

UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS CHASING NEWS



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From The Foundation

Of course, when one speaks of a “problem”, the first thing that comes to mind is freedom of press and freedom of expression. But nowadays, the fear of unemployment and being left unemployed is as important as freedom of press and expression for journalists; besides, these two are not inseparable from each other.

15 years ago, in a not-so-distant past, the discharge of a reporter or editor would spark reactions among their colleagues. In those times, journalism was the subject of discussion rather than distinctions such as “pro-government”, “partisan”, “dissident”.

Nowadays, the situation is entirely different: Self-proclaimed women and men journalists are mobilized to have their colleagues fired who work at the newspapers which they don't approve of, let alone being in solidarity! Especially in the last 10 years, I had to witness in pain how some of my brightest, resisting students were dragged towards other paths.

The importance of solidarity shows itself in journalism as in all occupations in such situations. Like anyone else, feeling that one is not alone as a journalist and using this feeling to continue one's work is of vital importance regarding the reporting of the news both for the journalist and for the public.

We as journalists from Turkey unfortunately cannot show a good example of solidarity. If we had, we as the IPS Communication Foundation wouldn't have organized a competition for unemployed journalists and declared it proudly because employed journalists still have a problem of protecting their posts against the state and their boss. But this situation also needs to be empathized with. When we started practicing journalism years ago, we couldn't imagine that a political figure, let alone a leader, would call our boss and ask for our dismissal.

They are trying to discipline the one they haven't sent to prison through

starvation and unemployment. Otherwise, how else can we explain a young person, who is prepared to work for 1,200 TL (300 Euros) losing courage in the face of the risk of not being able to find a job? Falling in love, getting married, having a child, and practicing journalism well enough to have all these is becoming impossible. This dark and dire situation still harbours hope. Such periods lead to seeking and finding ways of resistance and solidarity as well.

Have we heard of any TV channel, newspaper or a magazine recruiting staff through an exam in the last 15-20 years? Of course, I don't count TRT's exam to hire "useful" staff as an example. Dozens of young people from 80 communication faculties graduate with the excitement of becoming a journalist. However, merit and qualification are no longer criteria. The criteria are set on the understanding of "whatever our states people say is true". So, it is based on the biggest crime that a journalist can commit. The creation of a generation of journalists that don't ask questions, don't doubt, don't get excited is desired.

Sometimes speaking in such cryptic way may be found strange, even immoral by some. However, I am of the opinion there is no other way to get out of this dark period besides questioning ourselves and becoming stronger.

People and individuals' right to information is being destroyed because journalists are being pushed outside of their occupation. The phrase "journalism is not a crime" must not be perceived as a cliché. In fact, this struggle is a struggle to save the occupation. No one who calls himself or herself journalist can stay out of it.

Tuğrul Eryılmaz

IPS Communication Foundation Board Member

The Journalists Who Are Left Unemployed Resisted By Making News Reports

There are many obstacles facing the freedom of expression. The first things that come to mind are censorship or legal suits brought against the journalists. It is normal that these two come to mind immediately because they are both "hostile" interventions. However, "being left unemployed" is maybe seen as a more vital intervention for press workers because this constitutes a dimension of "civilian death" for the journalists.

The issue of unemployment of journalists is indeed not something new. I started practicing journalism 25 years ago. I tried to calculate how many times I was left unemployed as I sat to write this piece. I've counted enough to conclude that it was a lot. What prevented me from counting further was that I got lost in my memories of my unemployment in 2001. I had a serious economic crisis and found myself kicked to the curb by the magazine I worked at. When we gone to our workplace, we realized that our key cards weren't working. We stood petrified in front of the building in which we worked just a day before. Later on, we entered the building with the security staff. There were no computers on our desks. They let us take our personal stuff. Then they took us to the accounting office and finally outside of the building.

It was quite terrifying. The economic crisis rumor had become a reality for us. I was at the relative beginning of the occupation; it was normal that I got scared. My later unemployment didn't scare me that much. I learned that I could somehow find a job. However, especially the moves to leave the journalists unemployed after the State of Emergency that was declared in the wake of the July 15 coup attempt have made me feel as worried as I felt when my key card didn't open the door in 2001, even though I am not unemployed at the moment. I knew that everything was getting worse, but I was very surprised. "How can such a thing happen?" I asked myself. But this could happen and it was happening.

I've learned throughout the years that leaving journalists unemployed was not really that arbitrary. Bosses knew very well who to fire. It was not very difficult to realize that leaving the journalists unemployed was also

preventing people from getting information. The dissidents were the first ones to be fired. The remaining ones had to deal with self-censorship.

Remaining with a feeling of shame, fear and regret as a colleague of yours passes by with a few of his or her belongings – mostly books - in a small carton has most of the time aroused the feeling in me that leaving is better than remaining. I can say that I left plenty of times.

What we came across in journalism wasn't very different yesterday, and I believe it is a fact that harsher things are happening today.

When dealing with the criteria in freedom of expression reports, the number of arrested journalists gives a clear insight. Counting the number of arrested, detained or libellee journalists is relatively easier than calculating the number of those who were prosecuted, detained or in custody.

After the July 15 coup attempt, we have seen that the oppressive atmosphere that Turkey has suffered for so many years has been more and more oppressive. In this period, whereby the freedom of press became more limited, the journalists who were forced to quit their jobs have become a more visible phenomenon.

Let us put forward some figures to show the calamity of the situation. According to bianet's 2016 Media Monitoring Report, 778 press credentials and 46 journalists' passports were cancelled while the property of 54 journalists were confiscated in 2016. According to BIA Media Monitoring Report, the number of journalists who were left unemployed in 2016 is 2,708. Journalists' Association of Turkey had announced the number of unemployed journalists and media employees as approximately 10,000, when those who lost their jobs after the closing down of 179 media outlets through statutory decrees were taken into consideration. To compile the figures of unemployment in the media sector is not an easy task. However, it is clear that that unemployment is in direct proportion with the closing down of media outlets.

We give specific coverage to the problem of being forced to quit one's job

in media monitoring reports we publish quarterly. We define this problem as one of the fundamental handicaps before the freedom of speech.

We started our project "Unemployed Journalists Chasing News" in order to support journalists who were struggling with unemployment during the state of emergency, with the financial support of the Consulate General of the Netherlands' Matra-Human Rights Program. We published the call for papers on December 9, 2016 and accepted submissions until December 30.

The project was comprised of 10 news files, every one of which would be produced by two unemployed journalists in return for royalties, and published in bianet.

The news jury, comprised of Prof. Dr. Yasemin İnceoğlu and journalists Tuğrul Eryılmaz, Nadire Mater, Banu Tuna, Murat Çelikkan and Doğu Eroğlu evaluated 38 applications and chose 10 news files.

The publication of the news began on April 18, 2017. The publication of 26 news under 10 headlines was completed on May 3, 2017.

The publication of "Unemployed Journalists Chasing News" project began with the two news-file "Where do the unemployed journalists work" prepared by İrfan Aktan and Eren Güvendik. The first file showed that the journalists, though forced out of their jobs, were not able to move away from journalism.

After this, the two-piece file by Volkan Ağır and İbrahim Karcı, which investigated the "new diaspora", formed by Turkish citizens who chose or were forced to live abroad after the state of emergency, was published.

Next, the three-piece news file by Aynur Tekin and Ferhat Demir on the discrimination suffered by Afro-Turks in Turkey and the four-piece news file by Remzi Bıdancir and Leyla Ayaz on the malfunctions in the education of disabled citizens, told through the Bingol example, was published.

Oktay Altekin and Zana Kibar dealt with Diyarbakır Suriçi, where a curfew was declared on December 2, 2015 and which was left in ruins after

operations ended on March 9, 2016. They told the destruction in Hasırlı Neighborhood in Suriçi, known as Gavur Neighbourhood in two news pieces.

Michelle Demishevich and Elif Ural narrated the struggle of trans individuals in Turkey through the personal lives of four people.

Ivy Association was only one of the NGOs which were shut down on November 22, 2016 with the statutory decree no 677. The association that was combatting poverty was providing aid to some 32 thousand people. Nurhak Yılmaz and Sertaç Kayar told the story of the association and those who were deprived of aid.

Problems arising from urban transformation was another title. Ecem Engin and Şenay Öztürk prepared a two-piece news file, approaching Balat with this topic.

The headline of the file prepared by Zehra Doğan and Refik Tekin was “Art under the Grip of Trustees”. They narrated how the trustees appointed to municipalities previously held by Democratic Regions Party hindered art activities in a three-piece study.

The last file of the project was a three-piece study which dealt with the oppression of Kurdish political movement between 1925 – 2016, titled “Prison Chronology of Kurdish Movements”.

With the 10 news files, we covered a significant portion of the problems faced in Turkey in recent years in accordance with the journalism of rights and the peace approach of bianet. We introduce the project itself as a study that drew attention to the problems of unemployed journalists and preclusion of freedom of press and people’s right to information. While this was a first, we would like to pursue similar projects with the belief that one day freedom of press and expression and unemployment of journalists will not be a subject of debate.

Haluk Kalafat
bianet Eş Yayın Yönetmeni

About the Project

We carried out the project “Unemployed Journalists Chasing News” with the support of the Consulate General of the Netherlands Human Rights Program for the 2016-2017 period. The supervisor of the project was Murat Çelikkan and its coordinator was Öznur Subaşı. The jury of the project was comprised of Banu Tuna, Doğu Eroğlu, Haluk Kalafat, Nadire Mater, Tuğrul Eryılmaz and Yasemin İnceoğlu.

Within the project, which was carried out for solidarity with the journalists left unemployed, 20 journalists prepared 10 news files. The news began to be published on April 18, 2017. On May 3, World Freedom of Press Day, the publication of the news pieces was completed and we came together with the unemployed journalists who worked in the project and other employed and unemployed colleagues. Nilgün Uysal and Haluk Kalafat were the editors of news files, which were published in English, Kurdish and Turkish.



**Even Though They Communicate
Via Their New “Occupations,”
They Are Journalists**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

DON'T WRITE JOURNALIST DON'T WRITE - 1

Left-wing, Kurdish or member of Gülen movement. Some of them are still unemployed, some work as carpenters, some opened shops and some are inaccessible. The Chairman of Journalists Union of Turkey evaluates.

İrfan Aktan
Eren Güvendik

When this time of crackdowns ends, researchers will indeed do media monitoring to see the picture of these days. Books will be written, documentaries will be shot, eyewitnesses will be heard. The main reference guide of the researchers will be the incidents that were or were not reported in the written and visual media.

Live footage of TV stations raided by police, “free press will not remain silent” slogans echoing in courthouse corridors, unjust sufferings of discharged journalists who spent their lives for their occupation, journalists’ pleas in courts and absurd charges pressed against them will be the subjects of documentaries and researches.

Social objection that started in 2013 with the Gezi protests against the AKP government has been followed by policies of ominous crackdowns, censorship and auto-censor against the press. “Elimination” efforts firstly run through the bosses were actualized by mass discharges through statutory decrees or trustee appointments to media outlets in 2016.

As some of the journalists who were left unemployed try to continue their job by forming new mediums, some others of unknown number had to go on exile due to government’s crackdown. The remaining large majority that corresponds to some 10,000 people seem to be decoupled from their profession at least for now.

Waiting to go back to their careers

Most of the discharged journalists don’t seek jobs in the media sector and some try to sustain their lives in different line of works. But they all expect the political crackdowns to come to an end and go back to their careers.

Serpil Savumlu, journalist for 15 years, is unemployed now. Indeed, she was employed until recently. However, she had to close down the dry fruits and nuts shop she had opened up in her hometown of Bandırma. She is currently looking for a job.

Gökhan Kazbek, journalist for 27 years, finally has a job now: Carpentry.

Semra Pelek, journalist for 18 years, was fired from Milliyet newspaper through an “order from above,” one year before Savumlu and Kazbek. After a year of unemployment, she finally found a job as a copywriter at a public relations company.

Denizcan Abay, journalist for four years. He has been unemployed since October 4, 2016. On the same day, his mother was fired as the radio she had worked for was shut down. His journalist father has refugee status in Germany due to the prison sentence he received. If Denizcan Abay’s dream to open a cafe comes true, he will have a new job.

İhsan Çağrı Boyacı started journalism a few years ago. He had a job until recently. He was working as a waiter at a bar in Ankara. Yet when he could not get along with his boss, he needed to quit. Now he is looking for a job.

Ahmet Gülmez founded his own workplace. His bookshop is doing fine for the time being.



[CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Cameraperson Dedeoğlu

When an event takes place, camerapeople scuffle to get the best shot. From time to time, there are struggles that end in fights.

Turgut Dedeoğlu, a cameraman for 31 years, is called “grandpa” by his colleagues and is certainly respected among them.

When the camerapeople scuffle at social events, “grandpa” is always given the best spot. More precisely, he used to be given the best spot. Although he retired in 2011, he kept working in order to provide for his children in university until very recently.

He is unemployed since October 2016, and no position in media is given to this master cameraperson.



[CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Serpil Sevumlu: From anchorwoman to tradeswoman

Serpil Savumlu, a journalist for 15 years, worked most recently for İMC TV. Her tradeswomanship journey is a known story:

A little dry fruits and nuts shop in Bandırma that does not do much business. Having begun journalism in 2012 at Evrensel newspaper, Savumlu worked at their Ankara bureau for two years and then went on to become a correspondent at State Security Court in İstanbul.

Later, she became an anchorwoman for the night news in Hayat TV until 2009. In 2012, she was transferred to

İMC TV. She was both the editor and the presenter of “Purple Bulletin,” the women news program of the channel: “My résumé only consisted of journalism. But now there is tradeswomanship. Of course it did not last long.”

İMC TV was among the 12 TV and 11 radio channels that were shut down following the Statutory Decree no 668. A few days after the decree, on October 4th, İMC TV was raided by the police. While İMC broadcasted the police raid live, employees protested the raid. Hayatın Sesi TV, Denge TV, Jiyan TV, Zarok TV and Van TV, also listed on the decree, were all shut down one by one.

Savumlu learnt about the raid when

she was next to her mother-in-law's deathbed.

"I was in the hospital while there were the rumors circulating that the station was going to be shut down and that the police were about to arrive. On one side, there was the closing down of the channel, on the other there was the death of my mother-in-law... One after another. Afterwards, I did not even have the strength to look for a job. As a matter of fact, I did not have the hope to find one. All the places I could have worked for were shut down. Then I had to go back to my hometown of Bandırma.

Here I opened a shop where I sell natural products. But I don't have a good grasp of trademanship. Of course I wasn't the only source of the problem. When people buy chickpeas, they buy them in grams. There is a ghastly poverty. In addition, there is a ghastly racism. Bandırma is a little place.

People learnt that I was working for İMC TV until recently and that the channel was shut down through Statutory Decree. They also learnt that I am married to a Kurd. My son's name is Deniz Jiyan but here I had to call him Deniz. With all these things, I couldn't continue with the shop and I closed it."

Gökhan Kazbek: From editorship to carpentry

This time we go to a carpentry atelier in Istanbul Okmeydanı. Here works a journalist with 27 years of experience.

Gökhan Kazbek started journalism in 1989 at Sabah newspaper. He worked for Hürriyet, Turkish News, Star TV, Kanal 6, Ata TV and TRT. He was fired from TRT in October 2013 due to his tweets following the Gezi protests.

Like all the other journalists who were fired after Gezi with the direct or indirect involvement of the government, Kazbek was not provided with a position in the mainstream media. After one and a half years of unemployment, he finally started working as an editor for İMC TV. This was his last experience as a journalist before beginning carpentry. Some of his job applications were turned down.

Some of them were not even answered. When he was convinced that there is no space for him to do journalism, Kazbek entered the carpentry business with his colleague Mevlüt Aydoğan, who was a cameraperson..

After he was sacked from TRT following the Gezi protests, Aydoğan worked for Ulusal Kanal for a while. He was not paid for

nine months, so he quit and found a job at Cihan News Agency. He once again became unemployed after the agency was closed due to the first Statutory Decree after July 15th.

Kazbek tells about the aftermath:

"Mevlüt has improved his skills in carpentry above the level of a hobby. When İMC was closed, we met again and decided to start this job. I am on both the production and marketing sides of the business.

He is only on the production side. We have another friend who is a carpenter by trade. From time to time we consult him. We have our atelier. We are skilled enough to do anything, from tables to bedroom furniture."

Even though they have skills, the money they make with carpentry is not enough to pay rent, let alone provide for their children at university.

Kazbek says "when İMC was shut down, we were like fish out of water". One night four friends of his, who were also unemployed journalists, asked him to come to a cafe in Kadıköy.

When he got there, Kazbek learned that his friends were trying to earn money by conducting beer tasting for customers:

"They were all journalists... One friend had gotten into e-commerce, trying to sell women's clothing. Some friends even found regular jobs. Yet there are many friends who could not yet find any job.

I saw the state of emergency period in the 1990s as a journalist. But I have never seen a period like this before. I am 51 years old and have worked this job for 27 years. My present condition is a zero. I don't have a house or car. I have nothing."

Semra Pelek: Your names came from above

It is said that many journalists who were unemployed following the coup d'état of 1980 went into the ad-writing business. Semra Pelek, who was working as a politics editor in Milliyet and was sacked in August 2015 with 10 fellow journalists, went into a similar job. Of course, this was after a year of unemployment.

It was not easy to switch to another job. Yet Pelek feels lucky when she looks at the condition of her friends: "I was doing journalism with love and passion, but I am not sure whether I have warmed up to this new job as much. I entered Istanbul University's Communication Faculty in 1996. Starting from my second year, I began working as a correspondent for Milliyet newspaper. I worked as the correspondent at the state security court.

Then I worked at other companies. Then I went back to Milliyet. After the elections of June 2015, there was collective layoff at Milliyet in September 2015. They said to us that our names came from above. But we don't know where "above" is."

What's more, on what grounds are those "above" making these lists?. Pelek replies:

"In addition to AKP's political intervention for the last 10-15 years, there has been a transformation in media that dates back to the 1990s. Back then, they were sacking experienced journalists and hiring younger ones who they can employ for cheaper. Especially after June 2015,

they went on to leave no critical voices in newspapers.

No environment was left in mainstream media in which principled journalism could be conducted. Newspapers are asked to take sides for them.

This is against the essence of journalism. At Milliyet, there was no direct pressure on me to take sides. But as I was the politics editor, there was a lot of pressure. The number of questions like "why did you use this at this size" or "why did you use that heading" increased. Even putting the opposition party in a headline in 15 centimeters was a problem. You begin to question journalism after a while.



When you try to give space on page to a piece of news worthy of its value, there are other dynamics interfering. It starts to contradict with the values you believe in and to which you were working accordingly. And you become unable to work. For this reason, I didn't even apply to a job after Milliyet. In alternative media on the other hand, economic problems make employment impossible.

Denizcan Abay: Family of unemployed journalists

Denizcan Abay has experienced the oppression suffered by journalists in Turkey through the penalties received by her father, Necati Abay. The elder Abay took refuge in Germany in 2012, after

receiving a prison sentence regarding a reporting he had done.

When she was in high school, Denizcan Abay started to help her father who was the spokesperson for the Platform for Solidarity with Arrested Journalists, to keep tally of the journalists in jail. For this reason, she closely observed the price of critical journalism back then.

After she graduated from the faculty of communication, she started to work at Özgür Radyo, carrying on her father's and mother's occupation. Her second and final job was at İMC TV. On October 4, Özgür Radyo was closed along with İMC and her mother Leyla Abay, director of the radio, was taken into custody.

Abay tells about the aftermath:

“My father was also taken into custody and arrested at Atılım newspaper in 2013. He was under arrest for six months, while the cases were proceeding. At this time, he was the spokesperson for the Platform for Solidarity with Arrested Journalists. I passed my high school years helping my father list the names of the imprisoned journalists.”

The present situation for the Abay family is this: The mother is unemployed, the father is a refugee, and Denizcan dreams to open a cafe after four years of journalism. In her own words: “it is still in the stage of intention”. But her real intention is to return to journalism as soon as “the state of things change.”

Faruk Balıkçı:

When the door was closed, we entered through the chimney

Journalists reacted to the closing down of Diyarbakır-based media organizations Azadi TV, Jiyan TV, Zarok TV, Gün TV and Dicle News Agency through the Statutory Decree no 668 issued on September 29, 2016, with a three-day sit-in protest.

Faruk Balıkçı, who participated in the sit-in says: “We, over 70 journalists only from Diyarbakır, were fired in one night.”

“I was working for İMC TV. To be honest I haven't made a legal application. Neither did I get a compensation. At first, we wanted to carry out our sit-in protests with a hunger strike. But then it was generally agreed that this might have been inconsequential. For that matter we renounced this idea.

Most of those who were fired are still unemployed. Many of them are looking for jobs in different areas. I personally found a job in the news site Özgürüz. But when you have so many unemployed friends, you don't feel like doing journalism. I can't say that we are doing our job as willingly as before. But in the end, they closed the door on us, but we entered from the chimney. There are numerous friends who could not enter through the chimney.”

Gülen Movement media

Employees who worked for media organizations close to the Fetullah Gülen movement and were fired form an important portion of the journalists who were sacked due to political oppression. According to press organizations, this number is somewhere in between 2,500 and 3,000.

These closures were justified in the statutory decrees as “affiliated or, in connection to Fethullahist [Gulenist] Terror Organization (FETÖ), which was

designated as a threat to national security; terrorist organizations; or structures, formations or groups which are decided to function against the national security of the state by the National Security Council”.

Yet those who became unemployed following the closing of Gülen Movement media outlets do not want to talk to anybody out of fear of being associated with putschists. Journalists from Gülen Movement media that we could reach hid their past. Such that, without exception, they all rejected giving us even an anonymous interview.

This can be explained by the fact that 30 journalists and employees of Zaman newspaper, 21 of which are arrested, are facing three life sentences for “attempts to orchestrate a coup” and up to 15 years of imprisonment for “being a member of a terrorist organization.

They do not talk

For example, a journalist who had worked for Bugün newspaper for years cancelled our appointment at the last minute due to a job offer he received. He said “I am sorry, but I found two journalist women who will speak to you”. Later, he told us that those two women also did not want to talk.

One did not want to talk because she had started to sell jewelry online and she was scared to lose this job to which she has given everything she has.

A former correspondent, who now works as a laborer in a factory, also did not give the interview since he did not want to lose his job. Another possible interviewee, a cameraperson, refused to meet us by saying, “We have had a run of bad luck. We were just barely not imprisoned. Let's not get into these things”.

A journalist who had lost his job while working in Gülen Movement Media says: “When I was among them I was like a zombie as I don't have anything to do with religion. Yet now I am forced to prove that I am not a member of FETÖ.”

As there is a possibility that he might find a job, he also did not want to talk to us.

Where are the journalists in Gülen Movement media?

Gökhan Durmuş, Chairman of the Journalists Union of Turkey (TGS), says that following the operations towards Gülen Movement media, they could not even reach out to those who are members of the union.

“There are approximately two thousand unemployed journalists who were fired

through the operations against Gülen Movement media. These people hide themselves as they are scared to be accused of membership in the movement. This is quite clear. The majority of them have nothing to do with it. They were working there for their bread and butter. But they think that they will be accused if they go and make a declaration about this. There are already 80 journalists who are arrested due to membership to FETÖ. That's why they are timider. That's the reason why they are not in the market, looking for jobs.

I know at least that they are not looking for jobs in the media sector. Three thousand people who used to work in places that were shut down through the decrees are unemployed now. Their possible employers are not hiring new people. Instead, they are drawing down their workforce. There are dismissals in these places. Often, three or five people are sacked from big media companies. Hence, even if dismissed journalists were to look for a job, there is no place they can find one.”

Durmuş, Chairman of TGS, says that while they know the areas that unemployed journalists from left-wing and Kurdish media gravitate towards, there is no information regarding the majority of those once employed in Gülen Movement media.



Journalism is Banned under the State of Emergency

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

DON'T WRITE JOURNALIST DON'T WRITE - 2

*Unemployment was one of the tools of oppression,
and this pressure increased with the OHAL
announced after the July 15 coup attempt.*

İrfan Aktan
Eren Güvendik

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government's intensive crackdowns and operations started right after the Gezi Park protests, which started in İstanbul's Taksim district on May 31, 2013 and spread across Turkey.

12 people lost their lives during and after the protests, and 7,959 people were injured, 59 of them heavily.

During the Gezi protests journalists faced many attacks starting from June 2013 until September 2013. At least 153 journalists, including 10 foreign journalists, were battered and wounded with pepper gas and plastic bullets.

Journalists' efforts to cover events were prevented. The photos and video recordings of a large number of journalists were deleted by force. 39 journalists were detained; three others were arrested and charged with crimes during this period.

Many journalists who took a critical stand or refused to make news in line with the government's agenda were sacked from their jobs through direct or indirect reasons. There are no net figures from public institutions like the state channel TRT or the mainstream media as to the number of sacked journalists. However, Gezi is considered a milestone for the collective discharge of journalists.



Evaluation by the DİSK Press Labor Chair

Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) Press Labor Chair Faruk Eren, in his evaluation, said, "Though we don't know how many journalists became unemployed after the Gezi resistance, a huge injustice has started since that date".

"For instance, a lot of journalists were sacked from TRT just because of their tweets. A similar injustice occurred in pro-government media outlets."

"Nevertheless, the greatest injustice took place in the pro-Gülen media following the AKP-Gülen conflict. With trustee appointment to the Gülen community's media, we estimate as many as 2,500 journalists were left unemployed."



Eren Güvendik

I worked at İMC TV for four years. Afterwards, I worked freelance for institutions like AP and Al Arabiye TV. Then, after Nûçe TV was closed in October 2016 due to government's Kurdish policy, each and every door I knocked at the media sector was closed to me. This was because the government didn't just seize our present jobs, but our future jobs as well. I don't know whether any order was given to the media outlets, but no channel wanted me even though they were looking for a cameraperson.

Mesut Kete came to my rescue but it didn't last long either. Most recently, I worked at a stand opened by a friend of mine from university at the building of Ankara Ticaret Odası (Ankara Chamber of Commerce) in the local product section of the "Valentine's

Day Fair". The fair had started on February 2 and ended on February 14, Valentine's Day. I was selling gravy, dried fruits, jams and honey brought by Mesut Kete when I started to work for the Unemployed Journalists Chasing News project.

I started to work with Mesut in September 2016. I was left unemployed again after the fair was over because the interest in local products decreased "due to the state of that economy that forces people to save every penny in their pockets".

Mesut was a journalism graduate just like me but he never practiced journalism. He was looking for a new employee when I was left unemployed.

I, who was chasing news with a camera in his hand, had found myself selling honey! I was selling something for the first time in my life but I wasn't doing very well at that either. In the first days, I couldn't get used to it at all and failed to make any sales.

The thing is, Mesut had to close the small shop in Kızılay in capital Ankara since we couldn't make any sales. I am looking for a job in Ankara but I need a miracle to continue practicing journalism that I started in 2011.

Journalists are not organized

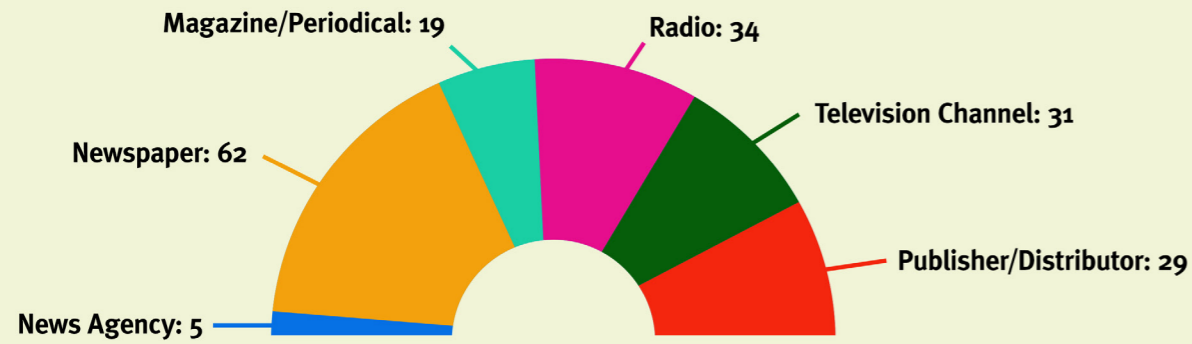
"Nevertheless, the number of those who found work at different jobs or who could find the chance to practice their profession is unknown. Since most of the journalists are not organized, their employment status or whether they have started a new job cannot be known.

"But we know that the journalists who became unemployed through the statutory decrees are not employed in the mainstream media. As Serpil Savumlu said, 'Let's say you are a tailor for 20 years, and one day they prohibit you from using needle, thread, and fabric. Our situation is exactly like this.'"

Balance sheet of the AKP-Gülen conflict

One of the big purges in the media mark the aftermath of the AKP-Gülen conflict, who were almost partners in governing since 2003.

Dissolved Media Institutions by 13 February 2017



DECREE NO:	668	675	677	By Radio Television High Council	683	Other	Total	Reopened
News Agency	3	2					5	
Newspaper	45	10	7				62	17
Magazine / Periodical	15	3	1				19	
Radio	23		1	10			34	2
Television Channel	16			12	2	1	32	1
Publisher / Distributor	29						29	
TOTAL	131	15	9	22	2	1	180	20

21 Statutory Decrees Under State of Emergency - F. Salman/A. Ergün- bianet

The most concrete example of the conflict between the two started when Gülen community began demanding more from the government. It was revealed through the fraud operation that took place between December 17- 23, 2013.

Trustees were appointed in October 2015 to the newspapers Millet and Bugun, which were owned by Ipek Koza Holding. In March 2016, Cihan New Agency's Zaman, Today's Zaman and Meydan newspapers as well as Aksiyon Magazine

were appointed trustees. The trustees closed down the newspapers.

178 media outlets were closed through the statutory decrees No. 668 (July 27, 2016), No. 675 (October 29, 2016), and 677 (November 22, 2016) issued as part of the State of Emergency declared on July 20, 2016, following the July 15 coup attempt.

According to the study by DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Trade



Unions of Turkey) Basın İş (Press Labor): 2,308 insured workers were left unemployed in the press, publishing and journalism sectors. It is not only that these people cannot receive their unemployment pay, but also they won't be able to collect their debts owed even if they open a lawsuit.

Both "solution process" and Kurdish media were closed

The government's comprehensive operations against the Kurdish media started on July 24, 2015.

Two days after an ISIS attack launched in

Suruç on July 20, 2015, two police officers were killed in their homes on July 22 in Ceylanpınar district of Şanlıurfa province.

A day later, it was decided in the security meeting held under the presidency of then-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu that an operation would be carried out against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). On July 24, when a military campaign was launched in Qandil*, over 90 news websites that report on developments concerning the Kurdish issue, including Özgür Gündem, Azadiya Welat, and Özgür Politika, were blocked.

The crackdowns against the Kurdish media intensified in this period of clashes.

23 TV and radio channels were closed on the grounds of “supporting subversive and separatist activities” through the second statutory decree.

*Qandil is a mountainous region in Iraqi Kurdistan where PKK headquarters is located.

BIA Media Monitoring Report and ÇGD figures

According to BIA's Media Monitoring Report 2016, 778 press cards were cancelled; the property of 54 journalists was confiscated; the passports of 46 journalists were cancelled, and 3 people were discriminated against in terms of receiving accreditation.

The same report noted that 348 media workers, writers and journalists were fired in 2015, 339 in 2014, and 143 in 2013. This figure jumped to 2,708 in 2016. According to the Progressive Journalists Association (ÇGD), three media workers were killed; 80 others were arrested; 299 were detained, and 32 were battered, subjected to violence or threatened in 2016.

Within the same year, seven journalists were deported; 2,622 media workers were left unemployed; five broadcasting organizations were attacked; 157 media outlets, 9 publishing houses and companies were closed; 3 press centers

were raided by police; gag orders were issued for 24 incidents; 20 websites were blocked, and 624 press cards and 32 parliamentary cards were revoked.

