okçuoğlu testified at the Prosecutor's Office. The indictment prepared against the lawyers by the Chief Public Prosecutor's Office due to "illegal organisation membership" was accepted by the 33rd Assize Court.
- 07: Antalya** A citizen, Y. T., was arrested due to insulting the President and the Manavgat Mayor during the firefighting efforts in Gündoğmuş district.
- 07: Van** An investigation was started against People's Democratic Party (HDP) Bitlis Co-Mayor Rümet Dursun, who made a statement in front of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) district building in Tatvan on July 31, 2021 regarding the killing of 7 Kurdish citizens in Meram district of Konya. Dursun testified within the investigation opened against him due to "denigrating the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey as well as the institutions of the state," "public incitement towards resentment and hostility or denigration" and "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911."
- 08: Antalya** The Provincial Gendarmerie Command took 1742 social media accounts and 1347 websites under examination on the grounds that they had made "provocative posts on the wildfires across the country." Legal actions were taken against 66 people. Furthermore, the command applied for access bans to be issued against 17 news websites.
- 09: Denizli** One person was detained due to making PKK/KCK propaganda on social media.
- 10: Istanbul** An investigation was started against the thread on Ekşi Sözlük website: "What more needs to happen for the people to riot".
- 12: Adana** Yeni Yaşam Daily journalist İbrahim Karakaş was sentenced to 9 years and nine months of imprisonment by Karakaş 11th Assize Court due to "illegal organisation membership".
- 12: Van** The lawsuit filed against JinNews reporter Hikmet Tunç and Muradiye Co-Mayor Leyla Balkan, who was dismissed and was replaced with a trustee, was concluded. Muradiye Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced Tunç to 1 year and two months of imprisonment, abated the sentence to 8 months and 22 days and deferred the announcement of the verdict. The court further sentenced Balkan to 8 months and 22 days of imprisonment, effective immediately.
- 13: İstanbul** In the lawsuit filed by Aydın Aydoğan, whose arm was broken during the police intervention on the 700th week demonstration of the Saturday Mothers, the 5th Administrative Court denied the compensation claim of Aydoğan.
- 23: Istanbul** The indictment prepared against 17 people due to jumping and chanting slogans during the Feminist Night Walk in Beyoğlu district on March 8 was accepted by the 10th Criminal Court of First Instance. The indictment claims an imprisonment sentence against the defendants for up to 7 years and eight months in total due to insulting the President.

- 23: Istanbul** The indictment prepared by the Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office against stage actor Genco Erkal with a claim of imprisonment for up to 4 years and eight months due to insulting the President through his social media posts was sent to the 16th Criminal Court of First Instance.
- 24: Istanbul** The indictment prepared against writer Yavuz Ekinci due to his social media post supporting Newroz and Kobane in 2013 and 2014 was accepted by the 34th Assize Court. The first hearing was scheduled for September 9.
- 26: Artvin** In the lawsuit filed against conscientious objector Şendoğan Yazıcı, who wrote on social media, “Do not perform your military service, don’t be a part of the militarist system, alienate yourself from military service, let everywhere around the country be ice cold, do not live and let live millions of inhumane applications, denigrations and shame,” Borçka Criminal Court of First Instance sentenced Yazıcı to 42 months and 6 days in tal due to “alienating people from military service,” “public denigration of the Republic of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the government and the judicial bodies of the state” and “making illegal organisation propaganda.”
- 27: Şırnak** The indictment prepared by Silopi Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office due to a press statement made by People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Şırnak Provincial Co-Chair Sabuha Akdağ on femicides, was accepted by Silopi 1st Criminal Court of First Instance. The indictment claims an imprisonment sentence against Akdağ due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility.” The first hearing was scheduled for October 15.
- 28: Şırnak** A lawsuit was filed against People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Provincial Co-Chair Sabuha Akdağ at Silopi 1st Criminal Court of First Instance with an imprisonment claim for up to three years due to reading the press statement, “Against violence, harassment and abuse experienced by women” on Arts Street in Silopi district on July 16, 2020.

3. Other Violations

- 04: Ankara** Various Criminal Judicatures of Peace issued access bans against 141 news content published by Bianet.
- 04: Kocaeli** Books sent to Kandıra Type-F Prison No.1 were not handed to the prisoners.
- 06: Muğla** A group attacked the Halk TV broadcast team in İçmeler district after the live broadcast was cut.
- 09: Ankara** Crimean News Agency (QHA) Turkish Editor-In-Chief Aydın Taş was found dead in his office.
- 09: Eskişehir** 1st Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against Nupel website due to the protection of national security and public order.
- 10: Ankara** Yeni Çağ Daily writer Murat Ağırel was threatened on social media.
- 10: Istanbul** Büyükçekmece 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against a certain content on ifade.org.tr due to a violation of personal rights.
- 11: Ankara** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) penalised KRT TV three times, FOX TV three times, Haber Türk one time, Halk TV four times, TR 35 one time and TELE 1 three times, making up a total of 17 administrative fines due to the channels’ news coverage on the

censorship brought against wildfires. On the other hand, Republican People's Party (CHP) and Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) member İlhan Taşçı was claimed to have presented a bias by sharing the message of the RTÜK Chairman on wildfires and was taken out of the meeting on the same day.

12: Ankara An access ban was issued against 61 news articles about a businessman on various websites upon the decree of the Access Providers Union.

17: Ankara An access ban was issued against the news articles on Milli Daily, Artı Gerçek and ABC Daily websites upon the decree of the Access Providers Union.

20: Ankara It was announced that in accordance with the Presidential Decree No. 82 on the State Monitoring Council, all professional organisations, trade unions, non-profit organisations, foundations, cooperatives, associations and all partnerships of them shall be made by the State Monitoring Council.

