

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 23/24 - June 28, 2024)

What happened last week?

- Following the "normalization steps in politics" that have been on the agenda for a while, President Erdoğan targeted the CHP again; "Our effort is actually to normalize the opposition. It is the opposition that needs to soften."
- On July 1, Parliament, which was supposed to go on recess, will resume its work after the AKP's proposal is accepted. During this time, the parliament is expected to discuss bills including the 9th Judicial Package and a law on the killing of stray animals.
- The first hearing of the second lawsuit filed against HDP politicians on the grounds of the anti-ISIS protests organized across the country on October 6-8, 2014 was held at Ankara 22nd High Criminal Court. Of the 5 former HDP MPs on trial, Hüda Kaya, the only one arrested in the case, was released.
- MHP leader Bahçeli delivered his speech for the first time from his seat and read from a written text instead of a prompter at the group meeting in the Parliament, which started 15 minutes late. After leaving the hall, Bahçeli was seen sitting on the seats backstage for a while. Meanwhile, MHP officials prevented journalists from taking pictures.
- It was revealed that a brigadier general serving in Syria was involved in human trafficking with his office vehicle. The brigadier general, who retired after the allegations, was arrested.
- The Central Bank kept its policy interest rate unchanged at 50 percent for the third time in a row.
- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) removed Turkey from its gray list after 3 years due to concerns about the effectiveness of its measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
- The hearing of the "Spice Bazaar" case, in which sociologist Pınar Selek has been on trial for 26 years despite four acquittals, was held at Istanbul 15th High Criminal Court. The hearing was postponed until 8 months later.



Lawsuit filed against Şenyaşar for demanding justice

A new lawsuit was filed against Emine Şenyaşar, whose husband and 2 sons were murdered in Suruç district of Urfa in 2018 by the bodyguards and relatives of AKP MP İbrahim Halil Yıldız, and who has been struggling for justice for years. Within the

scope of the case, Şenyaşar, who reacted to the removal of the banner "Justice for the Şenyaşar family, justice for everyone" by the police during the vigil in front of the Urfa Courthouse on October 7, 2022, was charged with "insult" and "resisting to prevent the execution of duty" upon the complaint of the police. The first hearing of the case will be held at Urfa 5th Criminal Court of First Instance on November 5.



Journalist Elif Akgül acquitted

The case against journalist Elif Akgül, who was accused of "making terrorist organization propaganda in a chain" due to two tweets she shared five years apart, ended in acquittal at Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court. The case was based on a social media post in which the journalist criticized footage of ISIS members and Turkish Armed Forces soldiers greeting

each other and another post in which she used the word "guerrilla".



Journalist Sezgin Kartal acquitted

Journalist Sezgin Kartal, who was on trial at Istanbul 22nd High Criminal Court on charges of "membership in an illegal organization", was acquitted. The journalist was detained and arrested on January 10, Working Journalists' Day, after the door of his house was broken down and he was kept in prison for 160 days.



Grounds for sentencing journalists: "Motivating with news"

Istanbul 23rd High Criminal Court announced the reasoning behind the prison sentences given to 5 journalists on charges of "aiding an illegal organization" in the Özgürlükçü Demokrasi case, which concluded on May 9. The court claimed that the newspaper published in favor

of the Syrian Democratic Forces (QSD) and against the state during Turkey's operation in 2018; that the journalists provided morale and motivation to the organization with their news reports and tried to create international public opinion and support in favor of the organization.



Acquittal for women on trial in "November 25" case

The case against 18 women, including journalist Zeynep Durgut, who were detained in Şırnak in 2023 during a press declaration organized for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on

November 25, 2023, on charges of "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911" concluded with acquittal at Şırnak Criminal Court of First Instance.



Idris Baluken sentenced to 3 years and 9 months in prison

Former HDP MP İdris Baluken, who was on trial at Siirt 2nd Assize Court due to his speeches at demonstrations and events he attended during his term as an MP, was sentenced to 3 years and 9 months in prison on the charge of "making propaganda for an illegal organization". The court acquitted him on the charge of "opposing Law No. 2911 on

Meetings and Demonstrations".



Lawsuit against Bar Association executives

A lawsuit was filed against Bar Association President Nahit Eren and 10 lawyers, who were members of the executive board at the time, on charges of "insulting the state" (Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code) for the statement titled "We Share the Pain of the Great Catastrophe" made by the Diyarbakır Bar Association on the

anniversary of the April 24 Armenian Genocide in 2021. The first hearing will be held at Diyarbakır 2nd High Criminal Court on November 28.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Ali Duran Topuz Case

The lawsuit filed against Artı Gerçek editor-in-chief Ali Duran Topuz for the news article titled "The prosecutor who investigated journalists and the judge who arrested them were appointed" with the allegation of "targeting a public official who took part in the fight against terrorism"...

Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court
Verdict: The next hearing will be held on November 7.