According to TGS' data, 142 journalists were behind bars as of January 19, 2017. Even though different institutions give different figures as to the number of journalists left unemployed, there is a consensus that the number in the country overall is around 9,000-10,000.

According to TÜİK's data in 2015, journalists have the highest rate of being unemployed among university graduates. As the unemployment rate was 9.9% in 2014, the figure was 29.1% in the field of journalism.

Despite having 24,000 people in the labor force by the end of 2014, 7,000 journalists were left unemployed in the sector, with 17,000 journalists employed. The unemployment rate of people who graduated from the fields of journalism and information almost tripled the average unemployment rate of those who graduated from a university or faculty.

There are only six media outlets who work with a collective labor agreement in Turkey. Five of them (Cumhuriyet, Evrensel, BirGün, bianet and Yurt) are organized through TGS, and the other (state-run Anadolu Agency) is organized in the Media-Labor Union.

İrfan Aktan

Aktan started his journalism career at bianet in 2000. He served as reporter, editor and columnist at, respectively, Express, BirGün, Nokta, Yeni Aktüel, Newsweek Türkiye, Birikim, Radikal, birdirbir.org and zete.com. He worked as Representative to Ankara at İMC TV. He is the author of the books titled 'Nazê/Bir Göçüş Öyküsü' (A Story of Migration) and 'Zehir and Panzehir' (Poison and Antidote). He is currently writing at Express magazine and GazeteDuvar.

Eren Güvendik

Güvendik graduated from the Faculty of Communication at Ankara University. He started his journalism career at the Ankara bureau of İMC TV in his senior year. He worked as a cameraperson at İMC TV for four years. After 2015, he left İMC TV and worked as a freelance cameraperson. He made TV programs for various TV channels. He is currently working as a freelance cameraperson.



Germany: New Generation Diaspora

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRATION - 1

One of the things that those who manage to go from Turkey hear most is the sentence "You've left and saved yourself, good for you."

Do the departers truly live in a euphoria of victory with a fundamental sense of salvation?

Volkan Ağır
İbrahim Karıcı

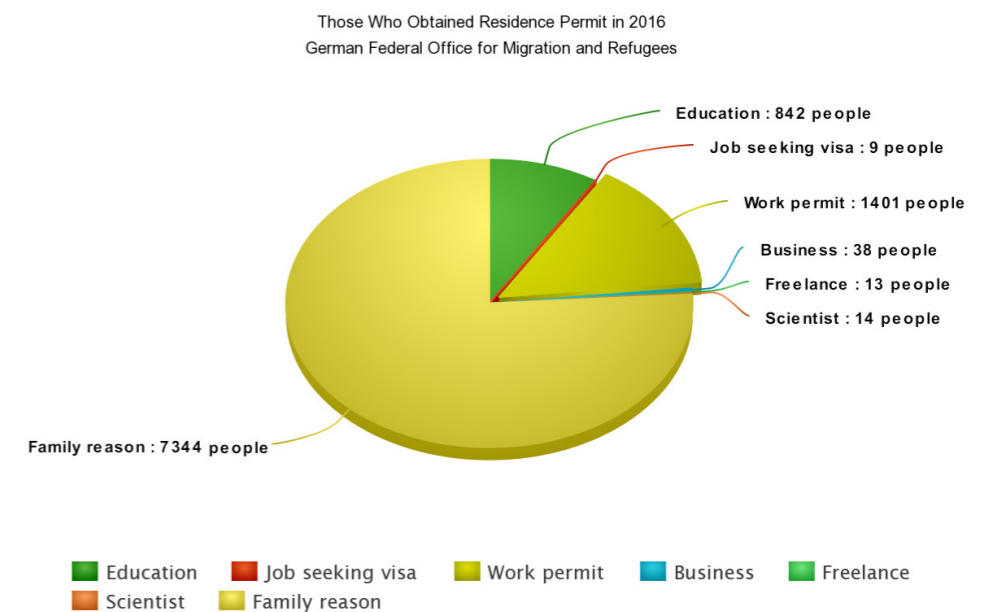
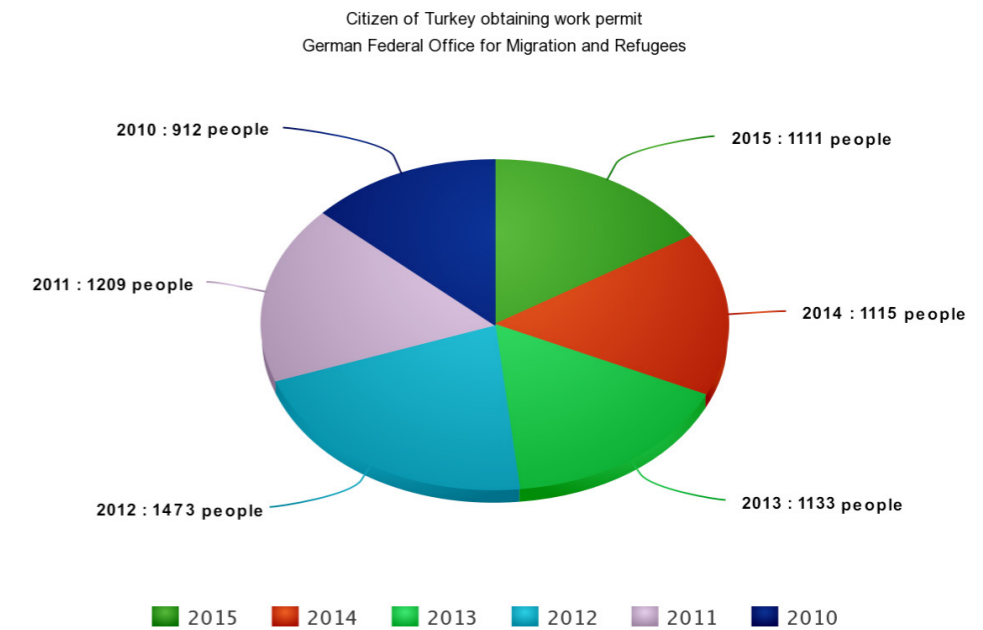
*"I've left tears behind
I've left a spouse crying in tears
I've left my left side desolated, hey
How would you know
Who I got crossed with*

Ahmet Kaya

No one leaves willingly. Conditions force people to leave. Is there anyone who leaves out of his or her own will? Indeed, however, heaven knows why it is called "moving" rather than immigration or voluntary immigration. Furthermore, this situation is not considered a problem.

In Turkey, an increasing number of people seem to be leaving for other countries, or does it just look like that to us? Recently, many people who have already established their lives have based their plans on "leaving" either for a period of time or for good. As some people already have plans for their future, the only thing that the rest rely on is leaving the country.

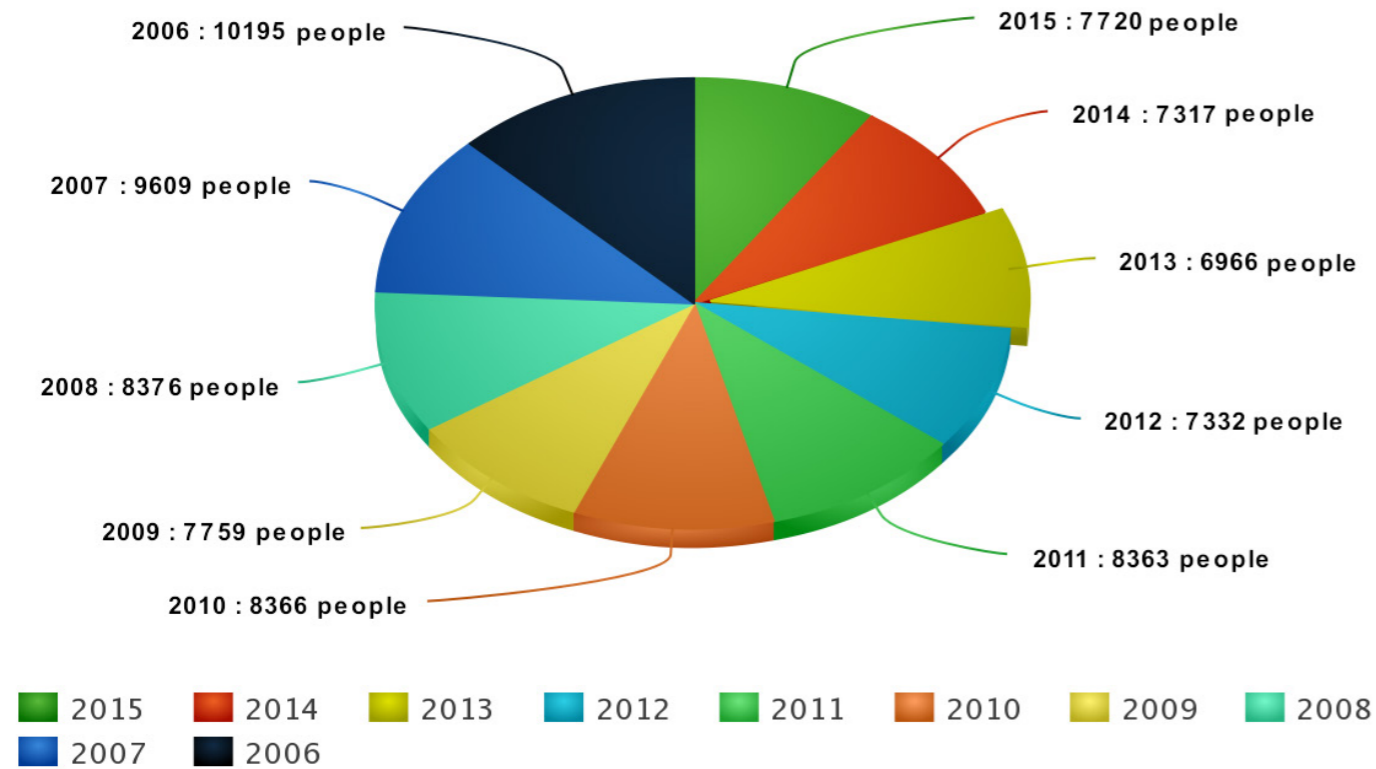
But, is it that easy to leave? Do things get back on the rails after one leaves? Is getting rid of a situation that you find harsh and challenging as simple as stop watching a bad movie and start watching a new one?



Germany is the first country that comes to the mind of the ones who plan to move away from Turkey. Turkey and Germany have a certain history. First the motto "We lost when Germany lost" emerged in the early 1900s. Then the Second World War followed. An influx of workers from Turkey to Germany started "upon Germany's wishes." Cooperation during this period as

well as the decision of those who went to Germany to reside permanently have deepened relations. The number of Turkish citizens living in Germany has reached approximately 3 million since then. The number of citizens of Turkey who went to Germany and obtained a residence permit was 10,388 in 2013, 10,748 in 2014, and 10,690 in 2015.

Those Who Obtained Residence Permit in 2016
German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees



Of the 2013 incoming residents, 1,463 came to Germany with an education permit; 1,307 with a residence permit, and 6,966 through the family reunification program. The 2014 figures showed 1,327 people with an education permit, 1,352 with a work permit and as many as 7,317 through family reunification. In 2015, 997 Turkish citizens started to reside in Germany with an education permit, 12 with a job-seeking visa, 972 with an employment visa, and 8,667 through family reunification.

In 2016, the plan of leaving Turkey became more popular than ever, and the number of citizens who obtained a residence permit was 9,661. 76% of those came to Germany for family reasons. These reasons can be divided into two

categories: marriage, and return of people whose families reside in Germany. Our path crossed with one of the 7,344 people who came to Germany through family reunification in 2016.

Breaking Point: Second Half of July

X, who is a cameraperson, took part in the shooting of various documentary movies. He also worked freelance occasionally for a TV channel that was outside of the mainstream and is now closed. He first came to Germany in May of 2016. His reason to come was again a documentary shooting, however, he started to have a romantic relationship with a woman from Germany. They had met in Turkey before

X came to Germany. This became a factor for him to accept the job offer in Germany. As the shootings dragged on, X managed to prolong his stay by extending his visa till June.

The incident that made him one of the 7,344 people occurred in July. His girlfriend was more affected by what happened in Turkey more than X. She asked him not return to Turkey and marry her. Making the decision without even informing their families, they got married in the third week of July. He has never been back to Turkey since that day. This makes him to long for Turkey.

The last time he was in Turkey was in June 2016. He intends to fulfill the responsibilities of staying here in Germany alongside the burden that has been placed on him by this decision. He struggles with challenging issues such as securing a residence permit, moving house, starting a new life, adapting to a new language and finding a job. As he continues to work freelance, he attends to a German language course and puts in a serious effort to shift to a more established life.

Permanent guest

The number of people who went from Turkey to Germany for education is 842. This figure includes those studying on the

undergraduate or postgraduate level. G. is one of them. Writing his/her dissertation as a student in social sciences, G. decided to go to Germany through the guest student program. But he/she kept the idea of living in Germany permanently in the back of his/her mind.

Coming to Germany in September, G. went through a difficult time due to losses in his/her family. The first reason for him/her to come here was to move away from the process filled with desperation and thus to take a breather.

However, since September, there was only one thing on his/her mind: Continuing to live in Germany where he/she came to complete his/her doctorate degree.

In addition to difficulties of living in Turkey as an academic, losing his/her hopes for a bright future in Turkey formed the basis to make his/her visit permanent.

There is a chance that he/she can find a position in the academy if he/she can transfer his/her doctorate registration to Germany.

At the time of writing this report, he/she was focusing on his/her dissertation and attempts to stay here.

G is also keeping the sports teaching license he/she obtained in Turkey as a plan B.

Seeking a new life the year before turning 50

The number of people who come to Germany with the job-seeking visa is the smallest number within these statistics. Ş.Ş. is among the 9 people who were granted this visa. As an employee working in fields of music and art organization in Turkey, Ş.Ş. was working in the organization of large-scale music festivals. However, the downward trend taking place recently in this field has also brought his/her business to a standstill. It was perhaps easier for him/her compared to others to seek a solution in Germany and to attempt this before he/she turns to age of 50.

He/she decided to settle in Germany with the advantage of having spent his/ her childhood in Germany. Even though he/ she had certain advantages, such as

speaking the language of the country and spending his/her childhood here, he/she had to face up to leaving his/ her spouse and kid who was going to primary school behind.

As Ş.Ş. noted, “Instability of the country and not being able to see a future for his/her children”, is the primary reason that drove him/her to immigration. He/she has been going through this process by seeking work and starting a business with the little money left in his/her pocket. His/her goal is to continue the profession he/ she knows best. However, it is not easy to enter such professional circles, especially in Berlin. Ş.Ş.’s spouse, who plans to bring his/her child to Germany eventually, will continue to stay in Turkey.

Sent by the state, victimized by the state

Tuba İnal Çekiç is an academic. Even though she worked at Humboldt University as a guest lecturer in 2016, she is now among the victims of the statutory decrees.

Coming to Germany with her daughter for educational purposes in June, Tuba met with Alper through a stroke of luck. “Immigration is in fact a never-ending thing,” Alper says. Tuba thinks that it is going to be easier to adapt in Germany thanks to the solidarity culture she learned during the Gezi protests.

Peace is in Berlin

Kadir’s story is a bit different than the previous accounts. Born in Ankara, Kadir lived in İstanbul for occupational reasons for a while before he came to Berlin.

He realized that the city tired him as he was trying to maintain a life. Upon realizing that he internalized the stress of the city, he started to question his motivations concerning his job.

The feeling that the steps he took for a job change with the motivation to change himself and people around him becoming barren drove him to different searches.

Kadir’s desire to search for a new job was driven by an urge to change himself as well as his feeling that the people around him were becoming desperate/worn-out. After not receiving compensation for most of his works, he was convinced that he needed to leave the country.

It was easier for him to make this decision because he is a computer engineer and Berlin is currently aiming to be the Silicon Valley of Europe. Kadir is one of the 965 qualified laborers who were granted work permits in 2015 in Germany.

The presence of the sectoral circle in



[CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



Berlin has helped him hold on to the city.

Even though he preferred to not follow any developments in Turkey as to not obstruct his adaptation process in Berlin, his arrival coincided with the October 10 massacre in Ankara.

Having to watch people he knew being killed in these explosions from far away was one of the harshest spiritual experiences he had to endure.



Germany: Immigration of the Suffocated

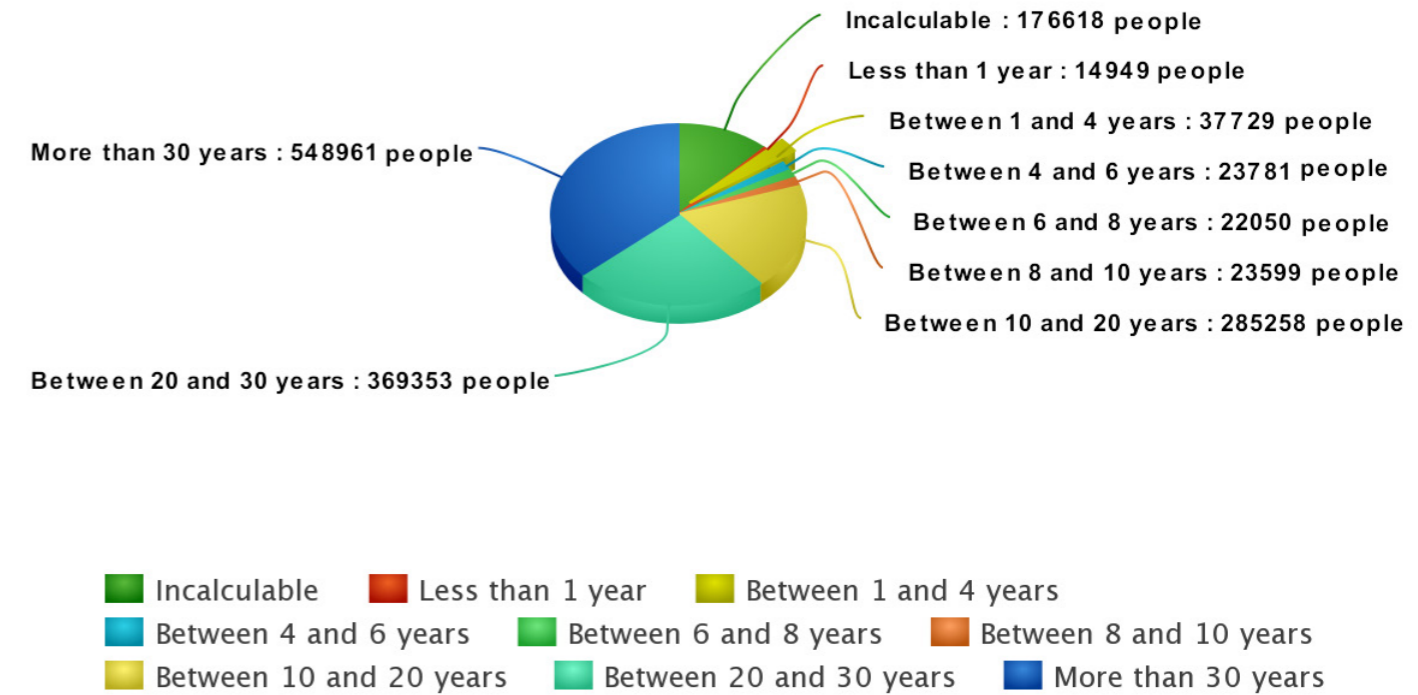
FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRATION - 2

The fact that the common ground of the individuals we interviewed were Gezi Park protests and its aftermath led us to name this new diaspora the “Gezi Diaspora.”

Volkan Ağır
İbrahim Karıcı

Those Who Obtained Residence Permit in 2016
German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees



According to data gathered up to March 31, 2016, the number of citizens of Turkey who obtained a 1 to 4 years residence permit from Germany is 37,729.

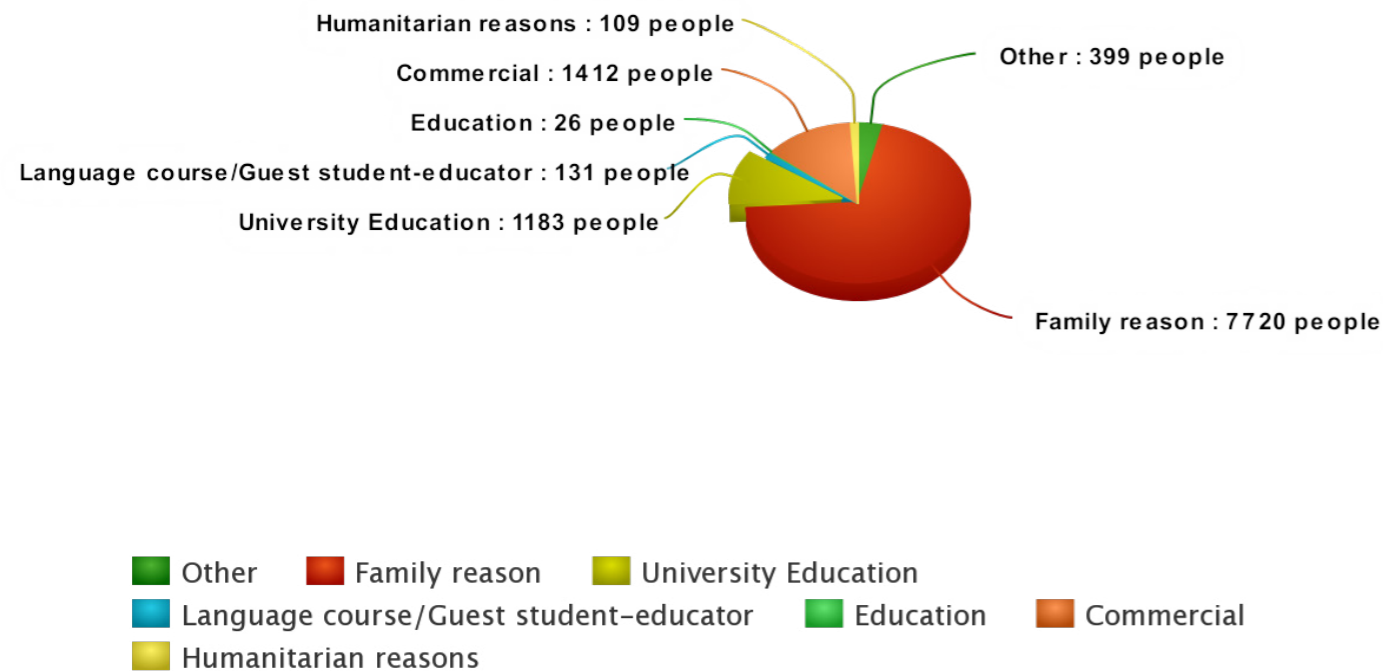
This data shows us the leap in these figures started in early 2012 and did not end before 2016.

Hence, the data led us to the Gezi Park protests and their aftermath as our interviewees also express. Their biggest support is the solidarity they learned those days. From the practices they narrated to us, we can understand that they hold onto each other in moments of despair.

The common ground of these people, the opinions of whom we had access to, is feelings of being worn out. We can describe their state of mind similar to that of when under stress you say, "I am suffocated, I am going out for fresh air," before you leave the premises.

What provides the fresh air they are looking for however, is not the country they live now, but each other.

Those Who Obtained Residence Permit in 2016
German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees



The new generation from Turkey

It is possible to speak of a different diaspora, spontaneously formed by those who have emigrated from Turkey to Germany, especially to Berlin, during the period we have mentioned above.

The fact that the common ground of the individuals we interviewed turned out to be the Gezi Park protests and its aftermath, led us to name this new diaspora the “Gezi Diaspora.”

It’s necessary to state that those who have settled in Germany in previous years have not mixed with the generations formed by the newcomers.

For instance, what Hasan Abi, the manager of the restaurant “Ein Laden” –gathering point for people from Turkey in Berlin Weser Strasse- is explanatory. Witnessing the presence of three generations over a 40-year time, he says:

“The majority of the newcomers are different from those who came earlier for economic reasons. The newcomers are educated and intellectual. They are a loss for Turkey and a gain for Germany. Germany is aware of this.

The people coming now are forming a completely different diaspora. They are mostly journalists, writers and filmmakers.

They don’t have a problem opposing Turkey; they try to keep on doing what they did there. And they keep coming.”

It seems that the present conditions in Turkey will breed the emigration of people to Germany or other parts of the world.

Another piece of data that should be

recorded is that almost all graduates of Robert College, Deutsche Schule and Saint Benoit High School are applying for universities abroad. **

An accelerating motion

Some of the main interviewees in our report have justifiably asked to remain anonymous, as they fear the oppressive and stigmatizing atmosphere in Turkey which could affect their return. They fear speaking about the country’s impact on their psychological condition, let alone criticizing the course of events.

The fact that they wanted to remain anonymous as they are anxious whether “something would happen to them” or “they make trouble for their families at home” is a testimony as to how uncomfortable their days in Germany are.

As the reporters of this piece, we are two journalists who vacated the country after the oppression of critical media in Turkey, and our experience were similar to the ones included in the statistics above.

We are among the growing number of people who escaped the oppression they suffered and emigrated to Germany for a better future, and we are among those

who do not have the privilege to shake hands with Angela Merkel.

We observe that there is an accelerating but completely different motion, although it is very difficult to watch the uncertain condition of the country from here. We can say that if the thirst of this majority for production meets the free productive spaces in Germany, substantial results might be attained. This report that we have presented is only the tip of the iceberg.

* The statistics utilized in this report are provided by Federal Office for Migration and Refugees of Germany (BAMF).

** Liseli öğrencilerinin gözü yurtdışında /High schoolers look out to abroad - http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/egitim/651644/Liseli_ogrencilerinin_gozu_yurtdisinda.html

Volkan Ağır

He has been writing a blog since 2006. He started to serve as a correspondent for the Sports Section at Cumhuriyet Newspaper in 2008. He has been working as a sports correspondent since that date. He followed the World Cup in 2014 in Brazil, and Copa America in Chile in 2015. He has been hosting the sports programme called “Efektifpas” (Affective Pass) on Açık Radyo since 2011. He is writing weekly at GazeteDuvar and at Özgürüz at certain intervals. His articles on social and political developments are occasionally published by various media outlets. He has been living in the province of Cologne in Germany since October 2016.

İbrahim Karcı

Karcı produced a large number of files, multimedia content and documentaries on human rights violations, minority rights, forced migration, human trafficking, systematical assimilation, gentrification, LGBTI political representation, social trauma and confrontation. He worked freelance with international media outlets such as CNN, TIME, AP, BILD, TVE and NYT. He has participated freelance in many transnational and interdisciplinary projects. Karcı observed and filed social movement and grassroots organization practices that parallelly occur especially in Turkey and Turkey-Syria Border, in the Middle East, South Asia and Europe in the field.

In addition to working as a freelance journalist, documentary producer and activist on the social dynamics of new migration movements in Europe since 2015, he continues his education at the Department of “Gender and Diversity” at Rhine-Waal University (HSRW) in Germany. (www.ibrahimkarci.com)



**The Liberation from being
“the Arab Girl Looking
from the Window”**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

AFRO-TURKS - 1

Academician Körükmez and journalist Karakartal narrate the problems faced by Afro Turks in schools and business life who are discriminated due to their skin color. Mustafa Olpak, the story of the organization and Calf Festival.

Aynur Tekin
Ferhat Demir

Afro Turks: The grandchildren of slaves brought from Africa

Afro-Turks, whose grand grandmothers and grandfathers were brought from Africa to Anatolia during Ottoman era, reside predominantly in Aegean Region.

Sabancı University faculty member Hakan Erdem, who conducts studies on Ottoman slavery, says that there had been slavery in Ottoman Empire since its early period. According to Erdem, ten thousand slaves were brought from Africa to the Ottoman territories during the 19th century. Today, the members of this African community describe themselves as Afro-Turks, and they are the descendants of people exploited as slaves in areas that include present-day Turkey.

Children kidnapped in Hadj

In the Ottoman Empire, slaves were brought predominantly from Africa and Caucasia, as it was forbidden to enslave the state's own subjects. African slaves were usually brought from Sudan, Ethiopia and Chad. The slave population was made

up of prisoners of war and those abducted by slave traders.

In addition, people who went to Hadj kidnapped children and brought them to Ottoman land as a proof of their pilgrimage.

Slaves cannot own property

In Ottoman Empire, slaves were called by names such as subject, handmaiden, odalisque and gulam. They were usually employed in big farms, in domestic service and in harems. In Ottoman law, there were rules regarding slavery. Slaves were able to be bought, sold and given as gifts. They themselves could not own property.

Their language and culture were obliterated

The slaves in Ottoman Empire were forbidden to speak their own languages or to pray according to their own beliefs. This restricted them in passing on their language, religion and culture to the next generation. For this reason, citizens of Turkey of African origin (Afro-Turks) do not even know what language their ancestors spoke.

“Skin color is the ultimate determining factor in social recognition and participation in any activity.”

This is how Lülüfer Körükmez, Assistant Professor at Ege University Sociology Department, describes what Afro-Turks (the African community living in Turkey) experience in their daily lives, business life and education due to their skin color.

The African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association Society was founded in 2016. It addresses the discrimination faced by Afro-Turks due to their skin color. Academician Körükmez conducts the field studies for the association and keeps a record of the experiences of discrimination based on skin-color.



“Performance” expectation

Afro-Turks mainly live in rural areas and as such their access to education is limited. Even if they start an education, their educational life can be left unfinished. The number of those going to university are quite low.

The two most important reasons behind this are poverty and discrimination based on skin color/ racial discrimination. Afro-Turks who take part in educational life can be mocked and ridiculed by their schoolmates.

They are forced to perform to a high standard in order to stay in the educational system and have their skin color accepted.

Assistant Professor Körükmez explains:

“They have bigger difficulties when they are ordinary, without any talent or unwilling to display high performance.

An interviewee said that she was accepted more easily when she performed well on stage or when she rearranged her own outlook in accordance with the popular view.

For example, she might make her hair curly and puffy, or wear beads in her hair. That is to say, she is accepted insofar as she submits to the demand to be cute.

This may sound “nice” at first, but it is only another form of discrimination.

Nobody should have to be cute or talented to be accepted. If this principle can be embedded within education life, the children could participate in education without much difficulty.”

Awareness

Assistant Professor Körükmez argues that children who attend schools with Afro-Turk children and their parents should receive awareness trainings or other awareness practices should be put into practice.

“In order for the children to be accepted in the class, the teachers and administrators should manage the process well.



[CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



Behaviors such as mocking and teasing alienate students from educational life.

Every effort must be made to explain different skin colors to children and to encourage togetherness.”

Cuteness, sweetness, Arabness

Journalist Alev Karakartal is conducting research about Afro-Turks both within the association and personally.

Karakartal recalls that as a child, she was marginalized specifically at times of crisis.

“In good times, you are cute and sweet. But at the slightest crisis, the children would yell “Arab, Arab,” and you are excluded. In my childhood, they did not know the word “negro.” By the time I

became adult, they learned this word from American movies and started to call us “dirty negro.” I even heard someone call me “negro” in English once.

“We are a funny country. We learn the history of slavery in our country and its relation to black people through the USA.”

There is no representation in textbooks

The association has been inviting Afro-Germans (citizens of Germany with African background) to Turkey and getting them together with Afro-Turks.

Assistant Professor Körükmez describes an observation which caught her attention with regards to children:

“We realized that Afro-Turk children are interested in Afro-German children’s books, because Afro-German children’s coloring books have black children and black or mixed families. For this reason, curriculum is really important...”

The fact that they are given a place in coloring books and textbooks gives the message that the child is recognized. This is a long process, but it has to start at some point.”

From time to time, Afro-Turk families make demands to media channels and publishers for books and cartoons that have black representation. As of yet, they have not received a response.

