

Think, think...



Freedom of Expression Weekly Newsletter (Issue 37/24, October 4, 2024)

What happened last week?

- Parliament opened after a two-month recess. The CHP has not stood up to protest against President Erdoğan during the opening of the Parliament for a long time, but this behavior ended with the order of party leader Özel. MHP leader Bahçeli, the junior partner of the ruling MHP, who had called the CHP leader a “provocateur” just minutes earlier, shook hands with Özel. Bahçeli also shook hands with the DEM Party group. In his speech, Erdoğan claimed that Israel would also target Turkey.
- Just before these warm scenes in the General Assembly, the MHP leader, speaking at his party's group meeting, again targeted journalists, the CHP and the DEM Party. Bahçeli, who threatened and targeted journalists because of the news on the murder of Sinan Ateş, said “everyone should know their place... you cannot question us, we will not make you question us” against the accusations against his party regarding the murder.
- The National Security Council (MGK) convened two days after Erdoğan said in the Parliament that “after Palestine and Lebanon, Israel will set its sights on our lands”.
- The Council of Judges and Prosecutors held elections for 8 vacant Supreme Court of Appeals memberships. Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor, who was elected as a member of the Supreme Court of Appeals, was replaced by Akın Gürlek, a deputy justice minister known for his disregard of the Constitutional Court's ruling when he was a judge and for the prison sentences he handed down to journalists and opposition figures.
- According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), annual inflation was 49.38 percent in September. According to the independent research group ENAG, the inflation rate was 88.63 percent. Erdoğan said that the cost of living was caused by “greed”.
- Eleven defendants were sentenced to imprisonment and 10 were acquitted in the trial on the murder of Sinan Ateş, the former chairman of the Grey Wolves' Hearths. While the verdict was awaited, Ateş's sister Selma Ateş was attacked. CHP leader Özel said, “Devlet Bahçeli and the MHP are responsible for every incident that will happen to the Ateş family.”
- According to data compiled by bianet, men killed at least 33 women and 1 child in September. The deaths of at least 21 women were reported in the press as “suspicious”.



Saturday Mothers acquitted once again

The case against 20 relatives of the disappeared and rights defenders who were detained on June 10, 2023 during the 950th week of the sit-in protests and press statements of the Saturday Mothers in Galatasaray Square was concluded with acquittal at Istanbul 39th Criminal Court of First Instance on charges of

“opposing the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations”.



Former President of Diyarbakır Bar Association Aktar acquitted

The case against rights defender and former President of the Diyarbakır Bar Association Mehmet Emin Aktar, who was accused of “targeting people who took part in the fight against terrorism” for sharing on social media the minutes of the unlawful search of the office of his detained colleague Resul Temur, ended in acquittal at Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court.



Lawyers on trial for their professional activities acquitted

The separate trials of Human Rights Association Diyarbakır Branch executive lawyer Gurbet Özbey Öner and lawyer Serhat Hezer, who were charged with “being a member of an illegal organization” on the grounds of their activities as lawyers, concluded with acquittal at Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court.



Trial of arrested lawyers begins

The first hearings of the trials of Contemporary Lawyers Association (ÇHD) headquarters executive lawyer Nazan Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı and ÇHD member lawyer Seda Şaraldı, who were arrested in February on charges of “illegal organization membership” due to their professional activities, were held at Istanbul 26th Assize Court. The court decided to continue the detention of the lawyers and

adjourned Kozağaçlı's case to December 6 and Şaraldı's case to December 11.



The case against journalist İdris Yayla

A lawsuit was filed against İdris Yayla, the owner of Jiyen News, for publishing an interview with the victim upon the complaint of Baran Kızıl, who was arrested for attempted rape and later released, due to “insult”. The journalist will stand trial at Diyarbakır 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance.



Journalist Furkan Karabay acquitted

Journalist Furkan Karabay, who was charged with “targeting people who took part in the fight against terrorism” and “publicly insulting a public official because of his duty” for the news article titled “Bribery fight in Mafia trial in minutes” published on Gerçek Gündem website, was acquitted. The journalist, who was on trial at Istanbul 24th High Criminal Court, had been detained for 11 days.



The case against journalist Furkan Karabay

The trial of journalist Furkan Karabay, accused of “insulting the President” due to his social media posts, started at Istanbul 74th Criminal Court of First Instance. The second hearing of the case will be held on December 13.