The Case Against the "We Can't Make a Living" Protest

The lawsuit filed against 24 people, including JinNews reporter Öznur Değer, who were detained during the "We Can't Make ends meet" protest organized by Ankara Labor and Democracy Forces in 2021, on charges of "violating the Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations"...

Court: Ankara 18th Criminal Court of First Instance
Verdict: The next hearing will be held on July 8.

<p style="text-align: center;">Ferhat Tunç Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against artist Ferhat Tunç due to "illegal organization membership" and "making illegal organization propaganda"...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court Verdict: The next hearing will be held on November 28.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Şerife Oruç Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Dicle News Agency (DIHA) reporter Şerife Oruç due to "illegal organization membership"...</p> <p>Court: Batman 2nd Assize Court Verdict: The next hearing will be held on December 17.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Vice News Case</p> <p>The 2015 lawsuit filed against ViceNews reporters Jake Hanrahan, Philip Pendlebury and Mohammed Ismael Rasool, who were arrested in Diyarbakır in 2015 and subsequently deported, on charges of "violating the Law on the Prevention of Financing of Terrorism", "knowingly and willingly aiding and abetting a terrorist organization" and "making terrorist propaganda"...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court Verdict: The next hearing will be held on November 25.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Zeynep Kuray Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 9 people who were detained during the sit-in protest organized in Istanbul in 2019 to protest the isolation of PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan and journalist Zeynep Kuray, who followed the protest, due to "violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 39th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing will be held on January 16th.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Deniz Yücel Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Die Welt reporter Deniz Yücel due to "insulting the president" and "insulting the state"...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing will be held on January 16th.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Women's University Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 8 women, who were detained during the "Women's University" protest in Ankara in 2021, due to "Violation of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations No. 2911"...</p> <p>Court: Ankara 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The hearing, in which the lawyers did not attend with an excuse, was adjourned on the file.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Özgür Gündem Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against Hüseyin Aykol and Zana Kaya, Editor-in-Chief Hüseyin Aykol and Zana Kaya, Managing Editor İnan Kızılkaya and Kurdish politician Hatip Dicle on the grounds of news articles published in the shut-down Özgür Gündem newspaper on different dates...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing will be held on January 16th.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Case Against Bosphorus Protest</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 71 students due to "violating Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations" in connection with the protests against the trustee rector at Boğaziçi University...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 27th Criminal Court of First Instance Verdict: The next hearing will be held on December 24th.</p>

Furkan Karabay Case	Mehmet Emin Aktar Case
The lawsuit filed against journalist Furkan Karabay due to "insult" and "slander" upon the complaint of President Erdoğan's son Bilal Erdoğan.	The lawsuit filed against former Diyarbakır Bar Association President and lawyer Mehmet Emin Aktar due to "targeting people who took part in the fight against terrorism"...
Court: Istanbul 47th Criminal Court of First Instance	Court: Diyarbakır 5th Criminal Court of First Instance
Verdict: It was decided that the case file will be merged with the case against Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal's complaint regarding the social media post that is the subject of the accusation. The next hearing of the case at Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of First Instance will be held on November 5.	Verdict: The next hearing will be held on October 3.

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

Case Against Journalists	Ankara Pride March Case
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...	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"...
July 2, Tuesday, Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance	July 3, Wednesday, Ankara 52nd Criminal Court of First Instance
ETHA Reporters Case	Case Against Journalists
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"...	The lawsuit filed against 12 journalists, including 9 journalists arrested in the operation against Mezopotamya Agency and JinNews, on charges of "illegal organization membership" based on 149 news articles published in Mezopotamya Agency, the protests they followed and their social media posts...
July 3, Wednesday, Istanbul 27th Assize Court	July 3, Wednesday, Ankara 4th High Criminal Court
Case Against Journalists	Case Against Journalists
The lawsuit filed against journalist Barış	The lawsuit filed against journalists Can

<p>Pehlivan and former Cumhuriyet Editorial Coordinator Mustafa Büyüksipahi for "insulting a public official" due to their news reports on Hamit Kocabey, a member of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors...</p> <p>July 3, Wednesday, Ankara 19th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	<p>Bursalı, Barış Terkoğlu and Nevzat Çiçek due to "insult" and "slander" upon the complaint of President Erdoğan's former lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal...</p> <p>July 4, Thursday, Istanbul 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p>Şebnem Korur Fincancı Case</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>July 4, Thursday, Ankara 2nd Civil Court of First Instance</p>	<p>Eyüp Akıncı Case</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against lawyer Eyüp Akıncı due to "publicly disseminating misleading information" for his social media post criticizing the bribery allegations in Küçükçekmece Courthouse...</p> <p>July 5, Friday, Istanbul Küçükçekmece 23rd Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p>Case Against Bosphorus Protests</p> <p>The lawsuit filed against 51 students and journalist Yağmur Kaya, who were detained at Çağlayan Courthouse where they gathered for their friends who were detained for carrying the rainbow flag at Boğaziçi University...</p> <p>July 5, Friday, Istanbul 17th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>	