First meeting towards organization

“I asked what sort of an association this was. When I learned that its sole purpose was cultural, I invited him to my house in Ayvalık. We hadn’t met before the association. He visited us and brought the book he wrote, ‘The Arab Girl Looks from the Window.’”

“We spoke, read his book and made the decision to establish the organization together.” African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association Chairman Şakir Doğuluer describes the first meeting towards the organization as such.



The association, which was initiated in 2006 under the chairmanship of Mustafa Olpak, has played a significant role in gathering Afro-Turks together. Thanks to the association, citizens of Turkey with African background started to be called Afro-Turks after years of being called “Arab.”

“Mustafa Olpak carried the struggle for rights in his bag”

Since they did not have an office in the beginning, Olpak was carrying the association in his bag. He met and spoke to everybody he could. There were places he was not welcome, or even kicked out. But he said, “This is a long journey,” and he continued on.

With his teammates, he went a long way in a short time. He ensured that Afro-Turks were recognized and he increased their visibility. Due to his efforts, research projects about Afro-Turks were not restricted to Turkey. International academicians and researchers were also involved in the project and an old African tradition, the Calf Festival, was brought to İzmir in this way.

Olpak’s death has deeply affected many people. Chairperson Doğuluer says: “Mustafa Olpak dragged his foot when he walked. Sometimes I hear sounds like that and I feel like he is coming.”



Mustafa Olpak

Mustafa Olpak was born in Ayvalık as the fifth child of stonemason Mehmet of Rethymno and Crete emigree Kemale. He was registered 15 months later. His date of birth on his national ID card is January 1, 1955.

After graduating from elementary school, he began to work at a lathe leveling atelier. After military service, he was active in the Karabağlar People’s House Association in İzmir.

In 1979, ultranationalists attacked the association, and he was shot from his arm and leg. He was among those who were taken into custody although they were the ones who were assaulted. He was in prison for 1 year after 1980 coup d’état. When he got out of prison, he was not able to use his arm like before. He then changed his profession and became a marble master.

In the 1990s, he decided to write down his memories and began to research his roots. The only thing he knew was that his ancestors were kidnapped from Kenya and sold to the Ottoman Empire.

“Human Slave Biographies from Kenya-Crete-Istanbul Coasts” (Ozan Pub. 2015) came to light like this. The extended edition of the book was published by Punto Publishing three years later.

Olpak was the founder and first chairman of the African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association. He died in October 2016.

(Source: [Köklerini araştıran adam Mustafa Olpak - Ayda Kayar](#))

Doğuluer: “We said: we exist too”

Doğuluer says of Mustafa Olpak:

“He dedicated his life to the association. He saw it as his child. He contributed to us a lot. Thanks to the association, we came together and said “we exist too.” We were behaving timidly due to verbal abuse. But with the association we said “he can look, he can jeer, he is the one to feel shame”. This association has broadened our horizons. We cannot thank Mustafa Olpak enough.”

About Mustafa Olpak’s project to build an African village, Doğuluer says: “He wanted to build a fully-fledged village with a cultural center, restaurant and hotels, which would carry the traces of Africa. It is still on our agenda.”



The sign of spring: The Calf Festival

Africans celebrate the Calf Festival to welcome spring. A tradition of Nigeria's largest ethnic group, the Yoruba people, it is celebrated today in Togo, Senegal, the inner parts of Kenya and Southern Sudan. Africans believe that the festival brings abundance and plenitude.

The festival is run by godyas, spiritual leaders of the community. Godyas are defined as healer women with special powers who keep the community together.

In the Ottoman era, from the 1880s until the end of the 1920s, the Calf Festival was celebrated for three weeks. It was

organized in the first week of May, when slaves were on leave, as a way to get together and communicate. Godyas would gather money to buy a calf and sacrifice it on the first Saturday of May.

Since 2006, the Calf Festival has been celebrated in Istanbul and Izmir with the organization of African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association.

Yet the celebrations held recently were different: They do not sacrifice animals anymore. The celebrations last for 3 days, and picnics and panels are organized.



How They Work/Cannot Work, Breaking Down the Stereotypes

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

AFRO-TURKS - 2

For Afro-Turks, the problem of employment differs in rural and urban contexts. They are seen as cheap labor. Skin color is an incentive for both employment and unemployment.

Prof. Dr. Çayır discusses the research about the discrimination experienced by Afro-Turks.

Aynur Tekin
Ferhat Demir

A heterogeneous community, Afro-Turks work in various sectors. One of the most common job sector is tourism. As a relatively more cosmopolitan sector, black people can find positions there more easily.

Field studies show that in the tourism sector, Afro-Turks are more likely to be employed in positions related to entertainment and communication, such as animators. Assistant Professor Lülüfer Körükmez emphasizes that the inclination to see black people as an element of entertainment is common in Turkey.

Afro-Turks who reside in rural areas work in industrial agriculture or positions that require little qualification. Since many of them have little agricultural property, they usually work as day laborers or seasonal employees.

“You will sit only at the tables in front of the bar”

The discrimination experienced by Afro-Turks in their work life usually occurs in one of two ways: Employers might not employ Afro-Turks due to their skin color, or they might employ them because it might be interesting.

Körükmez gives an example:

“An interviewee once told me something like this: He was offered a job in a bar in Alsancak and was told “You will sit only at the tables in front of the bar in order to attract customers.” So there are problems beyond our contemplation.

Sometimes people say “look, how sweet that he or she is employed”. No. This is a form of discrimination and it objectifies people before they get into production.”

They are often asked for a criminal record check

Black men might be associated with crimes such as drug dealing and smuggling. When they travel, they are often stopped and asked for a criminal record check.

The fact that a black person has a Turkish ID often makes security staff wonder, as majority of society does not have any information about Afro-Turks.

Journalist Alev Karakartal says: “When we show them our ID, it’s not uncommon that they don’t believe us and take us to police headquarters for forging IDs.”

The number of those who are working in institutions and public services is few.

Körükmez says that the darker your skin is, the less likely that you get a job. She gives an example about how the skin color affects employment:

“We interviewed three siblings who are in their 30s. Each of them had rather different skin colors. One was black, one was like you would call a Latino, and the other was close to white. The black one

was not able to find a job, and her little brother was accusing her of not explaining herself performing well enough in the job interviews. One day he said that he would come to the interview with her. He realized the situation then: the skin color made a difference.”

Türkkolu: When you move away from where you live, you become a stranger

Discrimination differs in urban and rural contexts. While there are fewer problems due to skin color in provinces and villages, in the city center discrimination increases.



Beyhan Türkkolu, an Afro-Turk working in the tourism sector shares her experience:

“Since tourism is a universal job, my experiences were not too bad. Yet when you leave the region you live in, you encounter things. I reside in Eşrefpaşa and many people residing there are long-time locals. People know one another.

I am not seen as a stranger there. Yet, when I leave there and come to Alsancak, they insult me. Sometimes in English, sometimes in Turkish. Sometimes they point their fingers and call [me] Arab.”

Women have bigger issues

Afro-Turkish women have their share of

the patriarchy, as suffered by the rest of the women in Turkey. Yet their problems are not limited to this.

Educated women with professional jobs are able to deal with the discrimination faced in their business and private lives more easily. Women who are employed as seasonal workers have a harder time to deal with this discrimination.

Karakartal says that in the upcoming periods there will be projects special projects for the women: “These women are harassed more than others. They are employed without social security. While white women can demand social security, they cannot. For this reason, we tell the kids to go to school and seek a career.”

Kenan Çayır: The stereotypes should be stretched

The Istanbul Bilgi University Sociology and Education Studies Unit functions as a bridge between elementary school teachers and academia. It conducts studies to increase the knowledge sharing between the two fields.



Prof. Dr. Kenan Çayır, director of the unit, which also carry studies on discrimination within education, emphasizes that an extensive study should be carried out in order to fight discrimination in education. He says that the stereotypes associated with certain communities is the chief reason for discrimination and adds:

“Research shows that there are various stereotypes concerning Afro-Turks. What leads to the discrimination are these stereotypes and labels associated with these. Primarily, these should be recognized. Then studies can be conducted to challenge these stereotypes among school age children.

This study can be done only through pictures in the textbooks. For instance, there are illustrations of children from various countries in the world. Yet Arabic and Chinese children are portrayed in ways that strengthen the stereotypes.

To diversify the clothing of these children, to add different outfits to the traditional outfits is a simple yet important tool to stretch the stereotypes. Likewise, Afro-Turks should be considered with a pluralist mindset and their identities should be included in lessons in diverse ways.”

Prof. Dr. Çayır emphasizes that teachers can develop mechanisms that prevent stereotypes and discrimination: “What is important is to take the scientific data and the needs of the research environment into consideration and to plan long-term studies.”



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

AFRO-TURKS - 3

The association operates like a memory center. Afro Turks are weary of being seen as an “exotic” society and want access to tools to prevent discrimination.

**They Marry White People
to Avoid Discrimination**

Aynur Tekin
Ferhat Demir



They prefer to marry white people

Because they do not want their children face similar difficulties, in the hope of whitening the next generation, Afro-Turks usually prefer to marry white people without questioning much of their partner's personality traits.

Assistant Professor Lülüfer Körükmez who meets with women during her field studies, remarks that there are examples where after the marriage, the women are scrutinized and humiliated by their husbands, husband's families and social circles due to their skin color.

While there is an ongoing false perception that “there is no racial discrimination in Turkey,” Afro-Turks, whose ancestors were brought as slaves from Africa, are facing it on a daily basis. They either refrain from travel or they prefer to marry white people in order to “whiten” the next generation.

Everyday discrimination in Turkey has different types. It can vary from calling Afro-Turk babies “how cute” to naming them “chocolate” or “Arab,” from confusing them with tourists to plain mockery.

“For reasons like this, the number of divorces has been increasing. Especially in villages, we see many divorced mothers living with their children. After the divorce women usually go back to their parents’ houses, together with their children.

In these houses, the grandmothers are taking care of the children, and the mothers are taking any jobs they could get which is mostly seasonal employment in industrial farming. This means cabbage or mandarin picking depending on the season.

Growing in number, these families try to act with solidarity with each other as far as possible.”

Black women are seen as more “touchable”

Journalist Alev Karakartal draws attention to another aspect of the issue and says that black women are seen as more “touchable” than white women.

“First, people look at you. They ask where you are from or if you are a multiracial. If you get over the “how cute” part safely, they immediately touch you. Without your permission, that hand touches your head and then proceeds to your nose. This is harassment, there is no other name to call it. You are under continued harassment and cannot explain to people that it is harassment.”



Not “Arab,” “chocolate,” or “blacky”; Black

Being identified as Arabic is more acceptable than being identified as African for some segments of the Afro-Turk community. Beyhan Türkkolu specifies that Afro-Turks think African identity as something to be belittled: “In the media, Africa usually comes to our attention through poverty and disease. Positive things are seldom shown. Saying that you are not African but Arabic or dark-skinned might be more acceptable for some people. Of course, we were born here. But we did not bring our skin color from Asia; we are from Africa. Through the association, people have become more aware of this.”

Afro-Turks are uncomfortable with people calling them “chocolate skin”, “blacky,” or “Arab.” Karakartal says, “We call ourselves black. Hence, we want people use the same word. This is a political choice and a definition we use as opposed to white.”

“We do not make propaganda, we want to learn our past”

Afro-Turks want to learn where they came from and want to know the traditions of their ancestors. While they carry out all these studies, they are also obliged to deal with stereotypes in Turkey. Ahmet Doğu, residing in Izmir, explains the situation:

“There is the popular saying that we live here but make propaganda for Africa. We do not make propaganda for that place. Like all other people, we want to know where our ancestors came from.

Like all people, you would wonder where your grandmother and grandfather came from. Yours is from Afyon, ours is from Africa. This curiosity come from human nature.”

Afro-Turks frequently deal with this narrative: “Good that you have come here. If not, how would conditions be for you?” Ahmet Doğu says that these sort of questions and reasoning are not right and are discomforting. When he is asked this

question, he answers that they would live in those conditions then.

Çetinbilek: “I clearly feel discrimination in Europe”

Lawyer Orhan Çetinbilek says that he had not been subject to any discrimination due to his skin color. Çetinbilek frequently travels to Europe due to his occupation as a lawyer and writer.

He says that in Europe, discrimination is clearly felt in everyday life: “To speak of discrimination here without speaking of it in Europe and USA is only a part of the picture. All need to be told and compared.”



Slavery should be in textbooks

The African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association works as a memory center and gathers human stories. It strengthens this field, which was not sufficiently studied in previous years and works to go back as far as it can in the historical context. Information obtained by academics studying Ottoman Turkish texts is added to the studies conducted by the association.

The Afro-Turk community is not recognized enough in Turkey. There is no information on this community in the curriculum. Karakartal says “When you define yourself as Afro-Turk, they ask what it is. When you start with slavery, they ask if there was slavery here. We are

so tired of this... Slavery is a crime against humanity, we need to agree on this. It should be told in the history textbooks, because this country has a history of slavery. We are not the only ones who need this. Whole country needs this. They need to face it.”

“Their approach is: ‘I found myself an interesting subject’”

When we were preparing this report, our first idea was to go to the villages in the Aegean region where Afro-Turks live. We thought that we might be able to access the people in these villages through the African Culture, Cooperation and Solidarity Association. Yet the association indicated that this was not possible and



that Afro-Turks grew weary of being constantly handed microphones and being asked about their past.

The reports and research done up until now have generally focused on the roots, the past of Afro-Turks and where they came from. They have been treated as an exotic community. This has caused them to withdraw.

Körükmez, whom we asked about this weariness, says:

“An important faction of civil society as well as academicians, journalists and documentary producers were interested in this subject. My observation about this interest is this: They think, “We found ourselves an interesting subject.

Let’s go do this and then retreat from this field.” Hence, the people in the villages are tired. There is this approach not to contribute to anything. “We have reported it, documented it, what else can we do?” They have this tradition to contribute to nothing.”

Körükmez remarks that when dealing with Afro-Turks or other discriminated communities, studies that support and empower them should be more extensive.

She says that long-term studies that aim to increase social acceptance should be carried out. She emphasizes that the practices should not only address the discriminated community but the rest of the society as well.”

Aynur Tekin

Tekin graduated from the Faculty of Communication at Ankara University in 2011. She joined the European Voluntary Service in Italy in 2012. She worked at various newspapers and magazines publishing in İstanbul for four years. She has been working as a freelance journalist for nine months. Nowadays she prepares special reports for Gazete Duvar, Zero İstanbul and Journo. She speaks English.

Ferhat Demir

Demir graduated from the Faculty of Communication at Ankara University in 2010. He worked at various newspapers and production companies. He served as a correspondent at Azadi TV that was later closed through statutory decree. He is currently working as a freelance cameraperson and visual director. He speaks Kurdish and Arabic.



Private Rehabilitation Centers For the Disabled People and Problems: The Example of Bingöl

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT
FOR THE DISABLED PEOPLE - 1

*Application of Support to Disabled People and the
problems in execution are discussed
by the Ministry of National Education's Bingöl
local authorities.*

Remzi Budancir
Leyla Ayaz

The number of centers has increased threefold

The number of private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people has increased after the implementation of this law. These centers conducted house-to-house surveys for screening and locating the disabled people and thus helped them get the disabled certificates for entitlement. Thereby they ensured enough students for their services.

According to 2016 data from the Disabled and Elderly General Directorate of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the number of students increased threefold over eight years, increasing from 131,206 in the 2006-2007 academic year to 349,681 in the 2014-2015 academic year.

According to data provided by the Ministry of National Education, there are 2,030 private rehabilitation and special education centers operating nationwide as of 2017. At present, 333,280 disabled individuals receive education at these educational institutions.

12 billion TL to the centers

During the “Budget Presentation 2017”, the Minister of National Education İsmet Yılmaz declared the amount of the budget allocated to the private education and rehabilitation centers as 12,188,990,000 TL.

The Turkish Disability Law (No: 5378) adopted in July 2005 brought change and improvement in disability services. Before then access to educational support for the disabled was restricted only to those who were covered with social security.

“Law No. 5378 of 2005 on Disabled People and on making amendments in Some Laws and Decrees,” provides a definition of disability and regulates policies to help the disabled gain better access to education, care services, rehabilitation and employment.

Curriculum and payment

Eight hours a month of individual and four hours a month of group program is implemented in the private education and rehabilitation centers for the disabled for the individuals with disabilities of at least 20% disability.

The centers receive budget of 509 Liras for each student with disabilities, and 143 Liras for group training, amounting to 652 Liras from the state.

Curriculum and absence

The educational support is paid to the centers based on the number of students attending the classes. The attendance of a student is documented by the signature of the student's parents.

Ministry of National Education inspectors check the institutions concerning the curriculum and physical environment but cannot monitor student attendance. The inspectors conducting routine monthly inspections cannot tell whether a student attended the course unless there is a complaint by the parents.

Irregularities

Irregularities mostly occur in areas such as in the forgery of documents, student attendance fraudulence, and damaging the state's economy.

The amount of reports appearing in the media that cover these irregularities and misconduct at the private rehabilitation and education centers is not low.

In 2017, simultaneous investigations were launched into private rehabilitation and special education centers in five cities with fraud charges. The police detained many people during these operations.

In 2012 police raided four private rehabilitation and special centers in Edirne and seized computers and documents. Legal action was taken against the central directors.

Pledges

The irregularities are mostly caused by the centers' business-oriented approach and the involvement of the students' parents in the process through economic pledges.

It is also widely rumored that the private rehabilitation centers for the disabled people take signatures from financially challenged parents that prove on paper that their children received education in exchange for money, coal and food support.

An example of this took place in Diyarbakır province in 2012. A student who was registered at private rehabilitation center in Kayapınar district of Diyarbakır lost his life.



The center received funding from the Ministry of National Education for three months as though he was attending the classes despite the fact that he was no longer alive. The fraud was disclosed through a complaint of a family.

Education is the state's job

The Six Points Association of the Blind board member and Diyarbakır Branch Chair Mehmet Akif Karakaş says irregularities and abuses take place nationwide:

“There are centers that do their jobs professionally but there are also others that commercialize it and say ‘I shall find 100-200 disabled people so I can be granted funding by the state.’ An urgent

regulation is needed. Education has to be under the responsibility of the state, not the private sector.”

It is everyone's responsibility

According to Association for the Physically Disabled Diyarbakır Branch Chair Ömer Aksan, there are 125,000 disabled individuals living in Diyarbakır:

“According to the complaints we've received, the officials working at the centers offer the people 100 TL, have them registered and tell them they don't need to come back. We have no authority to intervene. We haven't notified the relevant authorities. The institution can be closed down. The companies will target us if we do such thing.



If the families of the disabled individuals don't sell this right, then that institution cannot do the same to someone else. The families must report the irregularities to the authorities.

It is everybody's responsibility."

Centers and families

The Bingöl Association for All Disabled People Chair İdris Canlı points to the centers and families for problems and solutions:

"Everyone knows each other in small cities like Bingöl. The centers say 'Bring us the child's certificate and we will

deliver you coal, food and cash support every month. They collect the disability certificates from those who have them. They have the certificates issued for those who don't have them already. They've totally commercialized this matter".

Canlı states the centers have mostly focused on the villages and economically disadvantaged people to find students:

"Parents who don't know their social rights or how to read and write are easily convinced. The parents sign the document as if their children attended the class in exchange for a couple of bags of coal, some packages of food or 100-150 TL. They of course don't file a complaint".



Monitoring system by the Ministry

With certain amendments made in the Statutory Decree Concerning Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, which was published in the Official Gazette on December 9, 2016, a way has been paved for the use of systems of biometric identity confirmation and imaging systems with cameras at the private education and rehabilitation centers for the disabled people. Issuing a statement in January, the Director of Private Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education Kemal Şamlıoğlu announced that the biometric

identity confirmation system will be implemented at all private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people. The system is planned to be put into effect as of September 1, 2017.

The solution is in biometric identity

Bingöl National Education Director Kadri Engin explains that monitoring students and teachers will be possible by means of biometric identity:

"Documents regarding attendance of the students are filled by the centers and signed by families. As long as the

families don't complain, attendance of the students cannot be determined. Abuses will be prevented with the biometric identity confirmation system. At least suspicions on this matter will have been removed. Which class the students attended and what course was given by which lecturer will be seen in the system".

Palm scanning

Bingöl Counseling Research Center (RAM) Deputy Director İzzet Argun says that the infrastructure of the palm and vein scanning system has been completed and the information about the students and parents has been entered into the system:

"There are around 1,700-1,800 students in Bingöl. So far, the information for 1,200 students and 30 teachers has been entered into the system. As many as 1,500 students remain. The palm scanning system will be completed when that is finished too."

Suspension

The palm/vein scanning system first arrived on the agenda in 2012. 17 pilot cities were chosen for the program that was planned to be put into effect in 2014. This system, designed to monitor student and teacher development, was suspended in 2015 due to reactions from some disability associations as well as private rehabilitation and education centers.

Becoming compulsory via legislation enacted in May 2012, the palm scanning system is only used at public Counseling Research Centers. The private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people still distances themselves from this system.

Children first

The associations for disabled people advocate the position that the palm scanning systems will psychologically harm students. The private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people support this argument as well. Bingöl Bir Umut Private Education and Rehabilitation Center For Disabled People Director Mehmet Çapak says the palm scanning system will cause problems rather than solve them:

"The students who need special education receive education here. These children have learning difficulties. They are afraid. You cannot force children to have their hands scanned at the beginning of each course. This affects children's psychology negatively. Precautions should be taken with regard to the supervision of the children. Nevertheless, such a system shouldn't cause fear in the students. Camera systems should be installed at the schools. Remote eye scanning or fingerprint systems are also fine. The children's special conditions must be taken into account in the steps to be taken."



Two Directors Discuss the “Educational Support for the Disabled People” Practices

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT
FOR THE DISABLED PEOPLE - 2

Bukan and Çapak, two private rehabilitation centers for the disabled people directors from Bingöl, tell about the problems that have been experienced with the “Educational Support for the Disabled People” program implemented at rehabilitation centers.

Remzi Budancir
Leyla Ayaz

330,280 people with disabilities receive education at private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled of which there are more than 2,000 nationwide. A large portion of the people with disabilities receiving education at the private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled are students. At these centers, the students receive education based on their disability conditions and the areas in which they are lacking.

The issues, which are voiced by the people with disabilities and discussed across the country, are on the agenda of some private rehabilitation and education centers. Many centers want the inspections to be conducted more frequently, abuses to be prevented, and schools of educational and commercial intent to be differentiated.

We spoke with Ayışığı Education and Rehabilitation Center Director Doğan Bukan and Bir Umut Rehabilitation and Education Center Director Mehmet Çapak about the education program implemented in the private rehabilitation and education centers, who can receive education, and the problems that have been experienced.

Doğan discussed the outstanding problems and touched upon solutions. He also shared the practices of EU countries.



Director Bukan says The Private Ayışığı Education and Rehabilitation Center was established in 2013. It provides service to 135 registered students with its staff comprising eight teachers and one psychologist. Stressing that the service provided is “support education,” Doğan Bukan explains the process that is followed and which needs to be followed.

A student having a certificate with at least 20% disability applies to the Consultation Research Center (RAM) with his/her parents.

The committee formed within the body of the National Education sets

an annual program in line with the child's / student's needs.

Parents choose the center that they believe to be most beneficial.

As part of the program, eight hours of personal education and four hours of group education is provided per month.

Adaptations and differences in education

Since their programs are different from each other, the rehabilitation centers admit new students if the applicant student's program is in accordance with the center's program.

Bukan says they provide education in two categories at Private Ayışığım Education and Rehabilitation Center: education for students with a learning disability and for students who are mentally disabled.

“The students with learning disabilities are within the scope of the inclusion program. These students receive Turkish and mathematics courses. The curriculum carried out at the private rehabilitation and education centers is run in coordination with the child's school and RAM.

“Our students continue their education at their regular schools. We provide education within the framework of the

plan given by RAM and approved by the Ministry of National Education. This education can differ based on student's situation.

“We receive the students to classes in two groups. We have two students who are siblings. One of them is in the inclusion program. He is slightly disabled; the other sibling's situation is a bit more serious.

In order to ensure the sibling with a slight disability is not negatively affected, we take them from their homes separately. We send two shuttles every day. We need to approach this matter sensitively.”

Shuttle problem

It has been found to be problematic to have people with learning disabilities, seriously mentally disabled people, people with disabilities, or people of different ages together in the same shuttle.

Bukan underlines the importance of society's perspective. Some rehabilitation centers are described as “school of lunatics” in society.

“The children coming to the rehabilitation centers are described as insane. Both children and their families are affected by this. We refrain from placing emblems or names on our shuttles”.

Lack of teachers, expert staff

Bukan says the problems experienced in the rehabilitation centers are only part of the overall problem.

“These students receive education at regular schools. It is the teacher who knows his/her student's level and monitors his/her progress. Is this a specialist in this area? How many specialists are there on staff?

“How many teachers who are specialists in the area of people with disabilities are appointed? They are not appointed. Contracted teachers are frequently employed but no assignment is made.

The problem will deepen if the practice of employing contracted teachers continues instead of appointing teachers to their areas of specialization.

Mehmet Çapak: EU practices are examples

Bir Umut Education and Rehabilitation Center Director Mehmet Çapak believes that the problems and abuses experienced nationwide don't occur in Bingöl. Çapak argues that the problems can be resolved through inspections and that the real problem lies in the system. He defends the Ministry of National Education extending the period of study.



He points to the European Union as an example.

Çapak states that the inclusion system that is prevalent in Europe is not put into effect at all schools in Turkey, “This system not being prevalent is due to the lack of staff and buildings.”

In the Ministry of National Education Legislation on Private Education Institutions published in the official gazette dated May 18, 2012, the 12-hour education program applied in the private rehabilitation and education centers is described as “support education.”

With the education program designated according to individual disability levels and groups, the aim is that the disability condition of the individual with disabilities be resolved or its effects be reduced to minimum so that they can fit into the society.

Also aimed are their fundamental self-caring and independent living skills being developed. The program for the persons with disabilities is put into practice following the approval of the Ministry of National Education.

About this subject, the Ministry of National Education Legislation on Private Education Institutions says: “[With this program] it is ensured that the individuals who need private education, continue

their education with their peers by means of inclusion at the same institutions. Special study classes and education support rooms are opened within secondary and non-formal education institutions by national education directorates.

Home education is provided for the individuals who need private education on the preschool, primary, secondary and high school level and who are in no condition to directly benefit from education institutions.

EU practices in a nutshell

Education for individuals with disabilities starts at the preschool age in EU countries.

The students make use of inclusion opportunities in countries such as Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and England. In these countries, the inclusion system at public schools is made mandatory through laws.

Individuals with special needs receive education services in appropriate private schools in countries like Germany, the Netherlands, and Finland.

Education is provided for individuals with special needs at both private and public schools in most EU member countries.



**Students and Parents
from Bingöl
Tell of Their Experiences**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT
FOR THE DISABLED PEOPLE - 3

Student Kılıç, student A. disabled Derman and brother of a disabled sibling tell their experiences in private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people.

Remzi Budancir
Leyla Ayaz



Student Kılıç tells her story

Gülseren Kılıç is 14 years old. She uses crutches due to weakness in her feet. She started to go to a rehabilitation center due to the weakness that began in her feet five years ago. Her treatment still continues.

Kılıç says that she saw some people who were registered in the center and they did not attend the courses.

Physical infrastructure is inadequate

Kılıç also complains about the inadequacy of the physical conditions in the rehabilitation centers:

“There is no elevator in some centers. Our friends who have difficulties are obliged to climb the stairs by themselves or with the help of others. There is no treadmill in the center. We are not provided adequate physiotherapy training. My condition could be improved in a shorter period of time, but my

It is the students and their families who are familiar with the problems experienced in the rehabilitation centers, not the ones who submit the reports to institutions in exchange for money or aid.

The system, which is formed by the institutions receiving fund appropriated by the state for individuals with disabilities, stands as an obstacle before the individuals with disability willing to receive education and their families.

We gave an ear to the stories of the individuals with disability receiving education and their families in Bingöl.

treatment takes longer due to the lack of technical equipment. The course hours are also insufficient”.

Student A. Tells His/Her Story

The account of A., who is a student receiving education at a private rehabilitation center for the disabled people, reveals the negligence taking place. Stressing that the physical infrastructure of most of the rehabilitation centers in the area are inadequate, A. is aware that these centers have commercial approach to education.

“They are very nice when it comes to asking for a certificate. They chase after us but everything changes after they get the certificate. For instance, a student with an orthopedic certificate who is displeased with the education can leave the school if he/she wants to. However, those who are mentally disabled cannot do that.

“The mentally disabled individuals can leave the school with family consent. The management of the school interacts very well with the families of these students. The families are usually persuaded with money, but this is not the case for every family.

Furthermore, the school management knows very well which families should be persuaded”.

“Students are persuaded with money”

Expressing that some of his/her friends staying at other schools cannot leave their schools despite making complaints about it, A. conveyed a conversation he/she had with a friend:

“I have a friend. He/she is not happy with his/her school. He/she complains about the teachers, principal, and education quality. I advised my friend to leave, but he/she cannot because private rehabilitation centers pay the distance education enrollment fee. I said, ‘Can’t your father pay it?’ He/she said, ‘No, he cannot pay it’. My friend stays there because of money. He/she is somehow persuaded with money”.

Students who stay at home are made to look as though they attend courses

The student A. says there are students who don’t come to school, yet they are made to look as though they attend courses at a private education and rehabilitation centers.

“Some families really seek a good education, and some others act in a completely opposite manner. Especially the families from villages are not very

interested in education. They expect their children ‘to go to the schools so that some cash will come’. Certificates for these children are obtained and then they are registered in the schools.

“The student is made to look like he/she receives education while he/she is sitting at home.”

Parents are frustrated

The parents who expect the educators to be sensitive are frustrated. The parents who live either in a city or rural area, including the ones that don’t know to read and write, state that it is impossible to follow the curriculum of their children.

Expressing that they don’t even know why they sign the documents brought by the officials of the schools in which their children receive education at the end of each month, the parents demand that this problem be solved by the Ministry of National Education.

“My father doesn’t know what he is signing ”

Ramazan Borlukan (38) earns his living working as a waiter. His mentally disabled sibling received education at a private rehabilitation center. Stating that his father is old and doesn’t know to read and write, Borlukan says, “I am working



so I am not at home. I know that they take my sibling from home to school but I don't know which courses he/she takes. My father doesn't know either.

By the end of the month, they have us to sign a document and that's it. As the parent, my father signs it but I don't think he knows what he signs. Neither I nor my father know what sort of education is provided there”.

His concerns about his sibling are not unfounded. He says his sibling has worsened since he started going to the private rehabilitation center for the disabled people.

“My sibling is now more introvert. I believe there is something wrong with this education system”.

Mehmet Derman:“This is an open hunt for people with disabilities”

Private rehabilitation and education centers for the disabled people scour the region and collect reports. These institutions specifically work in rural areas.

Mehmet Derman (32) says that these institutions visited him as well since he has a certificate for disability.

“It was between 2005-2006. I was in the village of Peyas in the central district.

The people from the rehabilitation centers were going house to house. This was an open hunt for people with disabilities

“They were pledging for help and then they asked for certificate, ID photocopy and residency document. They came to me as well but I didn't give them anything, however, I heard that a large number of people handed over their certificates without questioning in return of minor financial aid”.



**“Solution is
a System of Inclusion
for the Disabled People”**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT
FOR THE DISABLED PEOPLE - 4

The Six Points Association of the Blind Diyarbakir Branch Secretary Berent evaluates the program of Educational Support for the Disabled People and offers his solutions.

Remzi Budancir
Leyla Ayaz

Yakup Berent is a counselor. He worked at the Counseling Research Center (RAM) in Diyarbakır for three years. He is now at the Diyarbakır Six Points Association of the Blind.

We've spoken with Berent about the state of the Education Support for Individuals with Disabilities program in Diyarbakır.

