

# Think, think...



## Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 16/24, May 3, 2024)

### What happened last week?

- President Erdoğan said, *"Taksim is not a place for rallies. We do not find the impositions innocent. It is clear that the insistence on organizing a rally in an area other than those permitted is not in good faith."* Once again, the Constitutional Court rulings were overruled and the local administration in Istanbul refused permission to those who wanted to celebrate May Day in Taksim. On May 1, a de facto "curfew" was declared throughout Istanbul, cutting off all connections between the two sides of the city.
- On April 26, 2024, the Ministry of National Education released the draft curriculum titled "Education Model for the Turkish Century" for public consultation; however, the Ministry announced that it would only collect opinions for one week, on the grounds that "sufficient consultation" had been conducted during the preparation process.
- Concerns of impunity are growing in the ongoing trial regarding the murder of former Diyarbakır Bar Association President Tahir Elçi. Presenting his assessment on the merits, Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor requested the acquittal of all defendants.



### Trial of lawyer Eyüp Akıncı

Lawyer Eyüp Akıncı is on trial for "publicly disseminating misleading information" due to his social media post criticizing bribery allegations at Küçükçekmece Courthouse. In the ongoing trial at Küçükçekmece 23rd Criminal Court of First Instance, the prosecutor's office presented its assessment on the merits and demanded Akıncı to be

sentenced. The next hearing will be held on June 7.



### **3 of 9 detained journalists arrested**

Mezopotamya Agency (MA) reporter Mehmet Aslan, journalists Esra Solin Dal and Erdoğan Alayumat, who were among 9 journalists detained in house raids in Istanbul, Ankara and Urfa, were arrested by the court on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization".



### **Construction workers detained**

The police intervened against the executives of Dev Yapı-İş and İnşaat-İş Trade Unions and creditor workers who wanted to make a press statement for the receivables of the workers working at the Istanbul Finance Center Central Bank construction undertaken by Emlak Konut and Limak Holding; many people were detained.



### **Investigation launched against journalist Asuman Aranca**

Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against T24 reporter Asuman Aranca for "violating the confidentiality of the investigation" due to her reporting on the findings of the expert report on the murder of Sinan Ateş, former President of the Grey Wolves.



### **Reporter detained for recording police violence**

Ekim Veyisoğlu, a reporter for the website siyasihaber9.org, who videotaped police violence against an immigrant woman in Mecidiyeköy, Istanbul, was detained on the allegation of "not performing his duty".



### **Concerns of impunity in Şahin Öner case**

On February 10, 2013, the trial of Şahin Öner, who lost his life after being hit by an armored vehicle during a demonstration in Diyarbakır Yenişehir, started to be held again after the Regional Court of Appeals' decision to overturn the verdict. In the first hearing held at Diyarbakır 1st High Criminal Court, the demand for the arrest of the accused law enforcement officer

was rejected. The next hearing will be held on October 9.



### **Eren Keskin and Gülistan Yarkin acquitted**

Eren Keskin, Co-Chair of IHD/TIHV Founders' Council member Eren Keskin and Gülistan Yarkin, member of IHD Commission against Racism & Discrimination, were acquitted in the trial they were charged for the Armenian Genocide commemoration organized in 2021.



### **Acquittal in Feminist Night March case**

35 people, including journalist Buse Söğütlü, who participated in the March 8, 2020 Feminist Night March, were charged with "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations" and the court acquitted all defendants.



### **Prison sentence for Barış Terkoğlu**

In the lawsuit filed against journalist Barış Terkoğlu due to "targeting people who took part in the fight against terrorism" upon the complaint of Deputy Minister of Justice Akın Gürlek, based on the news article titled "The same judge always gives the decisions on Turkey's agenda" taken



from ANKA News Agency and published on Odatv website and the article titled "How do I remember the judge who stirred up Turkey" published in Cumhuriyet newspaper, the court sentenced journalist Barış Terkoğlu to two years in prison.