Koma Hevra members detained

Zeynep Doğan, Gencay Morkoç and Yusuf Keleş, soloists of the music group Koma Hevra, who performed at a concert organized by Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, were detained on charges of “making illegal organization propaganda” with the Kurdish songs they sang at the concert.



Retried Yüksekdağ acquitted

On 15 February 2015, former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Figen Yüksekdağ, who was convicted on charges of “making propaganda for an illegal organization” based on a speech she made, was acquitted in a retrial at Istanbul 22nd Assize Court following the Supreme Court of Appeals' reversal.



Congregation censorship of the press

“The state creates a vacuum, sects fill it: Işıkçılar Cemaati'dan İzmir'e yeni yurt yurt!” with the headline ‘Işık Sızdı Boşluğa Işık Sızdı’, was rejected for printing by İhlas Matbaacılık. Upon this, the newspaper was printed with a changed headline.



Police intervened in Palestine protest

The police intervened the members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) protesting Israel's attacks on Palestine and Lebanon in Istanbul and detained 5 people, including Gazete Patika reporter Yadigar Aygün, after beating them.



Constitutional Court rules on 'violation of trade union rights'

The Constitutional Court (AYM) ruled that “the right to freedom of association was violated” in three applications filed by the United Metal Workers' Union (Birleşik Metal-İş) due to the long duration of the objection lawsuits filed by employers against the authorization determination made for their workplaces.



TRIALS OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Evrım Kepenek Case</u></p> <p>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...</p> <p>Court: Izmir Selçuk 1st Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Hearing outcome: The next hearing will be held on December 12.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>KCK Press Trial</u></p> <p>The KCK Press Trial, in which 46 journalists and media workers have been on trial since 2012 on charges of “illegal organization membership” based on their journalistic activities such as interviews they conducted, photographs they took, press releases they followed, news notes, etc...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 3rd High Criminal Court</p> <p>Hearing outcome: Next hearing will be held on January 23</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Suleyman Sahin Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against lawyer Süleyman Şahin, accused of “being an illegal organization member” due to his professional activities...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court</p> <p>Hearing outcome: The next hearing will be held on December 17.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rustem Batum Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Rüstem Batum due to “insulting the President” on the grounds of two social media posts he made in 2018 and 2019...</p> <p>Court: Istanbul 60th Criminal Court of First Instance</p> <p>Hearing outcome: The next hearing will be held on April 8.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Necat Çiçek Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against lawyer Necat Çiçek, accused of “being an illegal organization member” due to his activities as a lawyer and the press statements he made...</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court</p> <p>Hearing outcome: The next hearing will be held on December 12.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Adile Salman Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against lawyer Adile Salman, accused of “being an illegal organization member” due to her professional activities....</p> <p>Court: Diyarbakır 5th Assize Court</p> <p>Hearing outcome: The next hearing will be held on December 12.</p>

HEARINGS NEXT WEEK

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Özgür Gündem Trial</u></p> <p>Eren Keskin, Hüseyin Aykol, Reyhan Çapan and Hasan Başak are among the defendants in the lawsuit filed against Özgür Gündem newspaper, which was shut down by a decree law...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday, October 8, Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gezi Trial</u></p> <p>The retrial of Ali Hakan Altınay, Yiğit Ali Ekmekçi and Ayşe Mücella Yapıcı, whose sentences of 18 years each in the Gezi Trial were overturned by the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Court of Cassation...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, October 9, Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pelin Ozkaptan Case</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against the journalist due to “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” through two posts he made on his Twitter (X) account on June 27, 2019 and June 27, 2022...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday, October 9, Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Can Ataklı Trial</u></p> <p>The lawsuit filed against journalist Can Ataklı due to “inciting or insulting the public to hatred and hostility” over his remarks about the father of a soldier who lost his life in a clash in the Claw-Kilit Operation region...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday, October 10, Istanbul 5th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Özgür Gündem Editors-in-Chief on Watch Trial</u></p> <p>The retrial of Özgür Gündem Editors-in-Chief on Duty Şebnem Korur Fincancı, Erol Önderoğlu and Ahmet Nesin, whose acquittal verdicts against them were overturned on appeal...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thursday, October 10, Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Case Against Bosphorus Protests</u></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 style="text-align: center;">Friday, October 11, Istanbul 17th Criminal Court of First Instance</p>