Berent explained the general system, listed the problems and possible solutions, and called out to parents in particular.

“The parents have to be sensitive and the inspections should be carried out properly. It is hard to say that similar irregularities are not seen in overall Turkey. Receiving payment for a dead student for three months is the most obvious proof of that.”

Diyarbakır

Berent says there are more than 60 rehabilitation centers in Diyarbakır. Each center receives an allowance of at least 100,000 TL (25000 Euros) per month, and they are not inspected properly.

“Imagine that they conduct visits door-to-door, consume diesel oil, and receive extra personnel and shuttles. Believe me that if the palm scanning system is implemented, the number of education centers will be halved.

“Because there are many unrecorded students who sit at home and don't attend their studies but the centers still receive grants for them. These centers cannot take such risks after inspections begin. Some of these centers will be closed and some others will merge with each other.

“A child sits at home and the rehabilitation center doesn't pick the student up from his/her home with a shuttle. In exchange for a small allowance, the families are persuaded, and after receiving the documents signed by the parents from month to month, it shows on paper that they provide education”.

For this reason, Berent finds it important that a biometric identity verification or camera surveillance system be implemented as required in the 9 December 2016 Statutory Decree.



Problem of experts

Berent thinks the problem is not limited to private rehabilitation and special education centers. He also draws attention to the issues regarding staff for the individuals with disabilities.

“The expert staff carrying out the inspections are also inadequate. The number of teachers and inspectors who graduated from the special education departments is very limited in Turkey. You cannot find even five people who have command in the area. How will the inspection and supervision conducted? Students’ area of education, the curriculum, the syllabus and their social life must definitely be inspected. It must definitely be inspected whether the teachers are experts and have comprehensive knowledge of the area or not”.

Inclusion program

Berent advocates that the inclusion system, which enables students with disabilities to receive education with their peers with no disabilities, is more beneficial than the private rehabilitation and education centers.

According to data from preschool, primary and secondary school in 2014-2015 combined, 182,917 students benefited from the inclusion system regulated through the legislation.

“The number of students who attend the available classes at schools is fixed now. You are allowed to take only two inclusion students into a class of 20 students according the Ministry of National Education. A maximum of two autistic students can receive education in one class. A third one is not allowed but additional courses can be opened. Extra teachers can be trained, extra schools can be opened.”

Quality would be discussed

Berent advocates that private schools can be opened with the fund transferred to the private rehabilitation centers: “With the funds allocated to these private schools in Turkey we could open up hundreds of new schools and educate thousands of teachers and we would be then discussing the education quality rather than these abuses”.

Suggestions

Believing that the problems with the education for people with disabilities can be reduced to minimum with schools and the inclusion system, Berent's suggestions are as follows:

A separate room for special education class must be established at the future schools. School principals have to review physical conditions by taking people with disabilities into consideration at the present schools. Supplementary support education that the child receives at rehabilitation center has to be monitored.

The Ministry of National Education provincial and district directorates must increase the frequency of inspections of private rehabilitation and education centers. Palm scanning system must definitely be popularized.

For instance, there is no high school for people having impaired hearing in Diyarbakır. The students are transferred to Elazığ or Van. There is secondary school for people having impaired hearing in Diyarbakır, so why not convert two or three classes and provide a high school education. Why do we detach the child from his/her social life and send him/her to another city? These steps must be taken for the education of the disabled. The school problem must be solved in every city according to their own needs.

Remzi Budancir

Budancir was born in Bingöl. He started practicing journalism in Bingöl. He worked at the newspapers Ab-ı Hayat (2005) (Water of Life), Bingöl'ün Sesi (2007-2008) (Voice of Bingöl), Taraf (2008-2015) and Dicle News Agency (2006). He ran the projects titled "Yerel Medyanın Profili" (Profile of Local Media) in 2014, and "Güneydoğu'da nefret söyleminin Hıristiyan ve Alevi mağdurları" (Christian and Alawi victims of hate speech in the Southeast" in 2015 for Independent Journalism Platform as part of the "Objective Investigative Journalism Program". He was left unemployed when the Diyarbakır-based Azadi TV, at which he worked as editor, was closed through statutory decree.

Leyla Ayaz

Born in Van, Ayaz started practicing journalism at Dicle News Agency in 2006. He served as editor at Azadiya Welat newspaper, and as Kurdish and Turkish news editor at JINHA. He was the director of editing at Diyarbakır-based Anormal Film company. He was left unemployed when Van Doğu Radyo at which he worked as the editor-in-chief was closed through statutory decree on September 28, 2016. He lives in Diyarbakır.



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

SUR - 1

The last curfew in Sur was declared on December 2, 2015, with six curfews being declared in total. The operations ended on March 9, 2016, but there were no streets left to go out to.

**The Neighborhood of “Giaour”
Doesn’t Exist Anymore**

Oktay Altekin
Zana Kibar

One of the longest curfews in the world was put into effect in Diyarbakır's Sur district due to the clashes that restarted as a result of interruption of the peace process that was carried out in Turkey.

In addition to displacements, human rights violations and casualties, the historical fabric has been severely damaged in Sur, which hosts the cultural heritage of many societies throughout history. The latest photos taken in the neighborhood of Hasırlı, which is otherwise known as Gavur (Giaour) or Xançepek as Diyarbakır residents call it, reveal that the whole neighborhood was destroyed.

Later, 6,300 parcels of land in the Sur district were included within the scope of "urgent expropriation" through the resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers.

Curfew continues in six neighborhoods

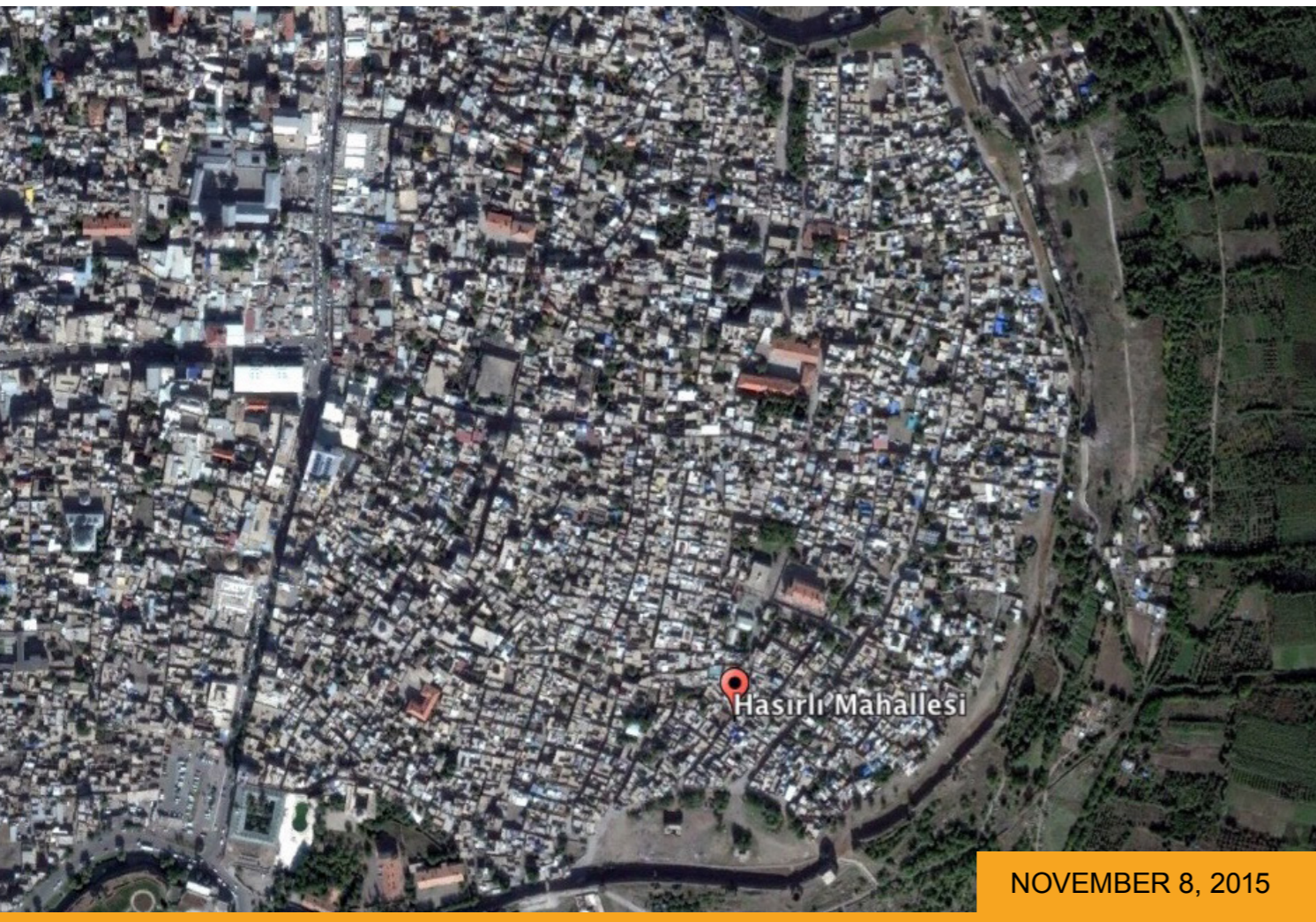
Reports continue to come from Sur that the curfews and destruction continue. Since the curfew began on December 2, 2015, six neighborhoods were levelled to the ground in Sur. This destruction continues to date starting from March 10, 2016, following the blockade and operations that lasted 103 days.

According to the previous announcement made on the Sur Sub-Governorship's official website, the curfew for nine neighborhoods (Abdaldede, Alipaşa, Lalebey, Süleyman Nazif ve Ziya Gökalp, Camii Kebir, Camii Nebi, İskenderpaşa and Melikahmet) was lifted whereas it still continues in six other neighborhoods (Cevatpaşa, Fatihpaşa, Dabanoğlu, Hasırlı, Cemal Yılmaz and Savaş).

The neighborhood of Gavur doesn't exist anymore

The entire Suriçi area was declared an "urban protected area" in 1988. In July 2015, the Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The districts from which residents were forced to leave were razed with artillery shootings by tanks from the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK). Through the demolition of undamaged or lightly damaged buildings following the expropriation motion, the district was levelled to the ground to a great extent. In Suriçi, which is also a protected area, there was harmony between its streets, traditional homes, fountains, traditional trade structure, and its social and architectural structure. The district's biggest neighborhood, the neighborhood of Gavur, was destroyed.

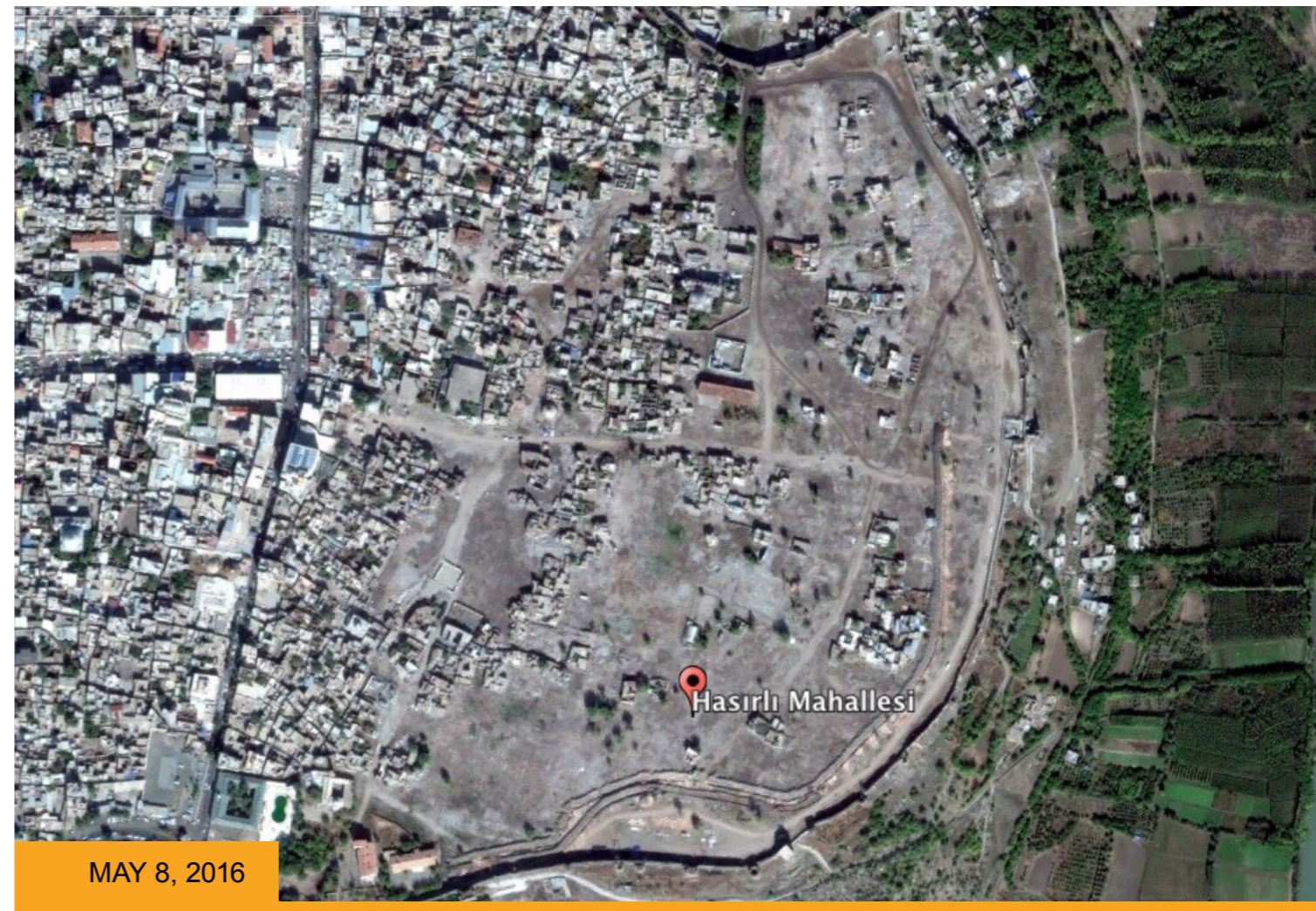


Hasırlı Mahallesi

NOVEMBER 8, 2015
MAY 10, 2016



Hasırlı Mahallesi



Hasırlı Mahallesi

MAY 8, 2016
APRIL 21, 2017



Concrete barriers block the road

Nothing left from the cultural heritage of this cosmopolitan district that dates back thousands of years and that was the city's first populated area. Only the Arap Şeyh Mosque still stands in the neighborhood. The Armenian Catholic Church and the Surp Giragos Church, the biggest church in the Middle East, were damaged as well as some Hebrew synagogues. The road to return to the neighborhood has been blocked as well. The concrete barriers placed on street entrances and police security check points set up at the entrances of the banned neighborhood. Journalists are also still not allowed to enter the neighborhood...

For the people who were forced to leave their neighborhoods, there is nothing left for them to gaze upon.

Hasty Expropriation

The Council of Ministers' decision of "urgent expropriation" for 16 neighborhoods in Sur and 2 neighborhoods in Yenişehir was published in the Official Gazette on March 25, 2016.

The Diyarbakır Bar's application to Council of State 6th Chamber objecting against the "Urgent Expropriation" decision to have it annulled and granted a motion for stay of execution was rejected.

In response, the Diyarbakır Bar appealed for correction. The bar filed a lawsuit against the Council of State for a motion for stay of execution on the grounds that the decision contravenes law and doesn't serve the public interest.

The neighborhoods which have been included in the expropriation are Abdaldede, Alipaşa, Cemal Yılmaz, Camii Kebir, Cevatpaşa, Dabanoğlu, Hasırlı (Gavur), İnönü, İskenderpaşa, Lalebey, Malihakmet, Özdemir, Süleyman Gazi, Savaş, Şemhane, Ziya Gökalp, Köşkler and Yenişehir.

80% of Sur has been "expropriated"

6,300 parcels of land in Sur were included within the scope of "urgent expropriation" through the motion adopted by the Council of Ministers and published in the Official Gazette on March 25. The historical district comprises 7,742 parcels. So through the decision, 80% of the district was expropriated. In one stroke, the land owners ended up homeless.

Urban equipment areas as well were removed in the current plan with the change in the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization's plan through which Conservation Development Plan was not implemented. People's most fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, including the right to live, the right to health, the right to education and the right to travel, have been openly violated through the curfews.

The last curfew which was declared on December 2, 2015 in Sur, was the sixth. Even though the official authorities declared that the operations ended on March 9, 2016, the curfew still continues.

Huge change in demographics

Diyarbakır consists of 17 districts and it is one of the most important cities in Upper Mesopotamia. The oldest settlement of

Diyarbakır, which brings together history, culture and nature, is the district of Sur, which is located in the middle of the city.

The walls (Sur) that surround the historical Diyarbakır Fortress, which date back 7,000 years, are important on a global scale. They are the longest and widest walls after the Great Wall of China. The carvings, inscriptions and motifs on the inner and outer ramparts protecting the fortress carry the signs of as many as 30 cultures. The district of Sur, which hosts an ancient fabric, with structures from different civilizations and houses of worship of different beliefs, and holds 7% of Diyarbakır population, was the 5th biggest district of the city.

The district's 15 neighborhoods (Abdaldede, Alipaşa, Cami-i Kebir, Cami-i Nebi, Cemal Yılmaz, Cevat Paşa, Dabanoğlu, Fatihpaşa, Hasırlı, İskenderpaşa, Lalebey, Melihakmet, Savaş, Süleyman Nazif and Ziya Gökalp) are located inside the ramparts, which look like a fish from an aerial viewpoint. 45% of Sur's population was living in Suriçi, which comprises 132 hectares of land.

People we spoke with passionately explained what was happening. They not only talked about recent past but also referred to the events of 1915 with a very fresh memory. There are many stories in every district of Diyarbakır about

Armenians being picked up to be deported and killed in places called “dungeons.” Assyrians who lived in Mesopotamia and Anatolia in the same period were also forced to emigrate or they were killed as well. The total death toll is estimated to be around 300,000. The Armenian population that was 73,000 in 1914 became 3,000 in 1918, and the Assyrian population dropped from 100,000 to 27,000. Even though it varies between different sources, the generally accepted conviction in Ottoman, Armenian and Kurdish historical research is that 30% of the population consisted of non-Muslims like Armenians, Assyrians and Chaldeans in Diyarbakır before 1915.

Türkey: For the Armenians, it is very melancholic

Diyarbakır Surp Giragos Armenian Church Foundation Board member Gafur Türkey, whom we met as part of the report in Diyarbakır, expressed with a broken heart that the whole neighborhood had been annihilated.

Stating that Diyarbakır has been an Armenian city all along and it is Suriçi where the Armenians predominantly live, Türkey says that the history of the neighborhoods of Sur and Gavur go very deep. According to Türkey, 60% of the population living inside and near Sur was



Christian and 40% was Muslim until 1915: “We know that they were predominantly Armenians.”

Saying that all the areas known as the neighborhood of Gavur are associated with Armenians, Armenian architecture, and old stone houses, Türkey goes on:

“Since ancient times, Armenian artists used to live in their place with their architecture and their style, as well as their cuisine and music. Everyone was working at their jobs until the evening, and then they set their tables and brought their instruments to revel. For instance, Sami Hazinses, Bedriye Aysel and Coşkun Sabah were born in that neighborhood. So, we are talking about a place which was known by these Armenian figures.”

Finally, touching on the events in Sur, Türkey said:

“I might be exaggerating a bit, but they are trying to get rid of everything related to the Armenians. Unfortunately, those traces were destroyed along with all the symbols that showed us that past lifestyle.

“In the early days, maybe some of you saw us walking down from the Four-Legged Minaret; there were very narrow streets. Now even a plane can land on those streets in which a car could barely fit. So, the whole historic fabric was destroyed there. Now, actually we are in a very bewildering situation. I, as a citizen who lives in Diyarbakır, feel stunned. For the Armenians, this is a very



[CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

sad thing. Mıgırđıç Margosyan street doesn't exist anymore. Unfortunately, there is no neighborhood left called Gavur neighborhood.”

Makbule Ana*:

I cannot live outside of Sur

We also listened to Makbule Ana, who didn't leave Sur and who had previously lived in the neighborhood of Hasırlı. She now lives in a neighborhood of Sur that still remains. She explained in tears how her old neighborhood was razed. Telling with tearful eyes that she has nothing left but her home, Ana says that she cannot live in anywhere but Sur.

“I tricked my children by telling them they are shooting a film”

As we walked on the streets that survived the destruction in Sur, we hear a voice from a window saying “They burned down our house too,” and we directed our camera to where the voice came from.

A father with his three little daughters listening to him, said that he used to reside in the destroyed Hasırlı neighborhood. They went without food and water with his mother, father, spouse and children in the basement for four months, and lived in fear of death every day until the day they left the basement.

He told their children that they are shooting a film so that the children won't get scared. The children saw the truth when they went out.

An old man approached us on another street and started complaining. He said that he only got a very small amount of money for his demolished three-storey home and that he couldn't save anything from the house. After saying that his neighborhood was razed just like his home, he slowly walked out of sight on the street.

* Ana means mother and it is a way of addressing elder women.



Mıgırdıç Margosyan Couldn't Recognize His Street Amidst Ruins

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

SUR - 2

"I cannot see. We call Suriçi 'kullik kullik' which means I know this place corner by corner, stone by stone. In the past, I knew where there was a fountain, a bakery, I knew them all but if I go there now, I would probably get lost".

Oktay Altekin
Zana Kibar



In its December 9, 2009 session, Sur Municipality Assembly decided to change the name of Direkçi street to “Mıgırdiç Margosyan.” The mayor of Sur at the time, Abdullah Demirbaş, who installed the street signs, told journalists that Diyarbakır is a multicultural, multilingual and multi-faith city and it lived in peace and harmony with this cultural richness in the past.

This step was seen as positive to have peace and harmony again, and Sur Municipality’s multi-lingual works were received favorably by the public. However, Mıgırdiç Margosyan objected to street being named after him due to his belief that the mindset in Turkey hasn’t changed, that the steps taken today may be invalidated in the future and that his name might be taken down from where it was hung.

The events have proved Margosyan right

Not only was his name taken down from the street, but Mıgırdiç Margosyan Street was replaced with razed, empty land as a result of the clashes that started with the curfews that were declared in December 2015. They lasted for 103 days, and the destruction has been continuing since March 10, 2016.

We met with Margosyan to speak about both of these incidents and how life was on the streets of Sur.



About Mıgırdiç Margosyan

Margosyan was born in Hançepik neighborhood (Gavur neighborhood) on December 23, 1938. He received his education at Süleyman Nazif Primary School, Bezcivan Secondary School in İstanbul and Getronagan High School.

He graduated from İstanbul University, Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Literature. He served as principal at Surp Haç Tibrevank Armenian High School in Üsküdar between 1966-1972 in addition to teaching philosophy, psychology, Armenian language and literature.

A part of his stories in Armenian published in Marmara newspaper were published as a book titled “Mer Ayt Goğmeri” [Our

Neighborhood]. With this book he was granted the Eliz Kavukçuyan Prize in Literature (Paris-France), which is only bestowed upon authors writing in Armenian. His books in Turkish titled “Gavur Mahallesi” [Gavur Neighborhood], “Söyle Margos Nerelisen?” [Tell Me Margos Where are You From?], and “Biletimiz İstanbul’a Kesildi” [Our Tickets were Sold for İstanbul] were followed by his second Armenian book, “Dikrиси Aperen” [From the Sides of Tigris].

From “Direkçi” to Margosyan

Suriçi is an old Armenian settlement and you were a resident there. Could you tell us a bit about Suriçi, Gavur neighborhood, what kind of place it is in the memory of Armenians?

Now when we refer to Suriçi as district of Diyarbakır, we should know that Diyarbakır itself was Suriçi. Later, buildings were constructed outside of the ramparts, but they have nothing to do with Diyarbakır.

Where Armenians predominantly live is Xançepik, also known as Gavur neighborhood. As the name suggests,

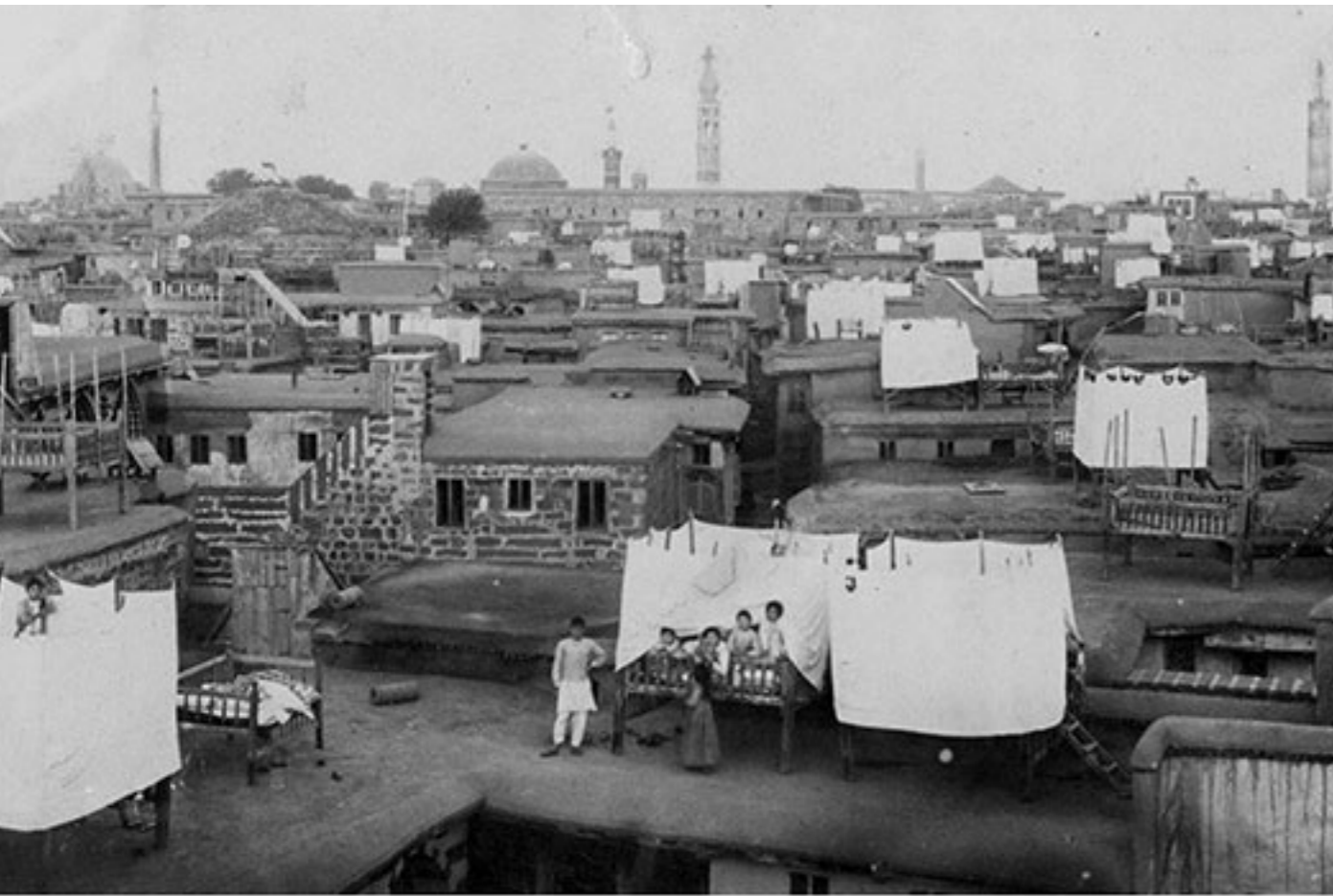
Gavur neighborhood was a neighborhood in which minorities and non-Muslims lived, known as giaour. Diyarbakır was hosting Christians, Giaours, Armenians, Assyrians, and here and there Chaldeans, and of course Muslims until the 1950s...

There was such a harmonious life. What was special about Gavur neighborhood was that most of the people were artisans: blacksmiths, jewellers, tanners, coppersmiths, etc. All these artisans were living together. When Armenians came together, of course there was no TV in those times, they talked about each other.

They were usually referring to each other as follows: Where were you at “Kafle”? “Kafle” is the people who migrate in convoys. The words like, “Genocide”, “Deportation,” were not used in Diyarbakır; everyone used the word kafle. When they talked among themselves, we children sat by the heating stove and ate walnuts. Life was like that in those times.

Suriçi, Gavur neighborhood represents a form of solidarity. This is also a place subjected to attacks throughout history. What does this tell us?

You cannot find flat streets in Diyarbakır, maybe that is the specialty of these houses. The houses were built in a way to be warm in winter and chilly in summer.



The houses used to have dam rooftops in early days. The houses were adjacent to each other and people were passing from one house to another through the dam.

Perhaps you know that there are two types of basalts in Diyarbakır; male stone and female stone. Yards were built with the female stones. Those stones were perforated, when you dabbled on the surface to clean it, some water was left in it, which was cooling the area. Arched houses and arched iwans that placed side by side with stones carved one by one gave Diyarbakır an architectural style.

And 80%-90% of those who built them were Armenian stone masons. My father was one of them.

A street in Gavur neighborhood was named after you in 2010. You say in one of your interviews that you didn't want the street to be named after you. Why did you oppose this?

I went there frequently concerning the restoration of the Armenian Church. I was being invited due to the books I wrote. People heard about me because of the books about Diyarbakır. Our friends working at the municipality then brought me this offer as a gesture and due to the efforts we made for Diyarbakır.

“We want to name the street where you live after you,” they said. I responded “People might think that, if the mindset changes, whether they are right or wrong,

the name may not be wanted anymore.” It is not really important for me to have my name there. I don't want this because if that name is taken down from there after 3 or 30 years, it will be a pity for both you and me.

One day, they put my name there but it is not there anymore. I had foreseen this. It is not really important if my name is still there or not. I wish it carried its previous name, Direkçi street but still hosted a couple of Giaours, yet, there are none left today.

Did you have any chance to see Diyarbakır, Gavur neighborhood's latest situation

or Migirdiç Margosyan street after the destruction?

I went to Diyarbakır but didn't have the chance to see because it was not allowed to enter and I believe it still isn't allowed. That is why I couldn't see the street.

Indeed, I'd like to go and see at the first opportunity and I guess I will deeply suffer.

We were able to go and see, and we took photos. We'd like to show them to you. In one of your interviews, there was this headline, “Tell me Margosyan Where are You From?” If we ask you “Tell Me



Margosyan Where is Your Street?”, could you show the street to us?

I cannot see (He is looking at the photos of the destroyed neighborhood) because the streets are gone now. I see something like a tract or a wide road here. I know Suriçi like the palm of my hand. In the past, I knew where there was a fountain, a bakery shop; I knew all except the grain mills but I would probably get lost now if I go there now.

This is the street which was named after you.

(He is looking at the photos of demolished streets) Yes. Its name and itself are both gone...I didn't know it would be that bad to be honest.

Can you find your house if you go to this street of which you know every corner, every nook and cranny?

It is impossible because nothing is left. It turned into a football field.

Unfortunately, yes. Street tales, Gavur neighborhood, that lively life you told in your books have been turned into this. Let us show you some images now.

(He is pointing to the belfry of a surviving church). The last maintenance was made,

it didn't have a tower before. Earlier, it had a belfry. The belfry of this church was demolished with the artillery fired from the inner fortress in 1915 or 1912 or 1913 because it was higher than the minaret.

The Armenians were forcibly displaced from here starting from 1915. Is it desired that the remaining Armenian traces are wiped away? There is already nothing left from the Armenians. The stone constructions, the stone masons I mentioned above...