24: Balıkesir Burhaniye Type-T Women's Prison confiscated all letters and documents written by women prisoners to the Human Rights Association.

4. Comments and Suggestions

Coşkun Üsterci (Secretary General, The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey)

There was no positive change in the violations happening in terms of the freedom of expression, meeting and organisation in August 2021.

Interventions of police forces continued against various peaceful meetings and demonstrations. A striking example of this was the consecutive interventions made by the police against the march of Dilbent Türker, who was dismissed from work due to her trade union membership, towards Ankara.

The police intervened against the march of Dilbent Türker on August 1, 2, 3, 4, 2021 in Küçükçekmece, Kadıköy, Kartal and Tuzla districts of Istanbul, detaining 12 people. On the 11th day of the march, on August 10, 2021, there was another intervention in Bolu - in the intervention, Dilbent Türker and All Automotive and Metal Workers Union (TOMIS) Istanbul representative Onur Eyidoğan were detained. Reaching Ankara despite all preventions, Dilbent Türker and her supporters made a press statement there on August 13, 2021 and the police intervened against it once again, detaining 14 people.

Another focus of the interventions made by the security forces was the meetings and demonstrations organised by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) to protest the racist attack in Meram district of Konya, in which seven members of the Dedeoğulları family died on July 30, 2021.

Another prominent issue in August was the interventions and attacks by police forces and civilians against press members and journalists, who wanted to correctly inform the people by rights journalism.

- BirGün Daily News Director Uğur Şahin was detained by the police as he wanted to cover male violence against a woman in Şişli district of Istanbul on August 3, 2021. Even though he showed his press card to the police, the detainment was based on the circular that was issued by the Security General Directorate and that banned unpermitted recordings. Şahin was released within the same day.
- A group interrupted the live broadcast of Halk TV on the wildfires in İçmeler region of Marmaris in Muğla on August 5, 2021. Show host Gökmen Karadağ and guest journalists İsmail Saymaz, Murat Ağırel, lawyer Salim Şen and Republican People's Party (CHP) Muğla MP Burak Erbay were attacked with glass bottles. The attackers were heard saying, "If you speak false things, we will prevent you from doing so." Five people were detained about the attack and four of them were released after testifying at the police station - the other one was released after testifying at the Prosecutor's Office.
- There were racist attacks against the homes, stores and cars belonging to Syrian refugees in Altındağ district of Ankara on August 11. As journalists Seda Taşkın and Büşra Taşkiran were covering the developments in the region, they were forced into a car by the police and were taken away from the area.
- A 3-year-old went missing in Beylikdüzü district of Istanbul on August 18, 2021. The child was later found unconscious, hospitalised and died at the hospital. Three journalists (Ahmet Yeşilmen, Kubilay Özev and Erdal Can) were covering the incident, whereas they were exposed to physical violence by İçelli guards.

Many people were detained in August due to their social media posts regarding the increasing racist attacks, wildfires and floods. Investigations were opened, lawsuits were filed and even imprisonment sentences and fines were issued against many, including human rights advocates, journalists, actors and conscientious objectors.

There was an increase in access ban decrees against online news websites in August 2021. 141 content published by bianet.org only were banned from access with decrees issued by various Criminal Judicatures of Peace.

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) issued administrative fines against KRT TV three times, FOX TV three times, Haber Türk one time, Halk TV four times, TR 35 one time and TELE 1 three times, making up a total of 17 administrative fines due to their news coverage on the RTÜK censorship against the news on wildfires.

All these developments reveal how risky and almost impossible being a journalist is and to use one's freedom of information in Turkey. The rights have been restricted in a way that would eliminate the essence of the right itself, rendering the use of all such freedoms very risky and almost impossible.

The most worrying incident that happened in August was a new attempt of restriction against the freedom of organisation. With the Presidential Decree No. 82, that was published on the Official Gazette on August 20, 2021, all professional organisations, trade unions, non-profit organisations, foundations, cooperatives and associations as well as all their partnerships were bound to be inspected by the State Monitoring Council. When this decree is evaluated in consideration with the **Law on the Prevention of Financing for the Distribution of Mass Destruction Weapons** No. 7262, that was enacted on December 31, 2020 by being published in the Official Gazette, we can say that non-governmental organisations were left with almost no space to move. The Law No. 7262 predicts that trustees can be appointed to non-governmental organisations (associations, foundations etc.) by the Interior Ministry and with a Presidential decree, all their assets can be frozen.

Osman İşçi (Human Rights Association - Ankara)

- As it happens in investigations against social media posts, suspects, criminal content, etc. The lack of specific information about the issues leads to the continuation of the climate of oppression and to feed the climate of fear. One of the main pillars of the struggle for human rights is to acquire and know. In this framework, we must design and carry out our work in a way that will answer this problem.
- The fact that non-state actors have committed acts such as threats this month indicates that the need for an end to impunity and effective investigation must be addressed with real urgency.
- The fact that institutions that fulfill the function of checks and balances, which is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society (as seen in the expulsion of a RTÜK member from the meeting or the extra authorities given to the DDK), not being operated by interfering is also a problem area that needs to be considered.

Ahmet İnci (Human Rights Association, Izmir)

- Intervention against the right to organisation: Harassments, tracking and forced espionage increased this month, especially against the young members of oppositional parties.
- Referring to the wildfires, civilians violated multiple rights by interfering with people's daily lives. These interventions focused especially on the Kurdish people. Identities of people travelling with their cars were checked and if they were from Kurdish provinces, they were insulted, threatened and beaten by the group.