### **210 detained in Istanbul May 1 celebrations**

The police prevented those who wanted to celebrate May Day in Istanbul's Taksim Square after President Erdoğan called it a "malicious demand". On the day when the entire city was blockaded and a de facto curfew was declared, police intervened against those who wanted to gather at

different points of the city and march to Taksim. The ministry announced that a total of 210 people were detained. 29 people were also detained in house raids on the morning of May 3.



## **TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

### **Taraf Newspaper Trial**

The lawsuit filed against former Taraf Newspaper reporter Mehmet Baransu and executives Ahmet Altan, Yasemin Çongar and Yıldray Oğur...

**Court:** Istanbul Anatolian 2nd Assize Court  
**Hearing outcome:** The trial will continue on December 2.

### **Evrin Kepenek Case**

The lawsuit filed against Bianet editor Evrim Kepenek, who was charged with "insult" for her news reports on Refik Y., who was arrested for abusing his 6-year-old child and later released on judicial control conditions...

**Court:** Izmir Selçuk Criminal Court of First Instance  
**Hearing outcome:** The hearing on the case was adjourned.

## HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

<p><b><u>Left Party Declaration Case</u></b></p> <p>2023 general elections, the lawsuit filed against four members of the SOL Party for "insulting the president" due to the leaflet they distributed before the general elections....</p> <p><b>Monday, May 6;</b> Bolu 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p><b>Closure Case Against Tarlabası Community Center</b></p> <p>Since 2006, Tarlabası Community Center has been working to solve the social and economic problems of Tarlabası residents and has been the target of smear campaigns that include ethnic discrimination and homophobic hatred...</p> <p><b>Monday, May 6;</b> Istanbul 18th Civil Court of First Instance</p>
<p><b><u>Sebnem Korur Fincancı Trial</u></b></p> <p>The 100 thousand TL non-pecuniary damages lawsuit filed by the Ministry of National Defense against Turkish Medical Association (TTB) Central Council President Şebnem Korur Fincancı for her statement that "it is necessary to investigate the allegations that the Turkish Armed Forces used chemical weapons"...</p> <p><b>Tuesday, May 7;</b> Ankara 2nd Civil Court of First Instance</p>	<p><b><u>Ankara Pride March Trial</u></b></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 42 people who were beaten and detained during the Pride March organized in Ankara in July last year due to "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911"...</p> <p><b>Wednesday, May 8;</b> Ankara 52nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p><b><u>Ercan Aktaş Case</u></b></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against conscientious objector Ercan Aktaş on charges of "discouraging people from military service", "insulting the state and state leaders" and "making illegal organization propaganda" due to his social media posts...</p> <p><b>Wednesday, May 8;</b> Istanbul Bakırköy 2nd High Criminal Court</p>	<p><b><u>Lawsuit against May 1 (2022)</u></b></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 15 people who were detained as a result of the police intervention against those who wanted to march to Taksim Square in Istanbul for the May 1st Labor Day in 2022...</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 9;</b> Istanbul 29th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p><b><u>18 journalists on trial</u></b></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 18 journalists accused of "being a member of an illegal organization" and facing up to 15 years in prison for their news reports...</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 9;</b> Diyarbakır 4th High Criminal Court</p>	<p><b><u>Emine Şenyavaşar Trial</u></b></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Emine Şenyavaşar, whose two sons and husband were killed in the incidents in Suruç district of Urfa before the 2018 general elections, due to "publicly insulting the government, the judicial organs of the state, the military or the security organization".</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 9;</b> Şanlıurfa 5th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>

### **Lawsuit Against Journalists**

The lawsuit filed 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 in 2015 and 2018 about research books on the Armenian Genocide...

**Thursday, May 9;** Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance

### **Özgürlükçü Demokrasi Trial**

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"...

**Thursday, May 9;** Istanbul 23rd High Criminal Court

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