Not just architecture but also that culture disappeared. You can build modern buildings as a substitution to those buildings but it is no longer the Diyarbakır

UN report: “An apocalyptic picture”

The United Nations (UN) in its report described the operations carried out in the region, especially in Şırnak, Cizre, Nusaybin, Sur and Silopi as “an apocalyptic picture”.

The 26-page report concerning the rights violations that took place between July 2015-December 2016, which has been released on UN's official website, includes “information about the massive destruction caused

by the operations launched by the government's security forces and the people killed, and details concerning other rights violations”.

According to the report, over 30 towns suffered during the operations, and between 335,000 and 1 million people consisting of predominantly Kurdish people were displaced.

The UN also released the photos taken by satellite of destroyed areas in Sur district.

Please click [here](#) to reach the full report.

Amnesty: 500,000 people were forced to migrate

In its report delivered in 2016, Amnesty declared that over 500,000 people were forcefully displaced.

The report was titled “The People Who Were Forcefully Displaced and Dispossessed: Sur Residents' Right to Return to Their Home,” and said an “estimated half a million people including tens of thousands of residents of Sur, which has the UNESCO World Heritage statue, were forced to leave their homes as

a result of the Turkish authorities' merciless crackdowns in the recent year.” 500,000 people were forced to migrate in Turkey, according to the report.

Please click [here](#) to reach the full report.

HDP report: “Cultural Heritage” has been turned into ruin

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), in its report on Sur that it released after the operations ended, stated that 90 civilians and 71 security officers lost their lives, and the historical structures inside the urban protected area were destroyed.

In the report, Sur is defined as “Diyarbakır's heart in terms of cultural, social, economical and historical context.”

The report discusses the events that took place in the region before and after the last curfew, and what has been experienced in the areas in which curfew was lifted.

Please click [here](#) to reach the full report.

that I narrated in my books. Once our PM had said something like that they would turn this place into Toledo. Turning this place to Toledo is not a solution.

Is it possible to create Toledo out of Sur?

Nothing can be created out of Sur. Only this fake structure can be created out of Sur and this fakeness can never reflect Diyarbakır's historical fabric of thousands of years. Maybe some brand new houses will be built, but what about the people who live there? What about the culture in which people have lived for years? Where is that cooperation, solidarity, spirit? That won't exist.

Finally, what needs to be done next?

Do you have any suggestions?

We shouldn't restrict ourselves to the matter of houses in or around Sur but we should talk about a full democracy. If a democratic mindset doesn't rule and a uniform lifestyle is imposed, it will keep facing reaction. We are losing time. It can be achieved in an environment in which people can speak their opinions freely in a democratic society. What needs to be done next in our country is to establish democracy, democracy, democracy no matter what.

Oktay Altekin

Altekin graduated from the Department of Journalism in Faculty of Communication at İstanbul University in 2010. He worked as a correspondent at various magazines and newspapers, and served editor at Özgür Gündem newspaper. He started a Master's program at the Department of Cinema and Television at Okan University in 2016.

Zana Kibar

A graduate of the Department of Journalism at Kocaeli University, Kibar is still a graduate student in sociology at the Mimar Sinan University. Kibar worked as managing editor at Amigra Magazine, as editor at Turuncu Kocaeli newspaper, and as reporter and editor at Özgür Gündem daily. She participated in the fieldwork of Dut Ağacı Sosyal Bilimler ve Araştırmaları Derneği, Hakikat Adalet Hafıza Merkezi and Göç-Der. Kibar is a manager at the Dut Ağacı ve Göç İzleme Derneği.



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

TRANS PEOPLE - 1

The life for trans people has become more difficult especially after the 1980 coup; those who were stuck in the triangle of the police, the state and the media took their first steps to get organized.

**The Ones Who Choose
Life, Love and to Struggle,
Against Hatred**

Michelle Demishevich
Elif Ural



They have always existed

Some of them have hidden every sleepless night on cold stages under spotlights, some with their naked bodies in the fantasies of hungry breaths, some in the closets inside the vast bottomless wells in which they are desolated. Some have bowed to patriarchy, to family, and some have hidden in other lives. Some others have chosen life, love, and struggle against hatred.

They managed to become one with all the colors of the rainbow; gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans and intersex people, and LGBTIs have existed throughout history and

will continue to exist in the future. Conventional morality and social norms stemming from habits of the past have hindered the access of queer people, especially trans people, to their most fundamental right to live. They have been deprived of many rights, including the right to shelter, work, life, education, and health.

The police, the state and the media

Life has become much more challenging for trans individuals, especially since the September 12, 1980 coup in Turkey. Violence has

Just to spite traditional family norms, honor, morality and taught gender roles, trans individuals have always managed to sustain their life as part of culture and history, and they still can today.

Trans people, who always have had to defend their identity against social taboos and hatred in every part of the world, have learned to become stronger against their most fundamental rights being seized by the system.

become a part of daily life, especially for trans women, who are more visible.

They were not able to walk on the street like any other citizen, nor were they able to exist in any space in life. Trans women were stuck in the triangle of the police, the state and the media.

Trans women have lost their lives in various ways. Some of them lost their lives due to male and police violence on the highways during sex work, into which they were forced to since their right to work was blocked by the system. Some lost their lives due to the torture they were subjected to at police stations or due to headlines like “transvestites spread terror” in the media.

Everyone has remained silent

Politicians, journalists, intellectuals, people of literature, revolutionaries, women, men: in short, everyone has remained silent about trans murders. In time, the silent scream of trans women has grown bigger and bigger and has turned into an insurgency with the Ülker Sokak resistance.

Since that day, trans individuals have never remained silent. They discovered that they are stronger when they are together and they have learned to carry out an organized struggle against the system, male violence and hatred towards their most fundamental right to live.

Now they shout out loud; “Live out of spite of hatred”, “Women are strong when they are together!”.

The legal fight against rights violations, homicides and violence has moved the trans fight to another level. Even though men who are the perpetrators of violence get good behavior remission in the court, trans individuals have learned to exercise their constitutional rights to the fullest over time.

Hande and Eylül

The suspected murderers of trans people were caught at times, and at other times the files were sent to rusty shelves to be placed among the unsolved murder cases.

Ending her life by jumping off the Bosphorus Bridge, the closing of Eylül Can’s case or not launching an investigation to find the perpetrators of Hande Kader’s murder, who was slaughtered by being burned are among many examples.

Sometimes investigations are completed and the legislative process begins, but the judges in the courts render transphobic verdicts. The results obtained by some people or institutions that turn rights violations into international campaigns can be gratifying. Justice is a bottomless well despite all those criminal complaints and investigations.



We share the stories of three trans women in the file “Trans Individuals”.

One tells how she built a career by receiving an education at the most prestigious schools, and another one explains how she was pushed into sex work because of male violence and social pressure. The other shares how she combatted violence and hatred by adding her disability identity to her trans identity, and how she could exist in the political arena. The common message of these three trans women is “first human rights and social peace”.

We dedicate this file to all trans individuals who are massacred due to male and state violence.

Stories of three trans women



Ece Devrim: I Strongly Resisted Forced Sex Work

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

TRANS PEOPLE - 2

Ece Devrim tried many jobs from dishwashing to DJing. She continued İŞ-KUR courses, became a health care worker; when she couldn't find a job, she had to do sex work despite all her efforts against this. Now, she sells lighters in her wheelchair.

Michelle Demishevich
Elif Ural



From Munich to İstanbul

I am a 50-year-old trans woman. I am the child of a family who went to Germany with immigration status.

When I started to get to know my own body at age 14, I felt that I was different from everyone else.

My father was like an absolute dictator in the family. I think that is why an urge has developed inside me to struggle against dictators.

I discovered my sexual orientation over time and I left home due to my family and my father's pressure. My father took me to a psychiatrist to change me. The doctors told him this situation wouldn't change. He resolved it by sending me to my relatives in Turkey.

I was on the street for 2-3 years, they raped me too. Men see rape as a right for themselves if you are trans or a street walker.

Ece became a paraplegic when a taxi crashed into her on the pavement while she was standing to get street food on Şişli Halaskargazi Street in İstanbul in 2014.

She earns her living by selling lighters, pencils and tissues on the streets in Şişli in her wheelchair, which was brought from Germany with the support of the Labour Movement Party (EHP) and the We Will Stop Femicides Platform.

In recent months, donations were collected to pay Ece Devrim's rent for one year via a campaign launched by feminist activist Dilâra Gürcü, who had previously carried out a donation campaign for trans woman İhsan Hala.

We talked about many things including her life, her struggle, Ülker Street, rape, politics and LGBTI activism since she came from Munich to İstanbul at the age of 14.

My father was a dictator

First, I came to İzmir and stayed with my aunt. I was wandering around with my male cousin day after day. He was taking me to certain places with the hope that I could change. His intention was to make me a man, so, he was taking me to nightclubs.

There was the Rita Club in İzmir. It was mostly visited by homosexuals. He took me there and that day he said to me, “ah, now I understand your style.” It was 1982-84. My cousin sent me to İstanbul by bus so that I could go back to Germany. In those times, there were flights to Germany only from İstanbul.

I called my father from İstanbul, I said I arrived and I was waiting to get on the plane. He responded again like a dictator and we fought on the phone. “I am not coming,” I said and hung up.

I haven't seen him in person since that day. It has been 35 years now. I called him from time to time as a decent person would do, but he didn't want to meet me. Most recently he called me when he had an accident. “Hello, this is your father,” he said. I said, “which father,” though I recognized him.

I said “What happened?” and he started to talk. “I am going to the Umrah, would you give me your blessing,” he said.

I said, “I can give you my blessing if you see it as your right in your conscience.” Then he said, “I've heard you had an accident, I hope you get better soon” and hung up the phone.

I lived-in with my rapist

I was 15 when I was raped for the first time. I was living on the streets in İstanbul. It was during the time when İstiklal Street was open to traffic. I started to live one of the three men who raped me because he saved me from living on the streets.

Turkey had just seen a coup at that time, you can imagine how difficult those times were. Now I laugh at that situation because I had to live with my rapist for two years. My rapist's name was psychopath Bülent. He was earning his living by selling books on the streets. He found me a dishwashing job at a restaurant. I improved my skills in time and started DJing at clubs.

At police stations...

One day I met with some trans women at the Fish Market. A trans woman named Canan took me to Pürtelaş street. I had to start sex work. Then Vice Squad director Doğan Karakaplan came, raided our homes; we were subjected to all sorts of torture at the police stations.



They were taking us to Belgrad Forest, raping and beating us, and stealing our belongings and leaving us naked. And we were again being raped until we got home. After people were dispersed from Pürtelaş and Ülker streets, I started DJing again. Along the line I enrolled in the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) and started politics.

Who wants to commercialize his/her own body?

The only thing that trans women are accused of is sex work, but among trans women, we have many educated friends who don't want to commercialize their bodies. No one wants to commercialize his or her body. One can unwittingly

become accustomed to this exploitation. No trans woman dreams of sex work.

The system doesn't give any chances to trans women other than prostitution. I never accept sex work, because this is a thing that the society tries to impose on us.

I call gigolos, street walkers, and trans women who became prostitutes “people who are forced into sex work in exchange for money.” Since the most fundamental rights of these people are prevented by the society and system, they are left with sex work.

The biggest supporter of the capitalist system is the patriarchy. For this reason, prostitution operations are usually carried

out against women and trans women. They are never launched against male sex workers because this is the system's own order.

I strongly resisted forced sex work

I strongly resisted selling my body. I did many jobs from dishwashing to DJing. I even continued courses at İŞ-KUR in order to find a job, and I became a health care worker.

We Will Stop Femicides Platform
Spokesperson Dr. Gülsüm Kav helped me in my studies. I served my internship working with children with Down's syndrome at a private hospital in Beykoz.

The hospital management appreciated my work a lot and they'd increased my working hours to five days a week.

But I couldn't continue after my internship was over. I applied for a job everywhere but I was rejected by all of the hospitals in İstanbul due to my trans identity.

Afterwards, I was forced to start sex work again.

After the accident, I've begun to earn my life by selling lighters on the street in a wheelchair, which was bought by the Laborist Movement Party.

The greatest system of exploitation is in the family

Society's greatest system of exploitation is in the family. I believe family bonds are nonsense. The system supports this family structure in order to be able to exploit it.

For instance, why do they keep calling on us to make three children? Is it because they care? No, it's not. Wars have begun in our time and capitalism is collapsing, and new slaves are needed to send to war.

They wage wars for the reconstruction of the capitalist order to make the system function.

I am a politician, not an LGBTI activist

We, especially Demet Demir, have paid heavy prices but Demet was sent to prison just because she defended LGBTI rights.

Violence, though changing color and form, still continues. I am a politician, not an LGBTI activist because I think I have to struggle for the rights of all oppressed peoples.

The system has undermined the associations working for LGBTI rights. The associations as well as the opposition media that cross with the system are

being closed. There is no difference between 1980 and 2017. In those times, journalists couldn't cover trans murders due to political pressure. Trans women cannot be organized like women's movements do because they are apolitical and their associations are undermined by the system.

We have to say no to this autocratic regime on behalf of all oppressed peoples. Furthermore, a large portion of the governing party's grassroots will even say no. They are undertaking referendum campaign by declaring the people who say no to be terrorists. They've built fear in the people. The Gezi spirit will live in the referendum. This is the last exit before the bridge.

May the oppressed unite and say no against war and yes for peace right now.

Let me repeat, let us say no in the referendum for a free world.



**Şahika:
You Don't Become
A Trans Woman Later**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

TRANS PEOPLE - 3

“There are people who think we are trans women because we are raped. What an absurd logic,” says Şahika, and adds, “It is an inborn condition, one doesn’t become a trans woman later in life.”

Michelle Demishevich
Elif Ural

The government hasn't bothered us

Thank God for this current era. In the 90s, going to clubs, we would hide in taxis in order to hide from the police, because if they saw us they would take us. We couldn't walk on the streets because the police would chase us.

It is not like that now. We can live in our womanhood and our humanity to the fullest. The Justice and Development Party hasn't bothered us; on the contrary they have put us at ease. In the past, our hair was cut and we were thrown out of the city.

We resisted in those times despite all the violence and torture we didn't want to live a fake life and we claimed our identities. If I wanted a fake life, I would sit right beside my mother. There is a thing called being "me", and we've paid prices for being "us".

Şahika is a trans woman in her 40s living in the Beylikdüzü district of İstanbul and making her living through sex work.

She openheartedly explains everything including police violence in the 90s, the masculinity of the media, and her being forced into sex work since she couldn't make a career due to social prejudice. She underlines the importance of respecting one another.

At the end of the interview, we listened to Sezen Aksu's song "Dua" (Prayer) and cried together holding each other tight.

My childhood friends...

We've suffered losses, including our families in particular. For instance I couldn't meet with my brothers for 18 years. I was seeing my mother from time to time but my siblings, relatives, my closes acquaintances and even my childhood friends only accepted me after 18 years.

The perception of trans woman in the public mind was different then. They were seeing us as "perverted," well in fact it is still pretty much the same, not much has changed.

Transsexuality is not something that one aspires to

There are people who think we are trans women because we are raped. What an absurd logic.

For example, it is not the case that the women who were raped start working at registered brothels. It is an inborn condition. You don't become a trans woman later. Furthermore, transsexuality is not something that one aspires to.

Transphobia has always existed

Unfortunately, you cannot make a career plan due to intense male and police violence. We were all pushed into sex work.

Thanks to attorney Eren Keskin from the Human Rights Association who fought for our rights in the past. Now I look and see that we are in a better condition than in the past.

Transphobia has always existed and it still does. It is present in the official state institutions as well as in the society. From courthouses to police stations, from schools to hospitals, it is present almost everywhere.

Today I have rights as a citizen. I am equal before the law just like anyone else. We

have experienced physical violence to the utmost level alongside psychological violence, and it is still ongoing.

That period was like that. Female and male citizens used to face the same violence and torture as trans women. In those days, the political and economic crises were felt strongly. Imagine a country that just came out of [the] September 12 [military coup].

Why did I come to this world?

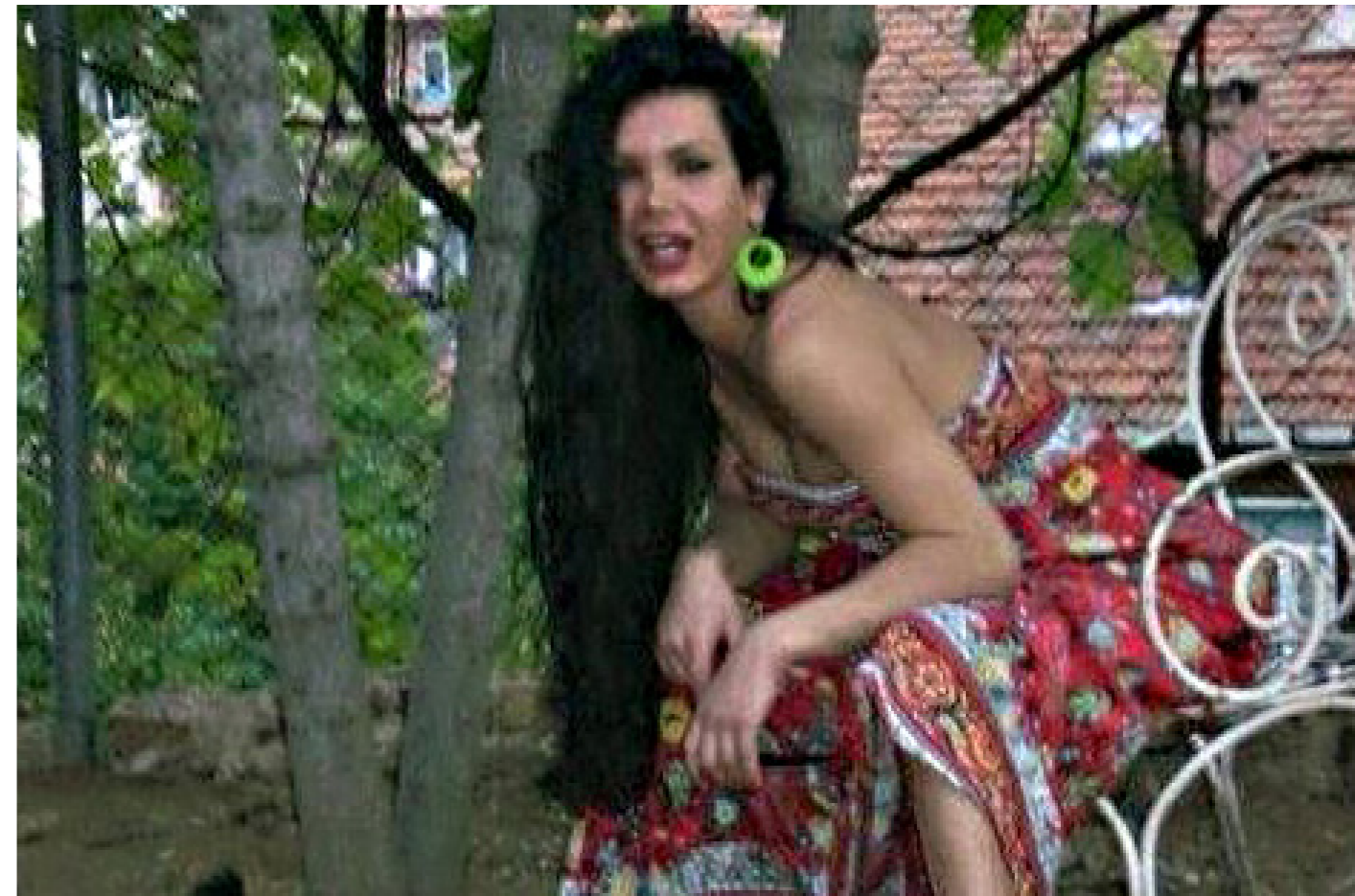
I use to say many times to myself that I wish I wasn't born with this identity, but now I say I wish I wasn't here in this world. Wars, environmental pollution, climate change, increasing femicide and child abuse...Now, as a human, I think why did I come into this world.

Violence against trans woman is different

We need to distinguish violence against women and violence against trans women.

While women are subjected to violence by the men closest to them, we are subjected to violence by male strangers on the streets.

The reason for this violence is "being a trans woman". The whole world is in disorder, it is not specific to Turkey.



It would not be fair to restrict talk about violence to Turkey. Today, there is violence in all over the world against foreigners, Muslims, black people, women, children, refugees...

We came to İstanbul to be women

The places where people are born, the education they get and their family structure directly determines one's future life.

For instance, me being from İzmir and being educated grants me an advantage. When I started to live openly as a trans woman, this advantage has had a huge contribution to my life in İstanbul.

Imagine 30 years ago and how there were trans women coming from almost all regions and cultures. Maybe there were some who saw some things for the first time when they came to İstanbul. Everyone came to İstanbul to be women, they had to make a living in this or that way.

Some started to wander on the streets, some started to work at nightclubs. For example, I remember very well that in those times, the clubs didn't hire just any girl. I always followed in the footsteps of the correct women around me.

I never looked up to a trans woman. Marilyn Monroe and Hande Ataizi for instance. I've always had a style. I like dressing well and stylishly. But depending

on the occasion, I try to care about how to dress. This stems from my respect for society.

Malatya is safer

I moved to Malatya to escape from problems I had with my boyfriend and a bit to stay by myself. Walking on the street in Malatya is safer than in İstanbul. This is the tolerance of the Anatolian people I guess.

We live in a society and the society has its own rules which we have to follow. One should dress accordingly. Try to go to a public bazaar with the clothes the celebrities wear in the Oscar ceremony and see what happens.

So, the décolleté must have a limit. It applies to both men and women. I say this as a person who loves décolleté. I don't go out in the morning with the dress I wear at night. If a dress looks cheap on someone, it means that person's choice is wrong.

Décolleté was a political action of ours

I love the new generation of trans women, they dress in an age-appropriate way. There are some exaggerated ones among them as well but there are also the trans women who dress very stylish and look more beautiful than many "normal"

women. We used to wear low-cut dresses and go out on the street like that and that was our reaction against the police violence. It was a political stance, we were doing that to say we exist.

There is no need to get dressed like in the daytime since there is no violence at that level anymore. Our décolleté was an insurrection.

I never thought I looked cheap on the streets but I also never could look pure either. I looked for pureness everywhere but couldn't find it.

The biggest rights defender is Bülent Ersoy

If we can live our trans identity today, if we can have the identity of being women, we owe it to Bülent Ersoy.

She paved a way for us by expressing herself very well and through the close relation she established with the Özal family.

She was a good example. The biggest rights defender is Bülent Ersoy. She paid a big price. We also have to do some things now.

She doesn't need to give support to LGBTI activism. She has already done her part. People don't have to include everyone in their lives.

Activism has turned into an income

LGBTI activism has turned into an income nowadays. I also have friends who work their fingers to the bone but I think some associations perceive it as a means of income because they don't do any major work.

There is the trans individual guest house for instance, and we watch sadly how it tries to survive in such harsh circumstances.

The donations and aids helped our friends in difficult condition. I wish the associations could help in this matter.

I believe places like women's shelters and nursing homes must be established for victimized trans individuals. People would donate to such places with inner peace.

Sex work is an occupation

I do my job out of love, no one does their job without loving it. If my words are perceived as immorality, then so be it.

If sex work was immoral, then the state wouldn't get taxes from the registered brothels.

I want the freelance sex workers be subjected to tax too because sex work is an occupation.

The right to education cannot be prevented

My recommendation for the young is to get educated. No one should oppose or prevent this right. I would have liked to make a nice career too but I have feared taking risks in my entire life.

I love cooking as well as fashion. I would have liked to work in one of these two sectors but because of masculine language in the fashion sector, police violence, male violence and society's prejudices, we were pushed into sex work.

I have never been a greedy person. I've earned and spent through my life. I am a person who started from scratch many times. I've spent the money I earned usually on brand name products, bags and shoes.

The difference between Europe and Turkey

I moved to Switzerland to work at a cabaret in the 90s. I lived in prominent European cities for years. There is no difference between Europe and Turkey.

If you are taken to a police station in Turkey, you will be released in no time but they deport you in Europe. Their laws are different. Human rights are better understood.

However, there is no clear difference.

For instance, Europeans like money a lot. They were complaining of a 10 Frank taxi fare in Switzerland. We take taxis in İstanbul much more often.

Each sector, each individual has hypocrisy, it has nothing to do with the society.

In the past, the media was presenting us very negatively. That is why there is this much marginalization and discrimination.

They used to use captions like “The transvestites spread terror.” In fact, the circumstances were very different. The real estate agents not renting the houses to us is a discrimination that followed this.

My partner has a roving eye

I have been in a relationship for 12 years. Love fades away in time; love is excitement, there are things beyond love in human life. Those are trust and sharing life.

Love is a very beautiful thing. Love refreshes people. There were many people with whom I could have fallen in love but I rejected them. However, my partner has a roving eye. He has never raised his voice. I am a woman of long relationships.

Referendum

Referendum means that everyone votes by their own free will. No matter what the results will be, the minority has to respect the majority because that is what democracy is.

We, the trans people, will be affected by the referendum results as much as any other citizens. There is no need for confusion.

A president elected by the people has to be respected because this is majority’s choice, but I will assert my rights if I see any injustice against my identity.

In recent days, an election was held in the US. I wish as a woman that Hillary Clinton had won. I want to deliver a message through our republic’s founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s words: “Peace at home, peace in the world”.

The whole world needs to understand that we are humans first. We have to appreciate people as people. I wish peace and tranquility for everybody.



**Emirhan: It's Necessary to Have
An Organized Struggle and
to Record Our Experiences**

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

TRANS PEOPLE - 4

Emirhan Deniz Çelebi is an English teacher and a highly equipped trans man. "I instilled fighting to my students. If I could touch the heart of even a single person, how lucky of me...", Emirhan says.

Michelle Demishevich
Elif Ural

I became acquainted with Emirhan in July 2016 through the trans activism camp traditionally organized every year by Pink Life LGBTI Association in the Torbalı district of İzmir province. He was subjected to violence too; I couldn't help but cry as he spoke of what he went through.

Emirhan Deniz Çelebi is an English teacher and a highly equipped trans man. He graduated from Ankara Gazi University. He is also a master's student in the Department of Journalism at İstanbul University and in the Department of Sociology at Yıldız Technical University.

He has travelled within Europe and North America. He is a founding member of the SPoD. He is one of the people who I feel happy to have in my life.

Let me give him the floor:

Menstrual period was a trauma for me

“I was born in 1990 in İstanbul. I came into the world as the fourth daughter of my family. Me and my aunt's son, my cousin, were playing together on the grass. Some time passed, my cousin needed to pee and peed standing up.

“I thought about myself and questioned why I didn't pee like that. So, I asked my cousin why he was peeing standing up. ‘I have penis,’ he said. ‘If that is a penis that he has, then what is mine?’ I wondered. I tried to pee standing up as I returned home but I got all dirty.

“In that moment, I told myself mine hasn't grown yet and I always thought it would grow until I reached secondary school. That lasted until I got my menstrual period. That was traumatic for me.

“With the menstrual period, my breasts began to grow and I was trying to hide them. The breasts were disturbing me. I realized at that point that something was different”.

I started to resemble my elder sisters

“In secondary school conservative women were coming to visit our school. Women who wore headscarves were explaining subjects like menstrual period and bodily hygiene. Girls and boys were in separate classes.

“One day, that women asked a question: Is there anyone who bled in their underwear? I was very surprised, and I wondered if they talked to us about cancer. Because until then, my mother was explaining things to me but I was never listening to her. I was playing Pokemon.

“One day, when we entered our class, the male students said to us, ‘You have vagina and it bleeds.’ I was surprised again. Everything was progressing very quickly.

“I could never forget the boys' offensive attitude and how the girls retired into their shells. Over time, I realized that I started to resemble my elder sisters but also noticed that unlike my elder sisters, I wasn't into any boys”.

You are a woman if you have vagina, a man if you have beard

“My family was a traditional one. They bought me a yellow skirt for Eid and I hated to wear it. Noticing this, my uncle-in-law got me some brown trousers.

After that day, I always wore trousers during the years of my puberty. I preferred clothes that didn't reveal the lines of my body.

One day, I felt very bad when my elder sister told me that I had to do my first wax because the hair on my legs was my hope. I guess it was because I thought ‘hair

equals man’ at that time. I felt very empty when I looked at my legs after the waxing. I was even neglecting the existence of my vagina because I didn't want to see it”.

I locked myself in a closet for 24 years

“I would have a man's body someday; I'd never lost this hope. I locked myself in a closet for 24 years. I was rejecting the men who were asking me out on dates”.

Rüzgar Erkoçlar has led the way for many people. I was scared to death to die with this vagina and breasts. I'd never viewed myself as a woman. I was on a search to

get rid of this body. Pieces of research were always providing information about the transition from man to woman.

Most of the information I found on Internet was in English and I started to learn English just to learn and understand this research.

I was carrying out my research in Internet cafes secretly in order not to be marginalized. With the support of my high school English teacher, I chose to study teaching English. At that time, my shelter was my courses. I used to hide in closets running away from people.

Today, out trans men confront serious peer violence. I had a girlfriend in high school and she was the first person to whom I came out. Our relationship lasted two and a half years. She cheated on me with a non-trans man. We had a fight and she told me ‘you will die with this body anyway’ and I was left with myself.

Afterwards, I met a girl on Internet and we had an online romance. There were trans men who Rüzgar Erkoçlar was in contact with but I couldn't contact him. He never replied to my messages.

Do I judge him? No, I wish he could be in the movement or that some other celebrity trans man comes from our community and fights...

I am not a man of one-night stands

I was starting to meet up with my girlfriend whom I met on the internet and I was going to her place from time to time.

One day, my girlfriend told her family about my situation. Her family reacted very badly .

I was a rebellious young man in those days and I argued back. I was saying things like ‘I love her’. We were like we were in a typical Yeşilçam movie.

Then, the relationship ended. I am not a man of one-night stands.

Thanks to my old girlfriend

My girlfriend of that time helped me at the beginning of my trans shift period. I fell in love with someone else and we broke up.

After I graduated from university, I started to work at TED college, and I had a unisex appearance. I started to develop through therapy at Hacettepe.

My appearance started to change too during that period and I decided to resign.

The school management on the surface didn't want to let me go, but it was bullshit as they had brought a lawsuit





against me but I hadn't filed a counter compensation suit. They behaved shamefully, but I didn't behave shamefully in kind.

I taught my students to fight injustice

I had told my students I had to leave for cancer treatment. I became very angry with myself for having lied like that because I was very fond of my children. My children were very smart. I taught them to fight injustice.

"Even if it is your principal, you will question and seek your rights", I said. My children were getting prepared for

the university entrance exam. During my teaching years, I instilled a fighting spirit to my children. How lucky I would be if I were able to touch the heart of even a single person.

Then I entered Department of Sociology at Yıldız Technical University. I had bared my soul to my family in that period. 'I called you my daughter for 24 years, from now on I'll call you my son', my mom said. My family accepted me as I am. I experienced no difficulties, I answered their question with patience. My elder sister asked me one day 'Will you go to the army?' I started my second grad program at İstanbul University in sociology again.

Only we trans individuals mourn for ourselves

I wanted to be engaged with organized LGBTI activism because I also wanted to do something social. My goal was to do something for trans men.

I enrolled in the Association of İstanbul Social Policies Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies (SPoD). When the trans man 'Okyanus Efe' (Ocean Efe) died, I realized that only we trans individuals mourn for ourselves. Then I came to see that there wasn't trans male visibility in any association.

I started activism through minor projects and then was elected as a board member. It was the first time that a trans man became a board member at an LGBTI association. We have to ask ourselves as well if there is transphobia in these associations.

For instance, I was there but how frequently do we as trans individuals go to the associations? For example, we are carrying out studies in the organization in which I am a part of against trans murders. We now have to leave the bad things lived in the past aside and speak about what can be done for the movement.

There are problems with our trans

organizations in Turkey. There is difficulty making culture amongst trans individuals. Most of trans women describe trans men as 'masculine lesbians'. We face the same violence in the society even if we don't realize it. I've taken initiative at SPoD regarding how we can include trans men in the movement.

"Let us put ISIS aside, let me talk to you about..."

For instance, most important issue for us is the hormone therapy because most of us don't see a gynecologist and we administer the wrong hormone therapy. We have to routinize this therapy on a semi-annual basis.

As far as I know, there are 712 trans men. I gathered this data from our closed Facebook group. At the meetings I attended, I deliver speeches about the LGBTI movement and the violence it faces.

In a meeting I joined in the United States, I was asked to talk about the terror incidents in the Middle East. I said, 'Let us leave ISIS aside, let me talk to you about the police violence against the trans women in Turkey'.

I talked about the torture that sex worker trans women were subjected to at police stations, and how the police receiving bribes from sex worker trans women

on the streets. I've always said and will keep saying that an organized struggle is necessary.

I've visited 5-6 countries and talked about the trans movement everywhere I went. I observed that when I spoke of the Ülker Sokak resistance, the eyes of those in the hall opened wide, and they felt the pain inside themselves.

To hell with Article 40*

We have to record the things we tell. We need to make our own news, take our own photos and shoot our videos by ourselves. The next generation will come with questions.

We don't necessarily have to gather under the roof of an association; we can also get organized in smaller groups. We have to act in solidarity against being held hostage to these blues and pink identities. To hell with Article 40 of the Civil Code.

We urgently need a law consultancy and we are trying to establish that through SPoD. We need associations in the organized struggle.

Turkey is a UN member since 1945

We need to get over our prejudices

Turkish Civil Code, Article 40

A person who wishes to change gender may request permission to change gender by applying in person to the court. However, for the permission to be granted, the applicant must be 18 years old and must be unmarried. The applicant must also be in a transsexual nature and must document the necessity to change gender for mental health and that he/she is permanently deprived of reproductive abilities through an official health committee report obtained from an education and research hospital.

Depending on the permission granted, once the gender reassignment surgery fit for the aim and medical methods has been completed and verified by an official health committee report, the court decides to make the necessary changes in the population registry.

towards the associations. We can overcome these through dialogue. I've translated a 48-page book that was prepared by Transgender Europe that was about how trans individuals will be associated with the United Nations. I translated it from English to Turkish for Pink Life.

What I wrote in the preface of the book was: It was in the 1980s when transphobia started to be visible in Turkey, and it started to rise in the 90s.

A baby born in those years is still wandering on the streets where transphobia is present. That means, there is still something wrong.

We need to know what is in the movement. We can study what we can do in the UN.

Our next advocacy should be on the UN level. Why? Because Turkey is a UN member since 1945. Nevertheless, we don't use that in our advocacy. Unfortunately, we don't have a strong lobby presence in the international arena.

Michelle Demishevich

Demishevich is a feminist, LGBTI and human rights activist, and journalist. She started her profession in 1995. She recently worked as correspondent at İMC TV and T24. She writes at tazgazete. She is among the founding members of the Greens and the Left Party of the Future.

Elif Ural

Ural graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature at Ege University. She worked as correspondent at Kanal D, CNN Türk and Al Jazeera. She specialized on Turkish, Israeli and the Middle Eastern politics. She continues to work as a freelance journalist.

Referendum

No, no, of course no. Thousands of no for the welfare of the LGBTI people... We will continue fighting no matter what the result will be, because there is still hope... We need to read a lot. What one reads most recently is what touches his/her heart and mind the most. Hope needs to be kept alive as we fight a mindset that tries to pull us back. We need to continue fighting strategically. Pressure from civil society is more influential on political authority despite the fact that associations are being closed down with the Statutory Decrees. Maybe we will not see compensation for our work but let's continue to fight for the sake of the next generation. Trans individuals and women are strong when they are united".



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

SARMAŞIK ASSOCIATION - 1

When Sarmaşık Association was closed through Statutory Decree no 677 on November 22, 2016, approximately 32 thousand people were deprived of its assistance.

**Sarmaşık Association
Was Closed; Where Does This
Leave the Victims?**

Nurhak Yılmaz
Sertaç Kayar

32 significant names laid the foundations of the association

No	Name Surname	Organization
1	Osman Baydemir	Mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality (Present HDP Deputy)
2	Mehmet Şerif Camcı	Advisor to Mayor of Metropolitan Municipality (Present Chairman of Sarmaşık Association Board of Directors)
3	Kutbettin Arzu	Chairman, Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Former AKP Deputy)
4	Raif Türk	Chairman, Diyarbakır Industrialist and Business People Association
5	Sezgin Tanrıkılı	Former Chairman, Diyarbakır Bar Association (Present CHP Deputy)
6	Ahmet Fikret Öcal	Former Chairman, Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
7	Şah İsmail Bedirhanoğlu	Chairman, Southeast Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
8	Alican Ebedinoğlu	Chairman, Düzce Union of Merchants and Craftsmen
9	Abdul Kadir Akboz	Chairman, Southeastern Young Businessmen Society
10	Fahrettin Akyıl	Chairman, Commodity Exchange
11	İlhan Diken	Doctor – Former Chairman, Medical Association (Deceased)
12	Mehmet Selim Ölçer	Doctor – Former Chairman, Medical Association
13	Cemal Mercan	Member of Board of Directors, Diyarbakır Industrialist and Business People Association
14	Haydar Kılıçoğlu	Educator – Retiree
15	Mehmet Işıktaş	Retiree
16	Fuat Hayri Demir	Lawyer – Former Chairman, Pir Sultan Abdal Association
17	Ali Akıncı	Human Rights Association Former Diyarbakır Branch President
18	Celalettin Birtane	Businessman
19	Abdulkadir Aydın	Farmer
20	Ali Öncü	Spokesperson, Democracy Platform
21	Muharrem Erbey	Lawyer - Chairman, Human Rights Association Diyarbakır Branch
22	Cavit Ceylan	Social Services Director - Retiree
23	Fahrettin Çağdaş	Former Secretary, Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects Provincial Coordination Commission
24	Necdet İpekyüz	Doctor - Member of Board of Directors, Human Rights Association of Turkey
25	Mahmut Ortakkaya	Doctor
26	Süleyman Gökalp	Tax Professional
27	Mehmet Kızıltepe	Chairman, Southeastern Union of Mukhtars
28	Sait Şanlı	Chairman, Chamber of Butchers (Deceased)
29	Ali Rıza Yıldırım	Social Service Specialist
30	Makbule Altıntaş	Local Agenda 21
31	Naşide Buluttekin	Representative, Umut Işığı Women Cooperative
32	Fuat Kumruaslan	Retiree

Founded 11 years ago in Diyarbakır to conduct research on poverty, Sarmaşık (Ivy) Association changed its direction to solidarity with the poor as a result of the perceived gravity of the situation. It was closed at the end of last year.

The association was among 550 associations, 9 media organizations and 19 health organizations that were shut down with Statutory Decree no 677 on November 22, 2016.

Sarmaşık Association was one of the institutions whose closure drew the strongest reaction. Behind this reaction was the fact that 5,400 families, or in other words 32,000 people faced the danger of starvation following the closure of the association. In our report, you will find the 11-year success story of the association and the unjust suffering that arose from its closing down.

Its full name is Sarmaşık Association: Combating Poverty and Sustainable Development.

It was founded in April 2006 in Diyarbakır. Its founders' committee list was rather "colorful."

People such as Selahattin Demirtaş, Co-chairman of Democratic Regions Party in that period; Kudbettin Arzu, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, later Justice and Development Party (AKP) Diyarbakır Deputy; Osman Baydemir, Mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, later Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) Urfa Deputy; and Sezgin Tanrikulu, CHP Istanbul Deputy came together to found Sarmaşık Association.

The founders' committee list of 32 (Table-1), which was also comprised of representatives from NGOs and citizens, was full of people who were going to be recognized by Turkey in the upcoming years.

Their common trait was that they were from Diyarbakır and they wanted to take part in eliminating poverty in the city.

In its legislation, objectives were listed as follow:

1- To cooperate with national and international organizations that aim at combating poverty.

2- To conduct studies that will implement

global objectives regarding combating poverty on a local scale.

3- To ensure the participation of the central government, local authorities and NGOs to this campaign and to raise societal awareness regarding the struggle against poverty.

4- To develop social solidarity and cooperation.

5- To conduct studies that will contribute to eliminating poverty and sustainable development.

6- To provide in-kind and financial aid to disadvantaged groups for food, clothing, health, education, fuel and sheltering.

7- To produce and implement sustainable projects aimed at disadvantaged groups.

"Poverty map" was published

The primary objective was to map the poverty in the city and to contribute to the elimination of poverty. Right after its foundation, the association began its first field research in this area. Five neighborhoods in four central provinces were chosen as research areas.

The neighborhoods were Gürdoğan neighborhood within Yenişehir province, Fatihpaşa neighborhood within Sur province, Huzurevleri and Peyas neighborhoods within Kayapınar province

Total Number of Households	5706
Total Population	36215
Female Population	17974
Male Population	18241
Average Number of People per Household	6,3

and Körhat neighborhood within Bağlar province. These were neighborhoods populated by those coming from nearby cities due to conflict. Visible poverty and squatting were their common traits.

The field study conducted by 45 pollsters began in April 2016 in Gürdoğan neighborhood. The research in the five

neighborhoods ended in February 2007. Face to face interviews were held with 5,706 family members in the shantytowns of these neighborhoods.

Material need is "food"

52 questions were asked within the scope of the survey. Answers were sought to

	Number of Households	%
Food	1743	38,3
Clothing	208	4,5
Rent	558	12,3
Health	240	5,3
Fuel	312	6,9
Education	292	6,4
Hot Meal	123	2,7
Household Goods	189	4,2
Work	882	19,4
Total	4547	100

questions regarding subsistence, social security, educational status, health status and sheltering.

Fairly telling results came to light. The most frequent answer to the question “What is your material need” was “food.” (Table 3) This answer alone revealed the conditions.

Şerif Camcı, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sarmaşık Association says that this demand came particularly from women.

“Because families were torn apart due to conflicts and forced migration, women became breadwinners. Women wanted food instead of money. They wanted food over money due to the possibility that men could spend it.”

Families with zero income

The reason for the demand for food was that poverty was forcing people to a life way below the starvation line. Minimum wage in the research period, which was between December 2006 and February 2007, was TRY 403.03. Yet the results of the survey (Table 4) show that two-thirds of the interviewed families were living with incomes far below the minimum wage.

The grave dimension of the study was that hundreds of families had no income at all. In the first stage, when results of Fatihpaşa and Gürdoğan neighborhoods were published, it was a shock for the public. The reality of families with zero income was a much-discussed topic for a long while.

Income	Number of Households	%	Cumulative %
No Clear Income	309	5,4	5,4
1-50 TRY	64	1,1	6,5
51-150 TRY	916	16,1	22,6
151-250 TRY	807	14,1	36,7
251-350 TRY	1 419	24,9	61,6
351-500 TRY	1 258	22	83,6
501 TRY and Above	933	16,4	100

During those days, Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) revealed the figures of starvation and poverty. The statement showed that 10,000 people were living with income below 1 dollar.

In the same period, Nazmi Belge wrote a piece to Radikal newspaper regarding Sarmaşık Association’s field study. In the piece, titled “Come and See the Poverty in Diyarbakır”, Ankara’s approach to the poor and poverty was criticized as such:

“TÜİK’s distribution of income data and poverty line figures do not mean much to the citizens as they indicate an “average value”. In order to see the difference of those in the bottom and those on the top in the distribution of income, one needs to face “those in the bottom” rather than looking at percentiles.

“When we see them, we think that either TÜİK’s data or our eyes are deceiving us. But the ones who live this reality are the residents of Fatihpaşa and Gürdoğan neighborhoods who live in single room houses, do not have any social security including green card, and bake bread in floor furnace in order to not to pay for bread.”

Danger of starvation gave birth to “Food Bank”

The results of Sarmaşık Association’s field research in five neighborhoods shook the officials of the association as

much as they did the public. The fact that there were thousands who would face the risk of starvation without the aid of a single meal changed the plans of the association. The primary goal to conduct field research and reports was abandoned and action was taken to “prevent people from starving to death”. With the words of Camcı, Chairman of the Association, “the employees and officials of the association put the results before themselves and decided to establish a ‘Food Bank’”.

Sarmaşık Association’s journey of solidarity began this way.

Where did this poverty come from?

Diyarbakır is among the cities with the highest unemployment rate for the last ten years. Although the official TÜİK data is “undisputed”; the 7 year data belonging to Diyarbakır and Urfa show the gravity of unemployment, one of the foremost indicators of poverty. (2010: 13.1%, 2011: 8.4%, 2012: 12.4% , 2013: 17.5%, 2014: 17.4%, 2015: 17.5%, 2016: 17.2%) There is a continuous increase in poverty figures.

Migration in 90s

Sociologist Aynur Zengeralp says that one of the most important factors of the poverty in the region is the big migration wave that took place in 1990s due to conflict. She adds:



“As a result of the conflict, there was intense migration from villages to the cities. Imagine that thousands of villages were emptied. The migration of hundreds of thousands to cities who were engaged in farming and animal breeding, also damages the economic structure of the country in a significant way.

“Hence one problem triggers another one. The city which let in the immigrants is not in a condition to answer their needs. This brings various problems like education, health and employment, and the problem becomes inextricable.”

What is left behind

Zengeralp says that in the beginning of 1980s, the population of Diyarbakır and

Year	Population
1980	778.150
1990	1.094.996
1997	1.282.678
2000	1.362.708
2007	1.460.714
2008	1.492.828
2009	1.515.011
2010	1.528.958
2011	1.570.943
2012	1.592.167
2013	1.607.437
2014	1.635.048
2015	1.654.196
2016	1.673.119

its provinces was around 700,000, while it neared one and a half million in the beginning of 2000s.

According to the data of Sarmaşık Association, due to the forced migration in 1990s, Diyarbakır’s population increased from 350,000 to 1 million in 20 years.

According to the 2006 research of Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, 97% of the population that was forced to migrate left behind their vineyards and orchards, 96% left their agricultural vehicles and 83% left their cattle.

Hence, people forced to migrate “left behind” their means of living.

The solution is hidden in the source

Sociologist Aynur Zengeralp remarks that when the population who migrated to Diyarbakır could not fulfill their needs for living, they were obliged to migrate to further west.

“In this manner, migration becomes an ongoing habit for the poor. The only thing that does not change on the way is that those in the power always use this poverty as an opportunity. This is called the “make them beg” policy.

The solution for this massive problem is hidden in its source. What is needed is

to end conflict and to abolish its basis. Otherwise, economic packages only satisfy the needs of the middle class. This means that rich would be richer, but nothing would change in the lives of the poor.”

From the chamber of commerce and industry

Ahmet Sayar, Chairman of Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce and Industry, remarks that “the city has a serious potential for development yet this potential does not make it to the statistics”. He evaluated the last 10 years of Diyarbakır’s economy as such:

“When we look at the course in the last 10 years, we can see the relation of the economy to the environment of peace and trust. When the solution process was taking place, new fields of investment became visible. But the reemergence of conflict directly reverberated to investments. The figures of exports decreased.

Conflict in both Turkey and Middle East reverberates to the economy of the region. There were losses in revenues and employment. Despite all this, businesses and industrialists still struggle to keep up and pursue their activities.”



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

SARMAŐIK ASSOCIATION - 2

From the very start, SarmaŐık Association conducted its studies with the support of institutions, and later on, with personal donors. In a short time it became a model for combating poverty.

An Alternative Bank: The SarmaŐık Food Bank

Nurhak Yılmaz
Sertaç Kayar



It was decided to establish a “food bank” under the umbrella of Sarmaşık Association: Combating Poverty and Sustainable Development. Yet, in order to provide monthly aid to approximately 30,000 people, the number of which would later increase, the association needed a solidarity network.

A wide array of support in the foundation phase was effective in the establishment of the food bank. A protocol was signed with 34 organizations under Diyarbakır Democracy Platform, including Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sur Municipality, Kayapınar Municipality, Diyarbakır Chamber of Medicine, Diyarbakır Bar Association and Diyarbakır Industrialist and Business People Association. This list included trade unions from various lines of work, families of arrestees and immigration associations.

The aim of the protocol was to support the food bank periodically each month, even with only miniscule figures. Unions and chambers would encourage their members, while other organizations would encourage their sponsors in this regard.

Number of donors rapidly increased

The food bank came into service on May 15, 2007. In the first stage, 3,600 families were supported. The number increased to 5,400 in a short while. This meant that the number of people provided with aid reached to 32,000.

According to Şerif Camcı, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Sarmaşık Association, the profile of those contributing to the association changed in time. After a while, the number of individual donors were more than the number

of organizations in the protocol. The average number of donors reached up to 9,000.

Among these were a janitor who donated 20 TL a month as well as a business donating a certain share of its income. Yet as of 2014 the number of donors dropped to 5,800 due to “increasing pressures and the change in solidarity priorities”.

A new and huge mass of victims appeared following the rush of those from the war in Syria and from the conflicts in the cities of Turkey. People who were supporting Sarmaşık Association for years channeled their aid to these “new

victims”. However, this decline in the number of donors did not hinder the aids to the food bank.

The association received 2,400,000 TL in donations annually. 86% of the donations were distributed to aid recipients.

People who came to the food bank were able to receive 15 kinds of staple foods as well as diapers each month according to their need.

Village guards and AKP supporters also received aid from Sarmaşık Association

At Sarmaşık Association, the intended population and aid criteria were rather anomalous. The elderly poor, who did not have social security, were outside of production mechanisms and were unable to go back into production; handicapped citizens; divorcees and widows; patients under continuous treatment; families/ individuals under hard socioeconomic conditions; and families with no member that could join workforce could receive aid.

“We weren’t interested in the political views of the applicants. We weren’t asking to which party they were voting for,” says Şerif Camcı. Village guards, AKP supporters and HDP supporters: they all had received aid from the bank for years.

Projects aimed at children and women

After the poverty map and the food bank, new necessities were determined in time. New projects were on agenda:

Child Education Support Program

The project aimed to improve the conditions for children of school age, who were able or unable to go to school as well as child laborers. 120 children benefitted from the project.

Women’s Health (Pilot) Project

The project aimed to inform women regarding basic hygiene that would improve their living space and teenage women regarding basic health protection; to develop health-protecting behaviors, to encourage the use of medical services; and to provide cleaning agents to families.

The project was implemented for one year. 105 women who received aid from the food bank benefitted from the project.

Natural Gas Technologies Employment Project

The project was created to generate employment in line with sustainable development principles. It was aimed at two groups. The first group was comprised of those with occupational

backgrounds who did not have certificates.

The second group was comprised of the individuals between 18 and 35 years old whose families had applied to the food bank. 300 hours of training was provided within the scope of the project.

The “Sarmaşık Model” drew attention

In time, the studies of the association drew attention both in Turkey and on an international scale. The Sarmaşık Model was listened to attentively in various national and international meetings. International Symposium on

Poverty, held in 2010 in Istanbul, 4th Regional Development and Governance Symposium, held in 2009 in Ankara, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) 2008 Conference, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) Conference and Human Rights Agenda Istanbul Conference were some of those meetings.

While the association was seen as an “exemplary solidarity model”, it was also subjected to audits and investigations. The first audit was held by Interior Ministry auditors between June 11-24, 2009. The documents of the association were examined for 14 days. The objective was to “determine whether the association was operating in line with



the purpose written in its charter”. When the auditors finalized the examination and prepared the report, there was no statement regarding non-compliances with the charter.

The association that helped the earthquake victims became the target

Following the earthquake in Van in October 2011, Sarmaşık Association became the target of racist groups on social media.

Tweets written with the tag #sarmasikderneginebagisyok (no donations to Sarmaşık Association)

became the number 1 trending topic. The association had already gone through an extensive audit. Yet after the agenda created on social media, the Diyarbakır Governorate blocked the bank accounts of the association for two months.

The justification for this was that the aid delivered to the earthquake victims was not “a study in compliance with association’s purpose”. The block was removed after the association’s objection. However, for this reason, the association was made to pay administrative fines three times.

In 2012, a lawsuit was brought against Sarmaşık Association within the scope of the “KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union)



Main Case”. Association executives’ testimonies were taken yet the case was dismissed of charges.

Simultaneously, State Audit Court auditors and Interior Ministry civil inspectors started an investigation into the accounts of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality.

The report prepared at the end of the investigation stated that between 2008 and 2009, the municipality donated to Sarmaşık Association in an illegal manner.

Civil inspectors ignored the protocol between the municipality and the association. The aid, which amounted to 900,000 liras, was charged to Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Osman Baydemir, aldermen and municipality

officials who have signature under the payment transaction.

Moreover, the Interior Ministry allowed an investigation into Baydemir and the aldermen. Although the municipality objected the case results via State Council, Department No. 1 of the State Council found the case result to be sound and sent it to the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office.

The municipality was forced to demand 900,000 liras back from Sarmaşık Association. After the case result, association declared to the public that it will pay the money in six installments and called for aid.

In fact, municipalities have budgets specifically allocated for this sort of social





aid. However, due to the investigation, the municipality had to ask for the financial aid back that it had provided to Sarmaşık Association.

Later on, the municipality determined the material needs of the poor and purchased these necessities itself.

It cooperated with Sarmaşık Association in the distribution of these necessities and prioritized the families determined by the association.

The municipality kept on providing aid to the poor until a trustee was appointed. After that, the study was stopped.

An investigation was held into the volunteers of the association as well.

Evrin Alataş, a journalist who died in 2010, was summoned for a statement in 2012. One of the volunteers of the association, sociologist Müge Tuzcuoğlu, was among those taken into custody for a short while.

No reports against the association were written in these investigations and examinations. A civil inspector even said, "If this work was held elsewhere in Turkey, it would be rewarded."

Nurhak Yılmaz

Yılmaz is a graduate of the Faculty of Communication at İstanbul University. She started practicing journalism at Demokrasi Newspaper. She worked at Ülkede Gündem, Özgür Bakış 2000'de Yeni Gündem, Dicle News Agency and Azadi TV. She practices freelance journalism.

Sertaç Kayar

Leaving the Department of Art History at Çanakkale 19 Mart University, Kayar started practicing journalism at the İstanbul bureau of Dicle News Agency in 2015. Kayar started practicing journalism at the İstanbul bureau of Dicle News Agency in 2015. He started journalism in the İstanbul bureau of Dicle News Agency. He continued his profession in many cities, mostly in Diyarbakır in 2009. He worked freelance at many domestic and international media outlets as of 2012. He worked at media outlets such as Gali Kurdistan, Xendan, Diyarbakır Özgür Haber Newspaper, Hurbakis.net, Azadi TV, Diyarbakır Yenigün Newspaper, Reuters (Freelance) and Sputnik.



Balat: A Modern İstanbul Project in a Historical Setting

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

BALAT

Balat is the district of fires, abandoned factories, ships whose masts were broken, and crippled cats but most of all it has been the district of minorities through history.

Ecem Engin
Şenay Öztürk

The ancient Jewish neighborhood Balat, which lies along the Byzantine sea walls by Haliç (the Golden Horn), is now one of the last fortresses that Romans took shelter in. The gentrification process that has been continuing for 15 years is in its third stage.

The first stage, which started in the beginning of the 2000s, was a rehabilitation project launched in cooperation with Fatih Municipality and the European Union with the goals of preservation and improvement.

In the second stage, this project was replaced with the Fener-Balat Renewal Project. So, the restoration work led by Fatih Municipality and the European Union was replaced with new projects run in partnership with the public-private sector.

The area was declared a renewal area in 2006 through the “Law on Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties”.

GAP Construction, which was connected to Çalık Holding won the tender of the preliminary design in 2007. The project was halted thanks to objections raised from civil society. Today, in its last stage, a transformation has taken place through the individual capital entering the neighborhood.



Since the people living in Balat for generations haven't prospered at the speed requested by the neoliberal policies, they cannot adapt to the new face of the city and district, which made these people poorer and has driven them to earn money through illegal means.

As history's rusty marks are zoned for construction and painted over, the Balat residents cannot see their own future amidst the new colors of the district.

It is now a very ordinary thing to see a boutique hotel on every street. In this area that sustains its

traditional neighborhood culture, the number of new generation coffee shops that sell a cup of coffee for 10 TL (2.5 Euros) is increasing day by day.

Through social and economic dynamics, the gentrification project is being carried out by through natural means in Fener and Balat, which are the new favorites of domestic and foreign tourists; urban transformation could not achieve this.

The residents who become poorer with each passing day are being silently kicked out of the district.

Glass artist Yasemin Aslan Bakiri carries on with her work in Camhane, an old Rum house, of which İstanbul Mayor Kadir Toptaş joined the inrestoration work in person 15 years ago.

Her door is open to everybody, especially to Balat residents. However, she says that Balat residents are not really interested in her works.

“The new coffee shops are temporary”

Camhane is one of the successful examples of Balat’s restoration works. Every detail in the shop was renewed

What is urgent expropriation?

Urgent Expropriation is regulated through the Law on Expropriation No. 2,942.

Expropriation procedures being accelerated through a Decree of the Council of Ministers or through a special case stated in the legislation is termed urgent expropriation.

In other words, the type of expropriation, which is made through an expert report to have other procedures completed after the expropriation procedures, is called urgent expropriation.

in accordance with the original. Bakiri decorates her works with Ottoman motifs to maintain the spirit of the shop.

Bakiri is very disturbed by the increasing number of new coffee shops. Saying that “Everyone and their brother are opening coffee shops like they do in Tünel or Galata, but they are all temporary”,

Bakiri complains about dullness of the new venues. “Antique shops are everywhere, but those ‘antique shops’ have turned into flea markets.

Those kind of things have bad impact on the area. I feel sad. Those things were done in Galata too but it deforms the fabric of the space and its naturalness”.

Bakiri claims that “insensible people” have had a share in turning Balat into a center of profit through gentrification.

Bakiri believes that the people who handed their properties over to investors didn’t look at their living environment with passion due to their economy-oriented mindset. “It is not right to gain something by destroying historical places”, Bakiri says and adds that:

“It is important to sustain and know the value of existing things rather than just adding something to it. The neighborhood culture needs to be protected”.

The district shaken by the waves of migration

One only needs to take a glance at the history of Balat in order to understand how Balat has been experiencing the gentrification process. The district became an area in which minorities, especially Jewish people, lived in the first years of the Republic of Turkey. The non-Muslim minorities abandoned the district in the wake of the events of September 6-7, 1955, and Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Due to its closeness to working areas downtown, the area was one of the first stops of those who migrated from rural areas to the big city until 10 years ago. It has become one of the favorite areas of young entrepreneurs and artists who seek new addresses for themselves...

The Jews and Rums who were residing in the Fener-Balat area before the Ottoman times sustained their existence during the Ottoman period as well. A decrease in commercial life on the shores of Haliç after the 19th century as well as fires caused Balat to fall from grace. With the French city planner Henry Prost’s plan to bring industry to the area in the 1930s, Balat changed its face since the state established factories and manufacturing shops there.

Migration started from the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia to the districts of





Fener and Balat in 1985, which is about the same time that work was done to clean the Haliç inlet. For the people who came through forced migration, not only did they not have a village or hometown to return to but they also didn't have a job waiting for them. The reason people choose this place was indeed its closeness to working areas downtown and its cheap rent. The last migration wave that occurred in that period formed the district's present social and economic structure.

The EU Project left unfinished

Balat's surroundings and sea were cleaned and the de-industrialization process was completed. After the

historical peninsula was added to the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List in 1985, the value of the area multiplied. The rehabilitation of Balat and Ayvansaray was discussed in the HABITAT Conference that was organized in İstanbul in 1996. Nevertheless, the project could only be put into practice in 2003.

The European Union granted 7 million Euros to Turkey for rehabilitation and restoration work in the area. During the restoration, not only the landowners or renters were evicted, but also they weren't asked to pay anything. Furthermore, with an agreement signed with the landowners, the EU banned the landowners from selling their buildings or evicting their renters for five years after the restoration of the building was

completed. As restoration costs exceeded the expectations, Fatih Municipality fully restored 35 buildings, and carried out simple maintenance in 121 buildings.

In 2006, the Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Renewal Project was declared on the grounds of the "Law on Preservation by Renovation and Utilization by Revitalizing Deteriorated Immovable Historical and Cultural Properties". In 2007, GAP İnşaat (GAP Construction) incorporated within Çalık Holding, which we know from the Tarlabaşı Renewal Project, won the tender of the preliminary project. The agreement with the EU was thus cancelled without asking the local community. Furthermore, the 121 buildings in which

basic maintenance was carried out were added to the list of 3,000 buildings to be demolished.

The details and goals of the projects were described on GAP İnşaat's official website as follows:

The current renewal area consists of the area located where the upper walls start (Ayvansaray and Mürselpaşa streets) to Haliç, which comprises 59 city blocks, 909 parcels and the neighboring areas. This is a 79,345 meter square area in gross. The project's primary goal is to ensure the area's physical structure be renewed and its social structural capacity be increased. At the same time, the project



aims to improve the present usage and enrich the lives on the coastal regions through the new usage. It is also intended that the residential character in the Fener-Balat area be supported and enriched through touristic functions. Despite its central location in the city, the region has been left outside due to its introverted character; increasing the potential of the region is among the goals of the project. The projects involves various architectural approaches such as restoration, restitution, and creating new projects, and projects that supports combined usage.

Annulment decisions, urgent expropriation and finally the victory

The Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Renewal Area Preliminary Project was approved in Fatih Municipality Assembly in December 2009. Following this decision, the local community gathering under the roof of the Association of Preserving Fener Balat Cultural Heritage (FEBAYDER) challenged the decision and the legal process started.

The people's efforts were fruitful and the court ordered the cancellation of the project in June 2012. Despite the annulment, the Council of Ministers ordered urgent expropriation for Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray. The FEBAYDER didn't give up on the case and it

was ruled that the execution of the project must be suspended in May 2013, and in September, the Council of State annulled the expropriation order. The case concluded with the İstanbul 1st Administrative Court cancelling the Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray conservation development plan that included the Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray renewal project. The Balat residents took a deep breath in the face of the destruction threat, however, what the urban transformation couldn't achieve would be achieved through social transformation.

Tourism based on consumption and shopping

FEBAYDER spokesperson Asst. Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Şahin says that they became the first victims of the urban transformation projects and adds, "Unfortunately, when this started to happen here, the proceedings weren't very clear and it was difficult to find ways to struggle against this. Now, everyone knows everything".

Çiğdem Şahin says that eye of the investors and the state is always on region since there is no place left for profit through gentrification, or areas that have not been subject to urban transformation in İstanbul. Şahin also underlines that the historical value of places is disregarded in urban transformation or social transformation, and that tourism



is established based on the scenery rather than the realities. "They speak of a tourism based on consumption and shopping. They don't mention the value of region, it is a decor-tourism. People will make money on hotels, restaurants, night clubs, and coffee shops. People won't make money from touristic or cultural values", Şahin says.

Prof. Dr. Seçkin Dindar, who purchased in his own words a "garbage dump" near the Anemaş Dungeons in Ayvansaray and turned it into a hotel and cafe, says that what adds value to a place is history, and history cannot be purchased. He adds that a restoration in accordance with the original cannot be done with a money-oriented approach but one has to do this type of work voluntarily.

This is a cultural transformation

Seçkin Dindar, who bought four historical buildings and restored them from the scratch, has a hotel, a dorm and a cafe in Ayvansaray.

Dindar says that he is the first investor who came to Ayvansaray, and no second investor has taken this risk yet, but it won't last long.

"Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray is the only place whose historic fabric is unharmed since it didn't go through urban transformation. You can also mention Sultanahmet but many big hotels were built there. The other place is the Galata area but there is no space left there. Now the Fener-



Balat-Ayvansaray region has the highest potential for profit through gentrification”.

Having served as presidential advisor at İstanbul University 11 years ago, International Academic Council head and Social Projects president, Prof. Dindar now works as a social media consultant under the Media Association for 60 universities.

He holds “conversations on history and culture” sessions for social clubs and all of his students on weekends.

“I’ve arranged tours for hundreds of people and I’ve created awareness by encouraging them. In all my speeches, I said that all intellectuals and artists have to come here”.

Dindar claims that the region is in a cultural development stage:

“This region has to turn into a place where intellectuals and artists live. It already has started. For instance, I know an artist who brings wood to life. I know an artist coming here to open an art exhibition on March 8. I opened a photography exhibition here. The authors come and sign their books”.

He states that many doctors and artists have moved to Balat, Ayvansaray and Fener, thanks to him.

“I think this is a huge change and a really big social project”, Dindar notes and highlights that value of the region will be protected this way.

It will transform by itself even if not through urban transformation

Industrial age that started in the 1930s made Balat a profitable location for settlement, the de-industrialization process that started in the 1980s drove the local community to poverty. Even though the re-structuring projects that came to agenda in the 1990s became a hope for prosperity for the local community, the improvement projects that came to agenda in the 2000s took the concept of poverty, which is already well known by the residents, to another level: The fear of being dispossessed.

Each project that promised to benefit the people has made the people even poorer.

The urban transformation system, which succeeded in Sulukule and Tokludedede by displacing people, failed in the Fener-Balat-Ayvansaray Renewal Project. And now, the gentrification plans that couldn’t be achieved through demolition have been attempted through the market mechanism, which is under the control of the investors. What urban transformation failed to do is being done by capital. Gentrification is happening “some way or another”.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Şahin, who has been living in Balat for many years and



has been taking an active role in urban movements, says that the Fener and Balat regions have been attempted to be opened to investors through a process like those for Cihangir, Tophane, and Ortaköy. Şahin states that the prices are increased via speculation and it is planned that the landowners will sell their houses, which they haven't sold to the municipality due to low prices, to the investors with high prices. With the new population offering high prices coming into the area, the poor will not be able to resist these prices anymore and leave the area. "We as the local community prevented the urban transformation plan, but now they are trying a new plan and it is happening."

"Gentrification is inevitable"

Journalist-writer Ersin Kalkan, who restored historical Agora Meyhanesi (Agora Tavern) in Balat and opened it in 2014, is one of the figures who were born in Balat and makes an effort for the neighborhood.

Kalkan says that the urban transformation threat has been avoided but the social transformation continues. "This is inevitable. It is the same with Barcelona or New York. This place can no longer be a Tarlabaşı". Kalkan adds that after the case concluded, people have started restoration and opened cafes, and now there won't be return from this point.



When we head away from the new face of Balat to the side streets, you encounter lives that wouldn't really interest investors.

The children aged 14-15 are married off with their families' consent and give birth to children with "clean" files. Every newborn child means a clean crime record and a new income opportunity for the families. The jobs these children are forced to do are drug trafficking and robbery.

Most of the Romani people, one of the last remaining minorities in the area, are musicians or tourism professionals. Following the rapid collapse of tourism in recent years, their income has decreased in half. As their income decreases and

rents increase, the situation leads them to desperation and they resort to illegal routes.

Using and selling drugs is one of the important problems in Balat. "There are three children at home, they are hungry, who will feed them?" a musician says. They speak about the uncertainty of their future as they drink beer or tea on their way to home from work. They are aware that the new face of the district excludes them; they cannot adapt. "Life is too hard to bear sober", a Romani musician who spoke on the condition of anonymity says, and adds that they are held accountable for every robbery in the district. He or she stresses that they don't work at insured jobs, and the employers also don't want to employ them at such jobs.

The area is terrorized through illegal interventions

Asst. Prof. Dr. Şahin says that reason for the illegality problems in the area is the last stage of the persuasion methods applied during the urban transformation process. When one-on-one persuasion efforts fail, a trivialization policy carried out to discredit the area. “They bring addicts and drug mafia in the area. After a while, the people say ‘If I stay here, my child will fall into the hands of the mafia or get used to drugs. Damn it, I am leaving’.

“Our door is open to everybody as long as they don’t disturb us”

From Halit Vitali, who had to do illegal work after working in the textile sector and at a coffee house. “It is not safe anymore, but we will stay here to the end”, Vitali says. “They come here every day as they are obsessed with the area, checking the stones of the buildings, taking notes, and they want to make contracts for 5 or 10 years. My flat is upstairs and I have nowhere else to live or breathe. I don’t know any other place but just this inn and the coffee house. We sit with men who want to relieve their tiredness with a couple of beers at the end of the day. Our door is open to everybody as long as they don’t disturb us”.

Ecem Engin

Engin graduated from the Department of Journalism at Aydın Doğan Anatolian Communication Vocational High School and the Department of Photography at Kocaeli University. Engin started her journalism career as an intern reporter at Radikal Newspaper. She served as reporter and editor at Mimarlık Dergisi (Architecture Magazine) and at various news portals. She continues to produce news reports and content since 2015.

Şenay Öztürk

Öztürk started practicing journalism at Radikal daily newspaper; worked at Milliyet Sanat Dergisi (Milliyet Magazine of Art). She still works as freelance photographer.



Art Grippped by The Trustees

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

ART UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY - 1

*The trustees appointed to the municipalities
held by Democratic Regions Party
halted artistic production in the municipalities.*

Zehra Dođan
Refik Tekin



Turkey makes it to top 10 in the annual report on censorship, attacks and violation of rights towards art and artists according to Freemuse, a Denmark-based freedom of speech organization.

The report underlined that the state of emergency was the main source of oppression. It stated that 23 serious incidents of violation of freedom of speech have taken place, 11 artists were jailed, three artists and artworks were attacked and two artists were threatened.

According to the report, 13 of the violations against art and artists were censorship, 11 of them were imprisonment, seven of them were investigations and two of them were threats.

The report states that Kurdish cities were affected the most by the state of emergency and that this has hindered artistic production.

What paved the way to trustees?

The state of emergency declared on July 21, 2016, with the Statutory Decree No. 674 issued on September 1, 2016, enabled to delegate municipalities elected by popular vote to central government by way of appointing trustees.

When the first appointments took place on September 11, 2016, 24 of 28 trustees were appointed to DBP (Democratic Regions Party) municipalities. With the latest appointment of trustee Kürşad

Atak, the district governor, to Eğil Municipality, the number of trustees appointed to DBP municipalities reached 84 (10 cities, 644 provinces and 9 boroughs). While the appointments continue, Turan Bedirhanoğlu, deputy governor of Şırnak became a trustee for three municipalities. He was appointed as trustee to Şırnak, Kumçatı and Balveren municipalities.

As of April 2017, the number of arrested co-mayors from DBP is 83.

After the appointment of trustees artistic production stopped

The main hindrance affecting artistic production has been the trustees appointed to municipalities.

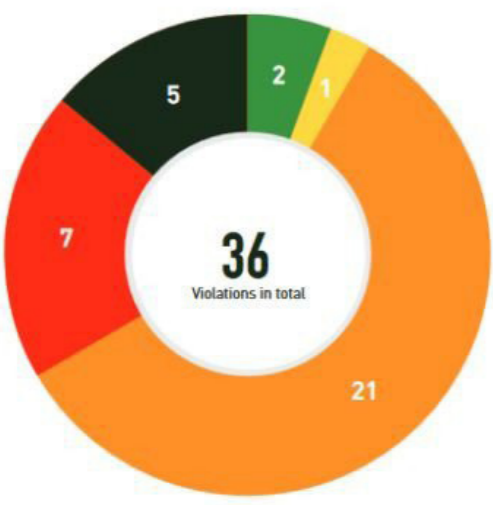
Culture and art centers in many cities became unable to produce art due to the practices of the trustees. Many artists' contracts were cancelled.

No official data: 14 government agencies refused to answer

It is almost impossible to find official data regarding the developments taking place in the arts and culture scene of the region.

In this research, we examined 14 city centers and provinces where trustees were appointed to (Central Diyarbakır, Silvan, Central Mardin, Nusaybin, Kızıltepe, Dargeçit, Mazıdağı, Central Batman, Central Şırnak, Cizre, Silopi, İdil, Central Hakkari, Yüksekova) and none of government agencies, which we applied within the scope of the right to information, answered our questions.

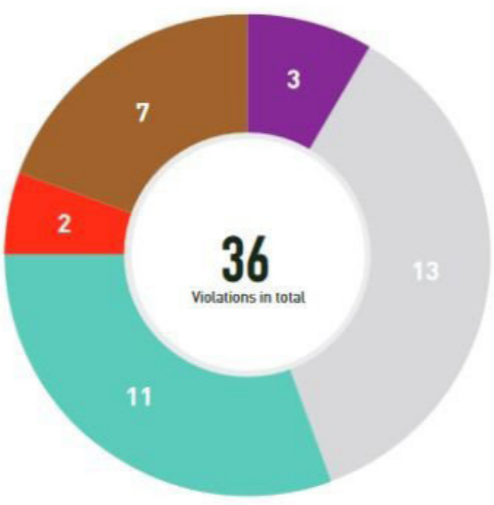
▶ VIOLATIONS OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM IN 2016 BY ART FORM IN TURKEY



ART FORM

- FILM
- MUSIC
- MULTIPLE ART FORMS
- THEATRE
- VISUAL ARTS

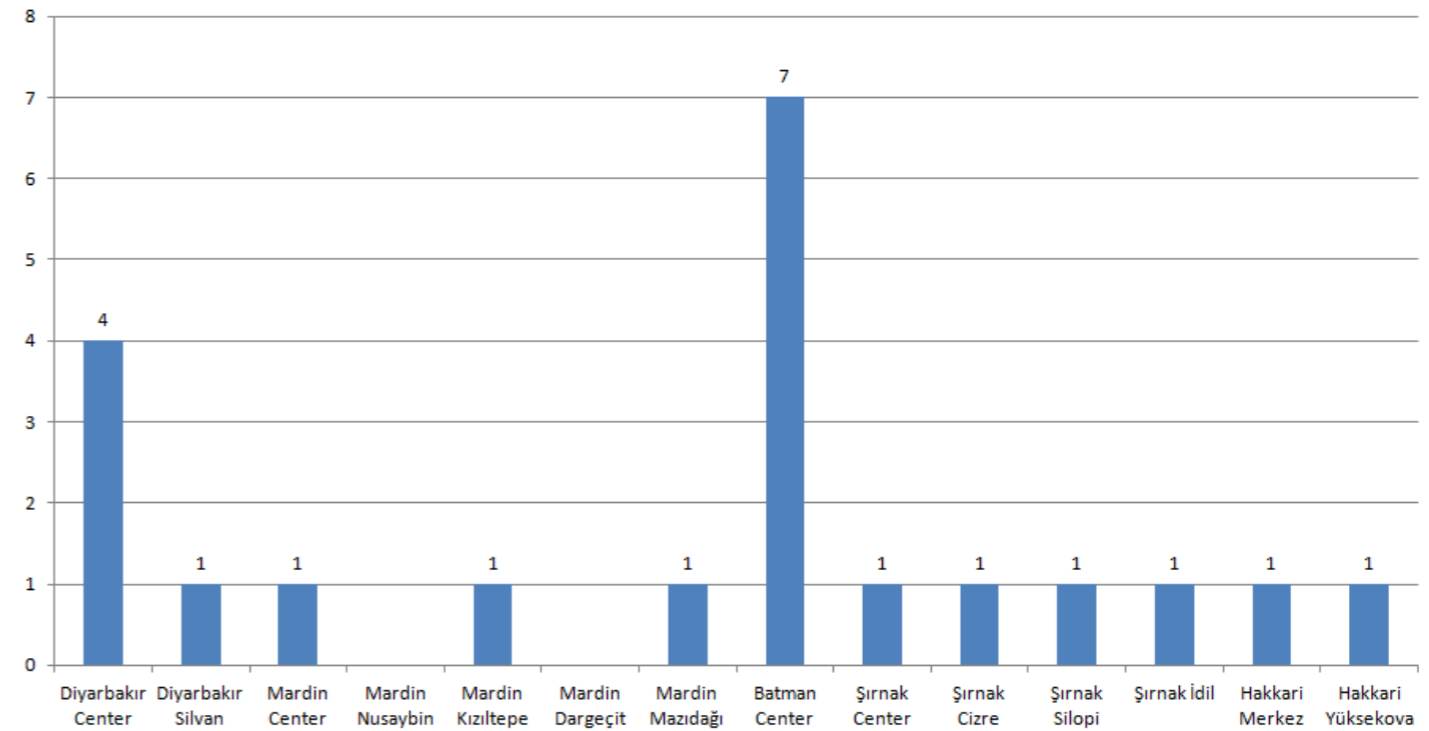
▶ VIOLATIONS OF ARTISTIC FREEDOM IN 2016 BY VIOLATION TYPE IN TURKEY



VIOLATION TYPE

- CENSORED
- IMPRISONED
- PROSECUTED
- PERSECUTED / THREATENED
- ATTACKED

Cultural centers that are either shut down or has no workers left



In fact, the municipalities' approach to the right to information can be seen on their websites. The information links on some of the municipalities' websites send you to photo galleries. On some, information forms do not work. And on some, there are no links for information.

Although we tried to reach these municipalities through the information forms on their websites and through their email addresses, we could not get any results. Here, we need to add that some of these email addresses have Hotmail extensions.

Figures are provided by artists

In the present case, whereby it is impossible to acquire official data, we

gathered our data by way of extensive press scanning as well as meeting with artists and municipality employees who were fired.

As a result, under the state of emergency, in these 14 cities where more than 4 million and 730 thousand people live;

- 21 culture and art centers were directly closed or their entire workforce was fired, resulting in de facto closure.

- 288 artists, employees and educators lost their jobs.

- 3,366 students, who were receiving education at these centers were denied this opportunity.

- 21 festivals were cancelled.
- 220 events, such as biennials, exhibitions, workshops, film screenings and theatre plays were cancelled.
- 2 sculptures were removed.

Up until now, 12 culture and art centers have been closed in Kızıltepe, Dargeçit, Mazıdağı and Nusaybin provinces of Mardin, Silvan province of Diyarbakır, central Şırnak and its İdil, Silopi and Cizre provinces.

In central Hakkari and its Yüksekova province, there are no events despite the fact that there are culture and art centers.

We met with artists from 14 cities and



SEYDA PERİNÇEK

Vocal Actor

Following the ban on HDP's 'Bejin Na' referendum song, the artist Seyda Perinçek who sang the song was sentenced to a prison sentence.

Perinçek who was accused of 'making propoganda for the organization' under the investigation of Bakirköy Chief Public Prosecution Office in 2015 was sentenced to 1 year 6 months and 22 days imprisonment on December 14th, 2016 for the same reason.

provinces who were suspended from their jobs in order to question the oppression in the culture and art fields. They stated that before the trustees were appointed, trainings were given in theatre, singing, cinema, folk dances and painting.

The artists also say that festivals and film days were organized in places associated with the municipalities, and that these types of festivals are no longer possible after the appointment of trustees.

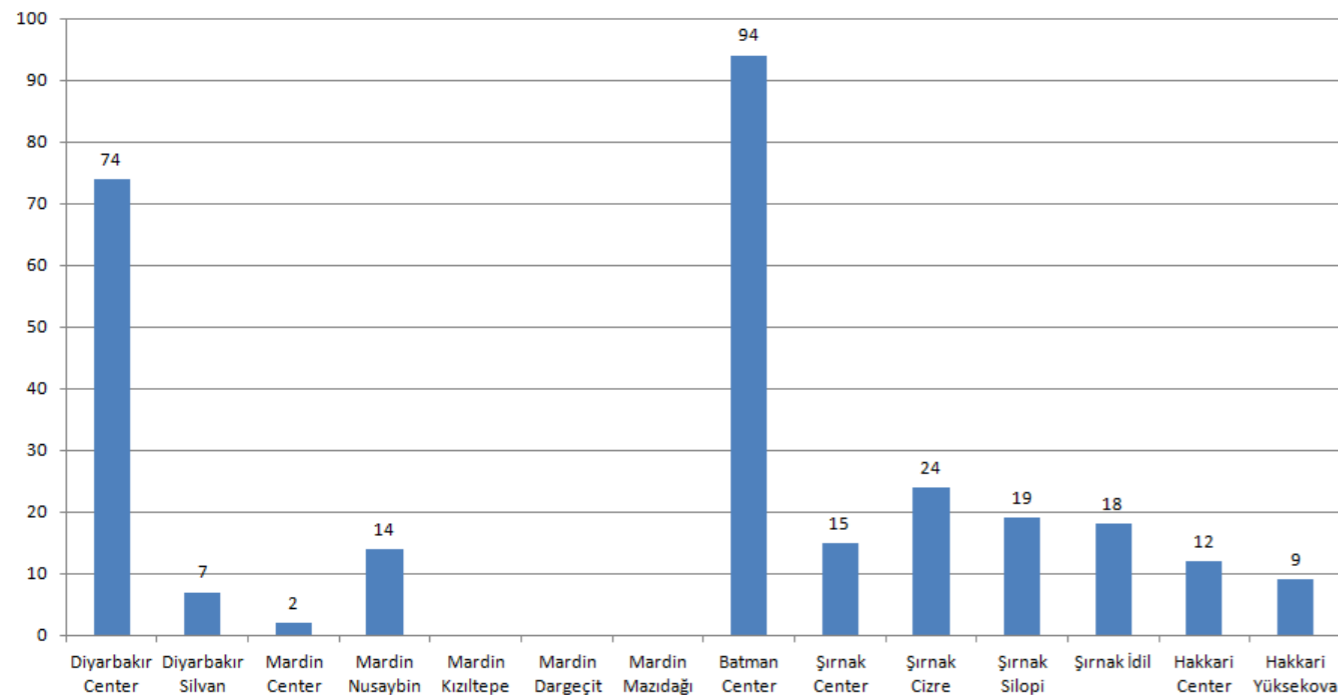
We spoke about these developments with artists who were working in Diyarbakır and Mardin municipalities, where trustees were appointed to.

First, Mardin...

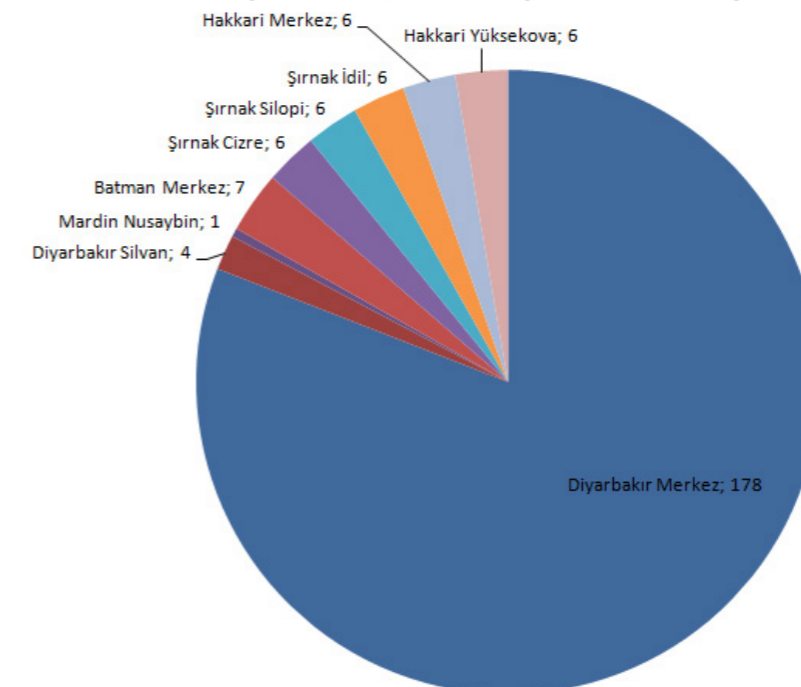
In Mardin, centers were closed and the department head was arrested

One of the cities devastated by the state of emergency and the preceding 2014-2015 era is Mardin. On November 16, 2016, Ahmet Türk and Februniye Akyol, Mardin Metropolitan Municipality Co-Mayors of Democratic Regions Party, were dismissed and Mardin Governor Mustafa Yaman was appointed as a trustee in their place. On November 24, 2016, Ahmet Türk was arrested. Although he was released on February 3, he could not go back to his position.

Fired artists and culture workers



Cancelled biennials, exhibitions, lectures, theatre plays etc.



After the appointment of trustees, the activities of Nusaybin Mitani Culture and Arts Center, Kızıltepe Ali Temel Culture and Arts Center and Mazıdağı Çiyayê Mazi Culture and Arts Center were stopped.

Seyfettin Yavuz, Head of Cultural Services Department of Mardin Municipality, and Mehmet Ali Dal, branch manager of the same department, were suspended from their offices, then arrested and sent to Mardin E Type Closed Prison on December 12, 2016.

Çerçi Film Days, which was held in the city annually, was cancelled. Mardin International Theater Festival for Children and Youth, which was organized every November since 2009 was not conducted as the organizer, Dramatic Arts Education and Research Association (DRASED), was closed. Four months later, reopened with another decree issued on November 22, the association declared that they are going to organize the festival in November 2017.

Selamo: “Now is precisely the time for art”

We spoke about the barriers to artistic production with director, producer and screenwriter Selamo, who has lived under curfew for months in his city. Selamo sees the state of emergency as an opportunity for artists.

He says that “now is precisely the time for art” and remarks that it is a “mistake” that artists have been working in institutions which are affiliated with state.

In order to finish with hopeful remarks regarding art under the shadow of trustees, we turn to Selamo:

“I am baffled by the fact that Kurdish artists see trustees as obstructions. Although being affiliated with municipalities has relieved artists economically, it has made us slowpokes.

“In addition to becoming slowpokes, we had to run all our business in compliance with municipal regulations. Are we not those who say that “the state should not own artists”? Then, can we say “we will not produce art with the patronage of state” when we work in municipalities, which are state institutions? Even if we say so, we cannot fulfill it.

“I am baffled by the fact that our fellow artists are sitting, tied hand and foot, saying ‘the trustee came and hindered our art.’ Now is the time for producing art all together. You can form a commune and shoot a film, with someone’s camera, someone’s script and someone’s light. You can paint communally and form art communes. Then we can say that we are producing art.”



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

ART UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY - 2

Amed City Theatre was reaching approximately 35 thousand spectators a year. The Cegerxwin Culture and Arts Center was graduating 100 students a year and was employing 30 teachers.

The Artists and Audience Were Left with No Stage; The Students Were Left with No Conservatory

Zehra Doğan
Refik Tekin



Gün: “They try to discipline the artists with hunger”

Let us give the reason for this in his own words:

“For now, we do not have a stage where we could do this interview. Likewise, we are not doing this interview in the street so that they won’t block the filming. That’s the condition of this region.” Gün says that the trustee cancelled the contracts of 31 actors working for the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Theatre on January 5, 2017:

“According to the 2nd Paragraph of Article 49 of the regulation, the contract renewals for one-year-contracted personnel are under the mayor’s authorization. For this reason, our friends were transferred to other departments since their “diplomas did not match with the field they were working in”.

Me and a friend of mine graduated from theatre. But also our contracts were also not renewed with reference to Article 49, which was at the trustee’s disposal. By cancelling the contracts, they tried to discipline the artists with hunger.”

We met with Ruknettin Gün, co-artistic director of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Theatre (DBŞT), who was suspended from his job at an unknown, out of the way café.

“We had become the regional theatre”

Gün says that Amed City Theatre was reaching 35 thousand spectators every year, that it was periodically going on tour, and that it had become the theatre of the region. The number of audience had especially increased with the Kurdish repertoire. Thus, in addition to Turkey, it extended to Europe, Iranian Kurdistan and Iraqi Kurdistan.

Gültan Kışanak and Fırat Anlı, Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Co-Mayors of Democratic Regions Party were detained on October 25, 2016 and were arrested



RUKNETTİN GÜN Actor

Diyarbakır Metropolitan Theater (DGBT) Co-Art Director Ruknettın Gün together with 30 other players, removed from the scene by trustee.

His contract was canceled arbitrarily.

on October 30. Cumali Atilla, governor of Etimesgut province in Ankara, was appointed as a trustee in their place on November 1.

Students were left without education

Gün explains the trustee’s approach to art:

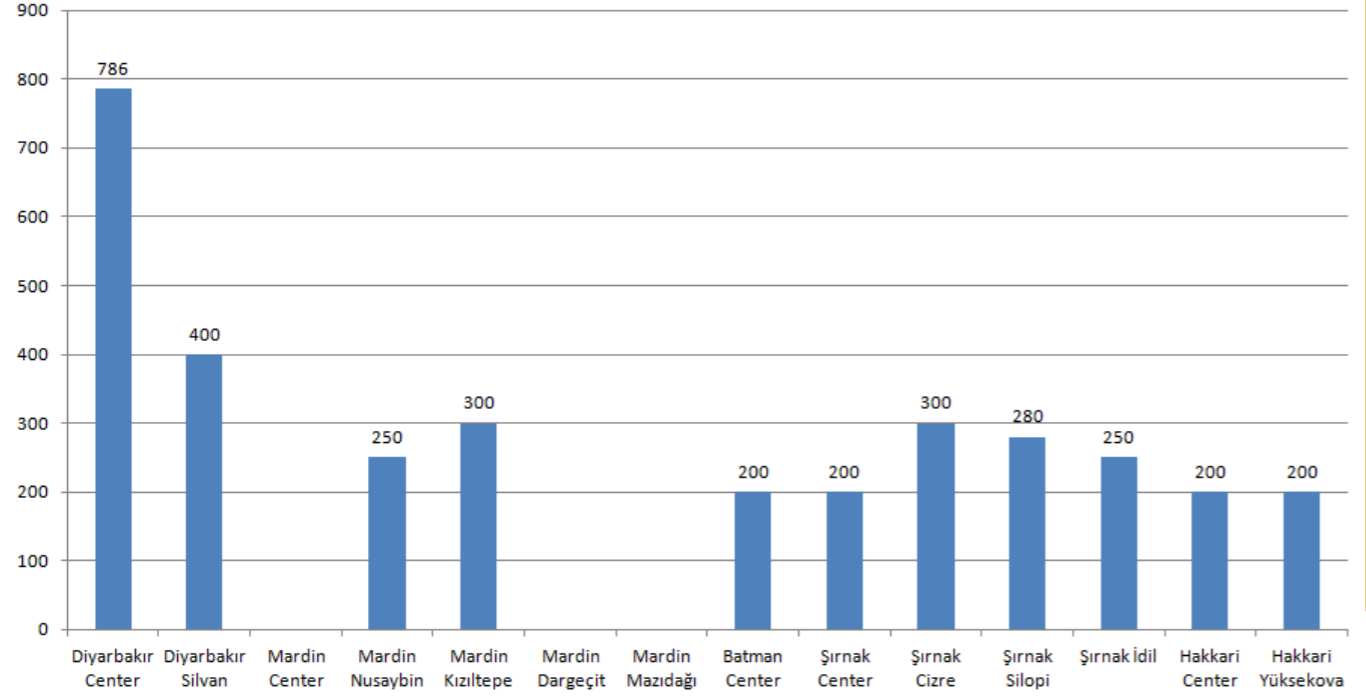
“They do not tolerate art. Aram Tigran Conservatory, which offered education in five art disciplines since 2010 and Ceğexwin Culture and Arts Center, which graduated 100 art students a year were shut down.”

After the arrest of Mehmet Ali Aydın, Co-Mayor of Kayapınar Municipality, on December 8, Governor Mustafa Kılıç was appointed as a trustee. Right after, artistic production in the Ceğexwin Culture and Arts Center, which was a center of the municipality, stopped.

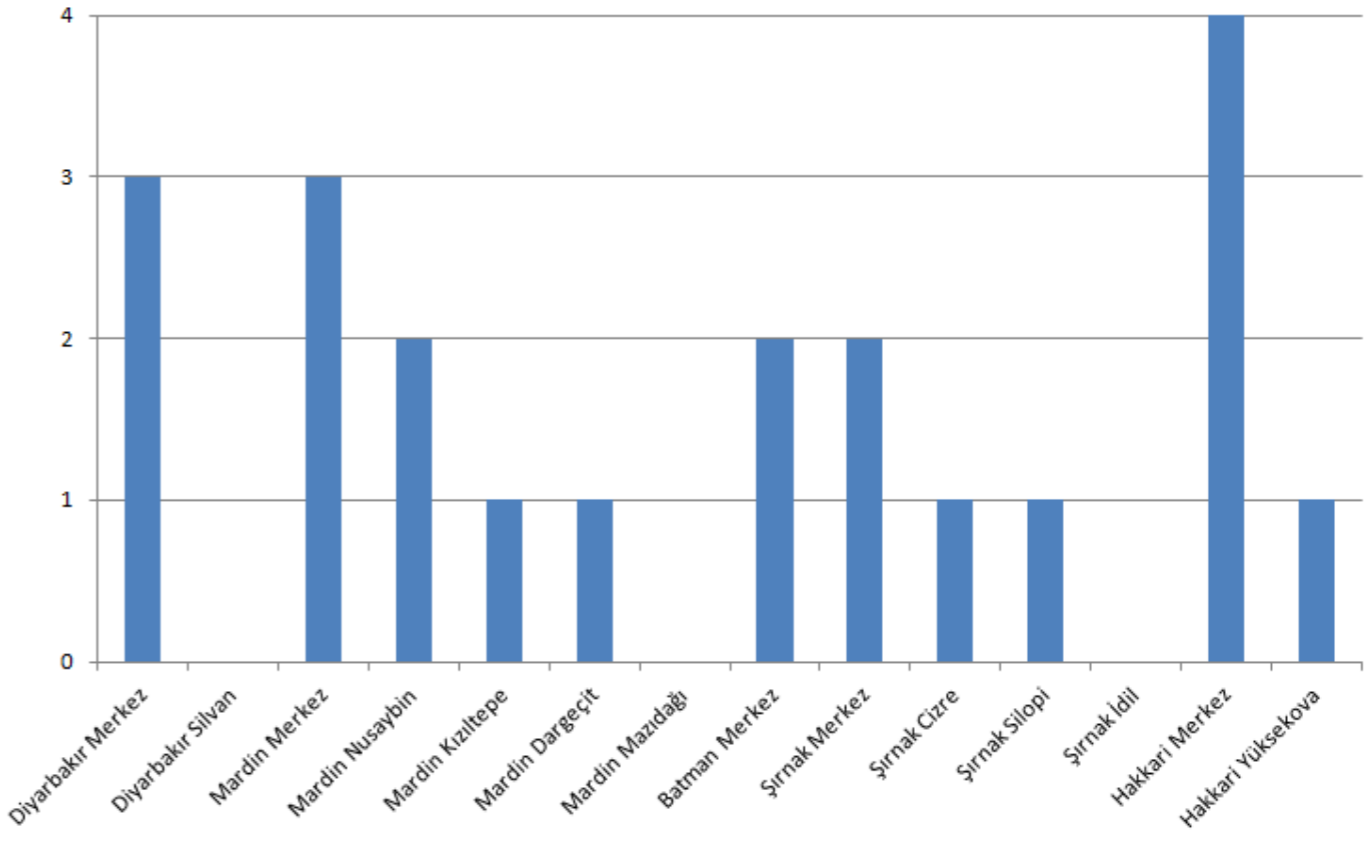
Cegerxwin Culture and Arts Center had 300 students in its cinema, singing, instrument, folk dance and painting departments. When it was graduating 100 students a year, it employed 30 teachers.

The most important culture and arts center in the region since 2010, every year 5 conferences, 40 seminars, 30 panels, 20 meetings, 20 openings, 20 stage

Students in cultural centers effected by the discontinuing courses



Festivals cancelled



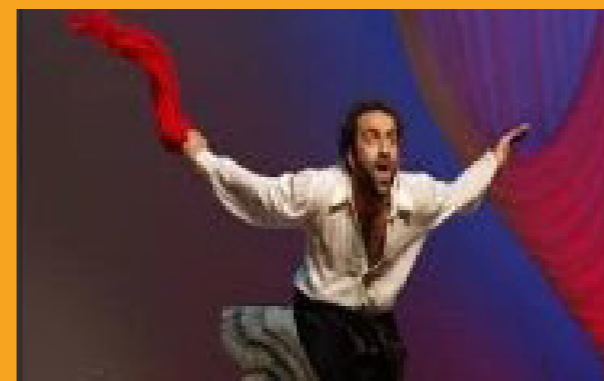
plays and 40 film screenings were held at Cegerxwin's hall. At its exhibition hall, 30 photography, sculpture and painting exhibitions were held each year. It had a 300-person capacity library and hosted the FilmAmed Festival every year.

As in Diyarbakır, the trustees appointed to the municipalities of Batman and Hakkari also de facto closed the theatres. Most of the employees were sacked while some of them were sent to other departments. After the termination of their contracts, artists in Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Theater established Amed City Theater as an alternative in the basement of Galerya Business Center.

Akkuzu: "The audience was questioning"

Now a new era for theatre has started. We met with Yavuz Akkuyu, one of the Amed City Theater actors, in their new place.

"The AKP mentality has slyly approached art as well. From the outside the City Theatre seems to exist but all the artists were sacked. So there is a theatre but it is de facto closed. "Why were we sacked? Because we were presenting experimental works in addition to stage plays. We were oriented towards a new discourse and a new art form."



YAVUZ AKKUZU

Actor

Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Theater (DBŞT) player Yavuz Akkuzu, after the appointment of a trustee, was removed from the scene together with the 31-staff cadre actors.

After their contracts are canceled and the actors are removed from the stage, Yavuz continues to produce arts at the Amed City Theater, which was opened as an alternative art center in Galeria Business Center of Diyarbakır on February 2017.

"We are still baffled"

Akkuzu says that they were staging four big plays and two children's play every year, and explains why they have established the alternative place:

We were the most settled theatre group in Kurdistan and we were making art, so they did not want this. Theoretically, we must be baffled by the fact that they don't want it. If you lose your bafflement you lose your humanity. People have a tendency to not be baffled.

When we say "AKP always does this" we lose our humanity. I am still baffled by these actions since it makes life more lively and vivacious. Not to be baffled seems fatal to me. Our problem is to be baffled when we are sharing what we produce with the audience. Since we were still able to be baffled, we felt the energy to establish a new place."

“Both we and our audience might be sought out”

The State Theatre is the only place other than Amed City Theatre where theatre plays are staged. According to Akkuzu, it is an inadequate place for artistic production.

Akkuzu thinks that the State Theatre will be a model for the trustee:

“Now the trustees will possibly do a bad copy of the State Theater. After the trustee, we were unable to produce art in the municipality’s venue. We couldn’t do this because our audience might have been sought out or one of our names could have been on the wanted list.”

Zehra Doğan

Doğan is a graduate of Department of Painting Education at Dicle University. She has been working at JINHA since 2012, when the agency was founded. Working as reporter and editor at JINHA, Doğan was deemed worthy of Metin Göktepe Journalism Award with her news report, which she made with women who were subjected to violence by ISIS in Şengal, titled “Ezidi Kadınların Çığılığı” (Scream of Yezidi Women).

Refik Tekin

Tekin started practicing journalism in 2001. He worked at Kurdish Raport Newspaper and MetroGraphy photography agency. He worked at the Diyarbakır Bureau of İMC TV that was closed through statutory decree on October 2016. He received Metin Göktepe Journalism Award with the images of “ISIS’ arms violation live” in 2015. Tekin continued shooting while wounded. This report was deemed worthy of the 2016 Metin Göktepe Journalism Award, 2016 Community Centers Free Press Award, 2016 Journalists’ Association of Turkey Press Award, and 2016 İHD Ayşenur Zarakolu Freedom of Expression and Thought Award. He opened four personal photography exhibitions. He participated in 24 common exhibitions and three photography festivals with his photos.



Prison Chronology of Kurdish Movements

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

KURDS - 1

The prison history of the Kurdish movement goes back to the foundation of the Republic. Even though it is not exactly known how many people were sent behind bars due to the Kurdish question, it can be said that the figure is over 300,000.

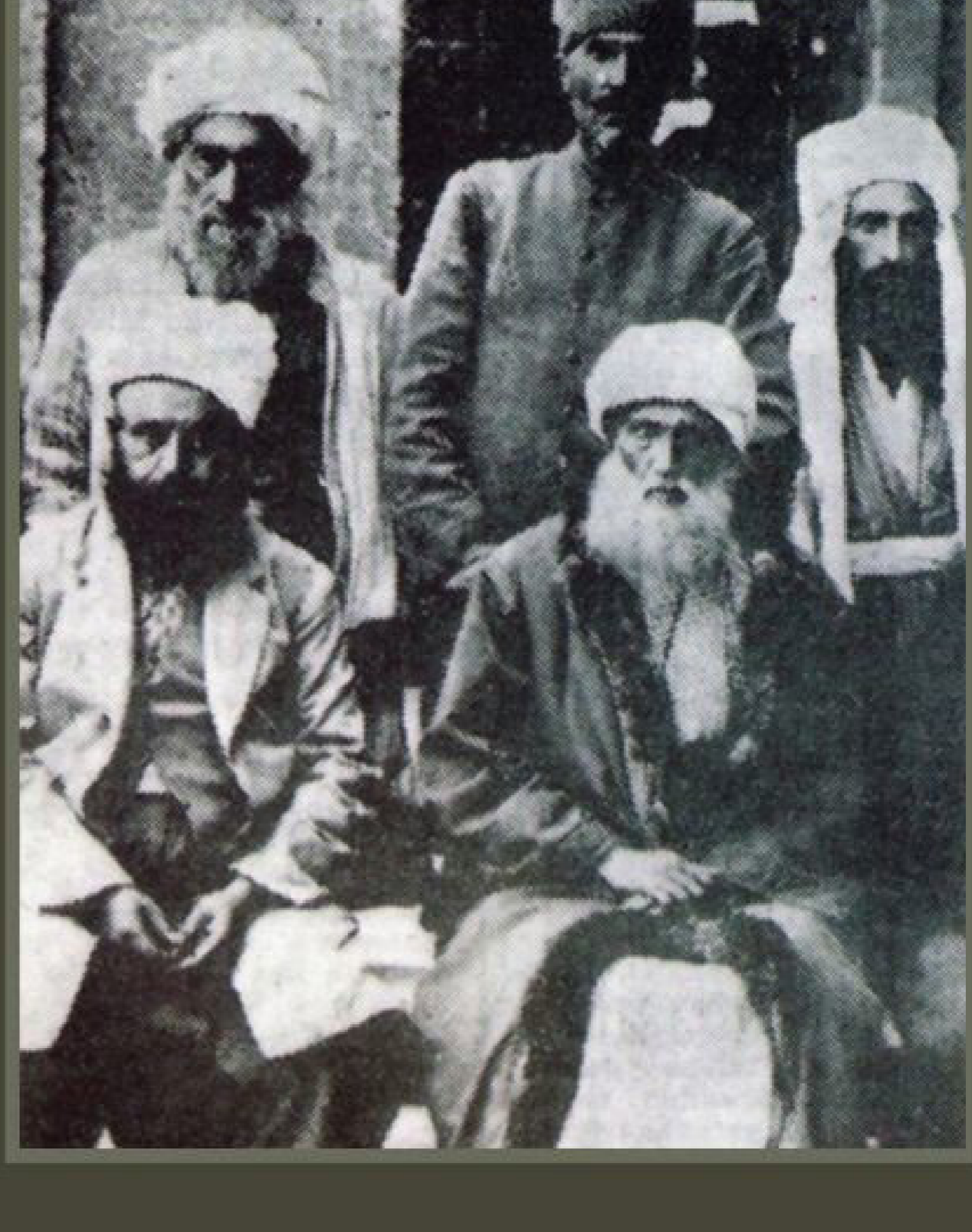
A large portion of this figure belongs to the post-1980 period. In general, it can be seen that the mass arrests take place during the periods in which violence and tension rises.

Nuri Fırat
Yılmaz Yıldız

1925 - 1938

Sheikh Said Insurgency (1925)

- ▶ The insurgency leader Sheikh Said and his 46 friends were arrested, tried and executed on June 29, 1925. By April and May in 1925, at least 15 figures including Cibranlı Halit Bey, Yusuf Ziya Bey and Seyit Abdulkadir got hanged as well.
- ▶ According to Ergun Aybars, 5,110 people were tried at the Independence Tribunals from April 15, 1925 to March 7, 1927. Of these people, 420 were sentenced to capital punishment and various punishments were imposed on the 1,911.(1)



Ağrı Insurgency (1926-1930)

- ▶ There is no clear data on Ağrı Insurgency. However, according to Ahmet Özet, 1,500 people faced trials; some of them were executed, some were exiled and some others received various penalties.(2)
- ▶ Capital punishment was issued for 44 people, 31 were executed in the trial in Adana, according to Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter.(3)



Dersim Massacre (1937-1938)



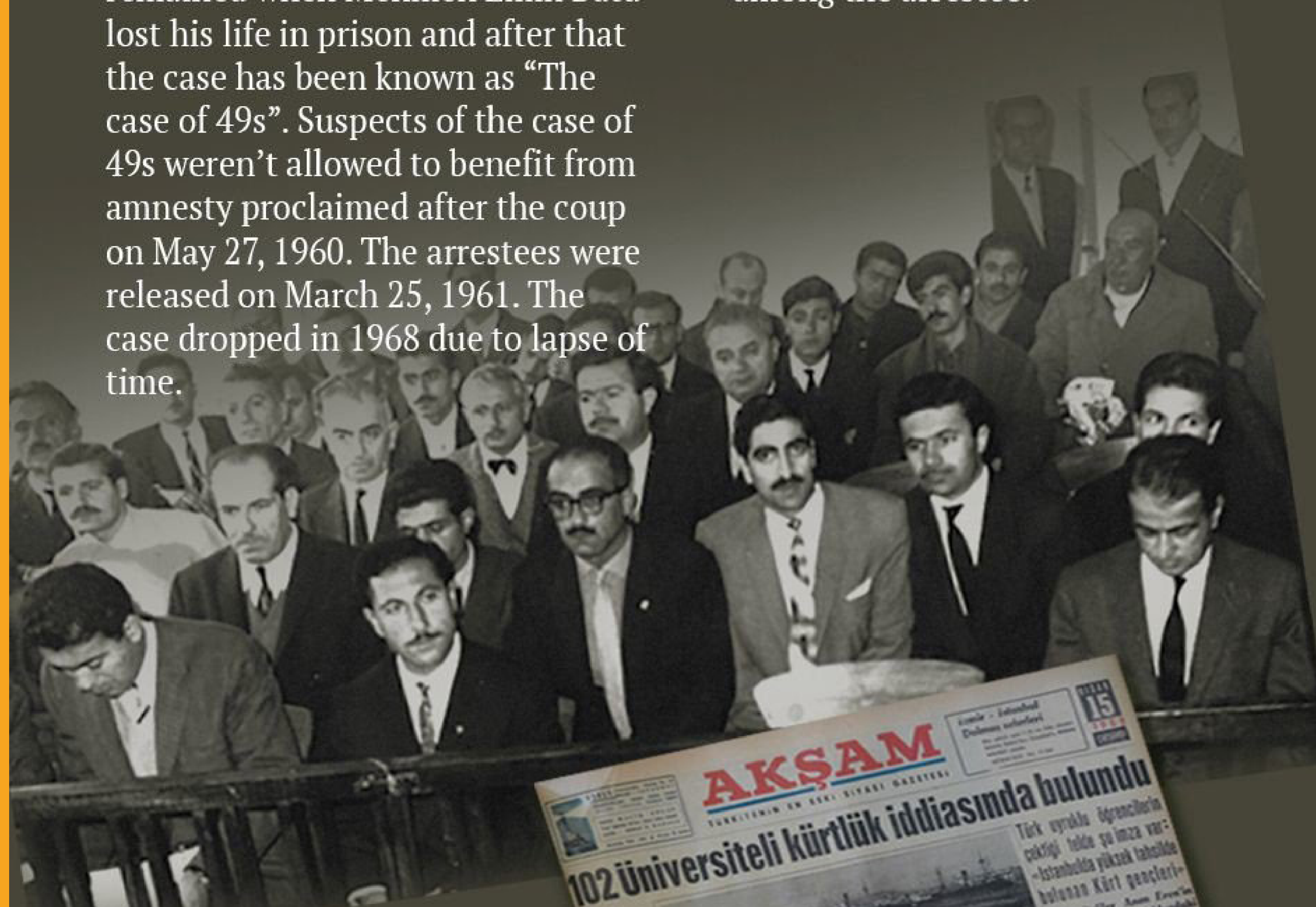
- ▶ There is no clear data of how many people were arrested. Seven people including Seyid Rıza and his son were executed for starting insurgency.

1960 - 1980

Case of 49s

- ▶ 40 Kurdish students and intellectuals were detained and arrested on September 22 and December 17, 1959. In total, 50 people were sued. 49 people remained when Mehmen Emin Batu lost his life in prison and after that the case has been known as "The case of 49s". Suspects of the case of 49s weren't allowed to benefit from amnesty proclaimed after the coup on May 27, 1960. The arrestees were released on March 25, 1961. The case dropped in 1968 due to lapse of time.

- ▶ There were well known Kurdish intellectuals and politicians like Musa Anter, Yaşar Kaya, Canip Yıldırım, Sait Kırmızıtoprak, Naci Kutlay, Sait Elçi, Yavuz Çamlıbel among the arrestees.



Case of 23s

- ▶ 23 people including Musa Anter, Sait Elçi, Medet Serhat, Yaşar Kaya, Ziya, who were among the defendants in the Case of 49s, were arrested in 1963. There were Iranian and Iraqi Kurds as well among the arrestees.

The developments about the suspects of the Case of 49s were covered by the media then.

Sivas Camp

- ▶ Four days after the May 27 coup, tribal chieftains and aghas were arrested and put in the military camp in Kabakyazı district of Sivas province. Although not yet certain, the number of those put in the camp is known as 485.
- ▶ Lands and real estate properties of the people who were brought to the camp were seized. The camp was dissolved on November 28, 1960, and 55 people were exiled to different provinces. The exile ended on September 10, 1962.



"Whistle" and "national food" events

Musa Anter was killed in an unsolved murder at the age of 72 on September 20, 1992. He was a defendant throughout the entire coup periods and in famous Kurdish lawsuits. Anter tells of two strangenesses that he confronted in the investigations known as "whistle" and "national food" events as follows: (4)

- ▶ "My first arrest is in 1937 and the last one in 1990. Half of my library is full of indictments and reasoned decisions that are duplicated as books. I don't know either of how many years I served in prison and kept in custody and how many times I was sent to exile.
- ▶ "We, the Kurdish youngsters were enrolled in various faculties in İstanbul between 1940-41 and we founded Student Dorm...They summoned me to the 1st Branch when I was the dorm director in 1943. I was subjected to heavy insults and torturing. The reason was why I had "allowed the students to whistle in Kurdish". Besides, we were in the World War II. People were starving everywhere. We could only eat the food that was coming from our hometowns. Our nutritions were bulgur, onion and pickled meat...And they became a reason for investigation. According to them, the reason for us to eat those food is not out of poverty but just to maket the Kurdish youngsters who come to İstanbul forget their own national food..."

DDKO cases

- ▶ Many dissidents were arrested before and after March 12, 1971 Memorandum. There were Kurdish politicians too among them.
- ▶ Revolutionary Eastern Culture Associations (DDKO) was closed after the memorandum. According to Celal Temel, 250 people affiliated with the DDKO, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey, and Labor Party of Turkey were arrested and tried. 92 of them were suspects in DDKO trials. (5)
- ▶ There were Kurdish intellectuals and politicians like arasında Musa Anter, Şerafettin Elçi, Tanık Ziya Ekinci, Mümtaz Kotan, Ruşen Aslan, M. Emin Bozarslan, Ferit Uzun, Kemal Burkay, Mehdi Zana among the judged people.

Beşikçi: The intention was to intimidate Kurds



According to sociologist İsmail Beşikçi, who was arrested for nine times and served in prison for 17 years and 2 months since March 12, 1971, the case of 49s and Sivas Camp were related to the developments in Iraq. Colonel Abdülkerim Kasım seized control of the government through a coup in 1958, recognized Kurds in the constitution, and that Kurds took posts in the government. Remarking that these developments, which caused tensions in Turkey, and May 27 coup affected Kurdish politics, Beşikçi said that "The Sivas Camp, case of 49s are courses aiming to intimidate Kurds".

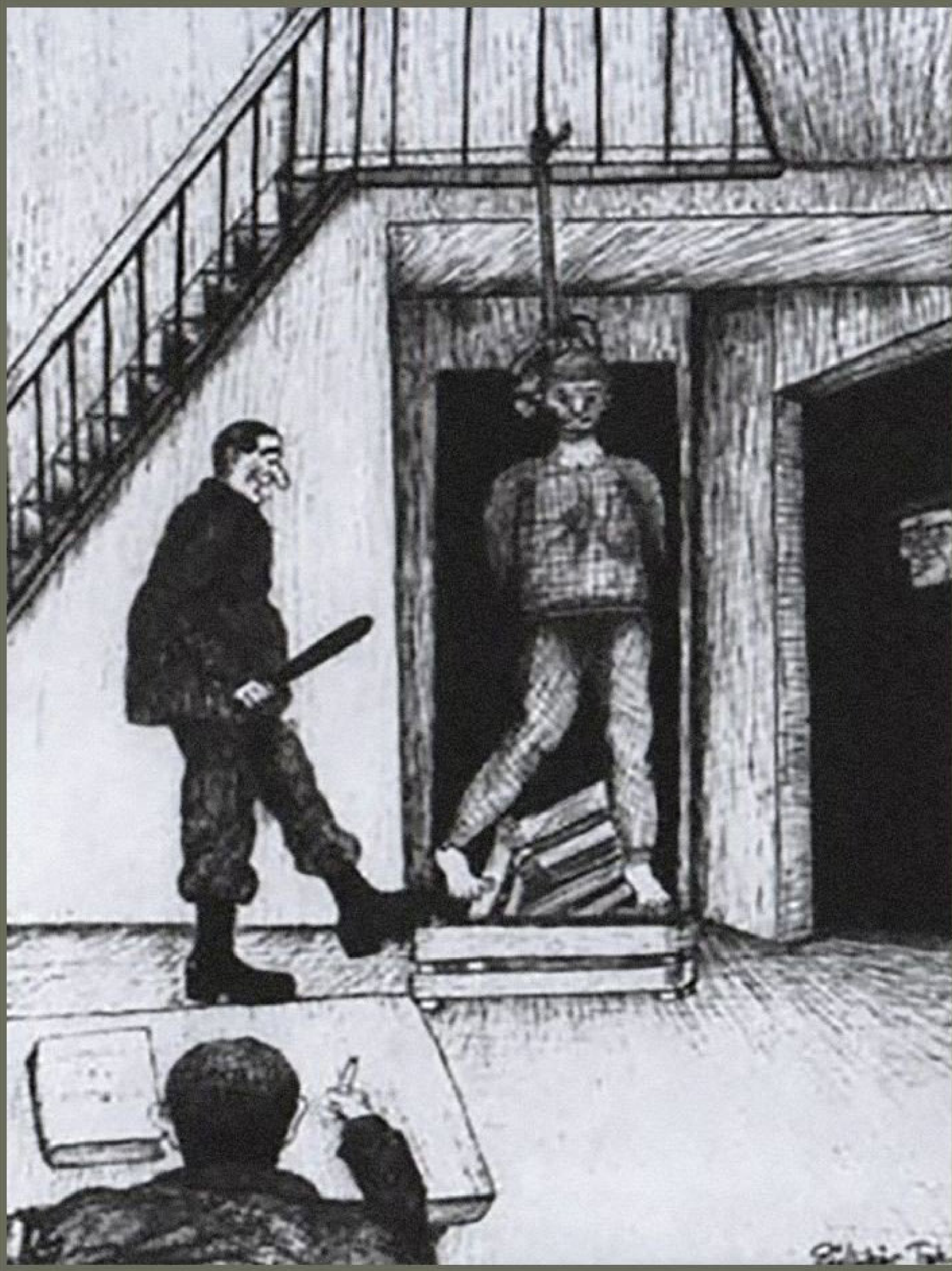
About the DDKO trials, Beşikçi says that "Kurds determinedly defended Kurds and Kurdish language for the first time during these trials against the state's denialist stance".

"Commando raids"

- ▶ In the spring of 1970, commando raids were launched in some districts and villages of Diyarbakır, Siirt, Erzurum, Batman, Muş, Bingöl, Mardin, Van ve Hakkâri, and many people were taken into custody. 3,000 people were arrested in Silvan district of Diyarbakır, according to Celal Temel. (6)

SEPTEMBER 12, 1980 COUP

- 650,000 people were detained in the first four months following the coup. 230,000 of them were tried at courts-martial, 30,000 of them were arrested. 45,613 case documents were sent to military court until 1986, which demonstrate that 500,000 people appeared before judge.
- This balance sheet also covers people who were allegedly linked with the Kurdish movement. Celal Temel compiled “the defendants who were tried for being affiliated with the Kurdish groups”: (8)
 - PKK: 4,300
(Only the number of those who were tried at PKK
Diyarbakır trials: 1,257)
 - Kawa-Dengê Kawa: 750
 - KİP-DDKD: 700
 - Rizgarî-Ala Rizgarî: 450
 - KUK-TKDP: 450
 - TKSP-ÖZGÜRLÜK YOLU: 300
 - TEKOŞİN: 45
 - Kurds in the other leftist groups: Around 1,000



This cartoon is about September 12, 1980 Coup and caricatured by Zülfikar Tak who had been imprisoned in Diyarbakır Cezaevi 20 years.

Diyarbakır Prison: 53 people died

- Most of the convicts linked with the Kurdish movement were put in Diyarbakır Prison. This place came to agenda with tortures and ill-treatments. 53 people died in the prison, according to a statement issued by the General Staff on April 2, 1989. (9)
- The prisoners resorted to some actions against the pressure: Mazlum Doğan, Ferhat Kurtay, Kemal Pir, Hayri Durmuş, Yılmaz Demir, Cemal Arat, Orhan Keskin and Necmettin Büyükkaya were among those who lost their lives.

1990s – 2000s

An increase was seen in the number of people who were sent to prison related to the Kurdish question in the 1990s and 2000s. However, there is no clear data on how many people were arrested due to the Kurdish question. Nevertheless, some data indicate a systematic increase.

- ✓ According to the annual report by the Human Rights Association (IHD), 76,688 people were detained and 6,654 others were arrested between 1994-1997. It is not clear how many of them were related to the Kurdish question.
- ✓ Citing security sources, journalist Tolga Şardan wrote that 203,000 people were detained on charge of “being a member of a terror organization” between 1984-2012. 16,935 people were detained only in 1999 on the grounds of being affiliated with the PKK, Şardan noted. The figure was 14,026 in 1993 and 12,525 in 1994. (10)
- ✓ As monitoring data of different human rights organizations are put together, it is estimated that the number of arrestees is close to 120,000 from 1984 to 2010. (11)



Operations were launched into the prisons on December 19, 2010.

Operation into the prisoners

A great number of operations were launched into the political prisoners during 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s. Death toll in these operations is as follows: (12)

- September 21, 1995, Buca Prison, 3 prisoners died.
- January 4, 1996, Ümraniye Prison, 4 prisoners died.
- September 24, 1996, Diyarbakır Prison, 10 prisoners died.
- September 26, 1999, Ulucanlar Prison, 10 prisoners died.
- January 7, 2000, Bandırma Prison, 1 prisoner died.
- January 25, 2000, Metris Prison, 1 prisoner died.
- December 19, 2000, Bayrampaşa Prison, 30 prisoners and 2 soldiers died

Balance sheet of the Ministry of Justice of 20 years

According to the Ministry of Justice, the number of people who were in prisons within the scope of “terrorism” offenses in 1990s and 2000s is as follows:

YEAR	PRISONERS	ARRESTEES
1991	395	1045
1992	522	3062
1993	847	4977
1994	1094	6412
1995	1637	7025
1996	2328	6207
1997	4179	4926
1998	4239	4835
1999	5297	5051
2000	4477	4190
2001	5116	3182
2002	5123	2622
2003	4161	1976
2004	2170	1618
2005	2093	1537
2006	2116	1719
2007	2418	2102
2008	2540	2899
2009	2967	3361
2010	3682	2535

Kankılıç: The crackdown has amplified the Kurdish movement



Hamit Kankılıç was arrested in June 1980 and was sent to Diyarbakır No.5 Prison. He received treatment for years because of torture. He spoke as follows with respect to the prisons in 1980s and 1990s:

- I was sentenced to capital punishment. In 1991, Turgut Özal had made legislative regulations. Life imprisonment sentences issued for rightists and Turkish leftists were reduced to 8 years and the capital punishment for them was reduced to 10 years. Capital punishment for those who were involved in the Kurdish movements was limited to 20 years. I served 20 years and our friends who were sentenced to life imprisonment served 15 years. As they say in Turkey, Kurds are equal citizens of this country; that is why we have always been subjected to such extreme equality!
- With the September 12 Coup, capacity of the prison exceeded 5,000 in 3-4 months. 3,000-3,500 of them were linked with the Kurdish movement. A manhunt had begun. It didn't matter who or who wasn't affiliated with the Kurdish movement, one complaint was enough.
- The arrests saw increase in the 1990s and reached tens of thousands.
- This oppressive police of the state has an effect in the development of Kurdish movement and in Kurds claiming their identities and struggle.

(1) Ayşe Hür (2015). Cumhuriyet'in kanlı 'Kürt Bilançosu'. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/ayse-hur/cumhuriyetin-kanli-kurt-bilancosu-1494640/>

(2) Ahmet Özer (2010). Kürtler ve Türkler. İstanbul: Hemen Kitap

(3) Ayşe Hür. age.

(4) Musa Anter (2011). Vakayiname. Diyarbakır: Aram Yayınları

(5) Celal Temel (2015). Kürtlerin Silahsız Mücadelesi. İstanbul: İsmail Beşikçi Vakfı Yayınları

(6) Celal Temel. age.

(7) Ali Yılmaz (2013). Kara Arşiv 12 Eylül Cezaevleri. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları

(8) Celal Temel. age.

(9) Ali Yılmaz. age.

(10) Tolga Şardan (2012). 28 Yıllın Acı Bilançosu: 35 Bin 300 Kişi Terör Kurbanı Oldu.

<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/28-yilin-aci-bilancosu-35-bin-300-kisi-teror-kurbani-oldu-siyaset-1581690/>

(11) <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/07/convicted-of-terrorism-a-young-kurdish-girl-is-serving-her-seven-year-and-nine-month-prison-sentence-in-turkeys-prison-e.html>

(12) Mustafa Eren (2014). Kapatılmanın Patolojisi / Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Hapishanenin Tarihi. İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları



KCK Operations

FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

KURDS - 2

Since 2009, the operations that have been launched against the people and institutions linked with the Kurdish movement have been usually carried out under the name of "KCK".

Nuri Fırat
Yılmaz Yıldız

- ▶ The period of KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) operations began in the 2010s. Along with members of illegal organizations, politicians, students, attorneys, journalists, unionists, workers and villagers were arrested in the operations that started on April 14, 2009.
- ▶ It is possible to divide the KCK operations into two periods: one between 2009-2013 and one post-2015. Most of the people who were arrested since 2009 were released during the Resolution Process that began in 2013, but their trials continued. After July 2015, when the Resolution Process ended and the violence restarted, new KCK operations and arrests took place.
- ▶ The Kurdish movement and official sources declared different data concerning these two periods.



Before the resolution process

- ✓ The Minister of Justice at the time, Sadullah Ergin, declared that 2,146 people, 992 of whom were arrested, faced prosecution as of August 4, 2012. 113 of them were tried in civil suits. (1)

- ✓ The number of KCK arrestees was around 10,000, according to Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) officials at the time. (2)

After the resolution process

- ✓ On December 14, 2016, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that "over 40,000 people were detained over 10,500 people were arrested during the operations launched against the "separatist organization" in the recent year.

- ✓ On February 13, 2017, Minister of the Interior Süleyman Soylu conveyed that 8,477 people were detained 2,603 others were arrested during the five months of operations launched against the PKK.

- ✓ According to the HDP Information Processing Center, 9,200 people were taken into custody and 2,897 of them were arrested between July 22, 2015- January 27, 2017.

- ✓ According to İHD's 2015 report, 13,189 people were detained and 1,860 of them were arrested. There is no information as to how many of them were detained related to the Kurdish question. In the first nine months of 2016, 15,000 people were detained in the KCK operations and 5,600 of them were arrested, the İHD declared.

- ✓ The İHD also announced the number of people who were detained or arrested due to political reasons in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia in 2015 and 2016. According to this announcement, 5,387 people were detained and 1,196 of them were arrested in 2015; 6,680 were detained and 1,724 were arrested in 2016.

- ✓ Attorney Şule Recepöğlü, the İstanbul Branch Director of the Association of Solidarity With Prisoners' Families, which was closed through a Ministry of Interior circular letter during the State of Emergency, shared the following information: 8,500 people were in prison in the PKK/KCK trials before the Resolution Process. This figure dropped to 4,750 during the Resolution Process. 9,700 people, 780 of whom were women, were behind bars in the PKK/KCK trials as of February 16, 2017. 1,200 of them have been in jail with life sentences since 1990s. 110 of them were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment.

- ✓ As of February 7, 2017, summary of proceedings issued for 55 HDP members who were relieved of their MP duties on May 20, 2016, were turned into lawsuits. 27 MPs were detained and 14 of them were arrested. HDP Co-Chairs Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ were arrested on November 5, 2016. Yüksekdağ was relieved of her MP duties on February 21, 2017.

- ✓ HDP Legal Consultant Hülya Çapar Duran declared that 74 mayors were under arrest and 83 trustees were appointed to municipalities as of February 28, 2017. The arrests and detentions were on-going at the time of the announcement of this data.



"Our arrest process was decided after the Resolution Process was ended by the Justice and Development Party (AKP)".

"The course of events that brought us to prison was a plan that the AKP members sat around a table and planned hour by hour, day by day.

"If you act like a terrorist, you will be treated as one. I find jurisdiction's ruling appropriate".



"IMPRISONING IS NOT A CURE"

Mustafa Eren, one of the project coordinators of the Civil Society Association in the Penal Execution System (CİSST) and author of the book entitled "The Pathology of Being Closed Down / History of Prison from Ottoman to Present", evaluated the data concerning Kurdish movement's prison experiences:

- ▶ The most challenging part of conducting research on prisons in Turkey is to generate data. It is hard to access data because the Ministry of the Interior doesn't publicize any data and it is difficult for NGOs in countries like Turkey to conduct research in prisons.
- ▶ The Ministry of the Interior in its year-end data announcement declares the number of arrestees "as of the end of the last month". However, there is a significant level of circulation within the year concerning those who enter and leave prison. Such information is not included in the ministry's announcement and there is no way to calculate this.
- ▶ An amendment was made in 1983 and the "the people who were arrested or convicted due to terrorism" expression was added. It was the first time that the prisoners were called terrorists. The perception changed after this. It was a discourse and perception that marginalizes and demonizes political prisoners...The post-80 period was a period in which the prisoners' identities were abolished and the prisons were turned into a mechanism to suppress the public opposition.
- ▶ We can see an increase in the arrests in relation to the developments in the region since 1992...For this reason, one might easily claim that a large portion of the arrestees and convicts are from the Kurdish movement. After the 2000s, the KCK operations intensified.
- ▶ In the political processes, arrests focus on people who are directly targeted by the political authority. It is the same as the developments regarding the Kurdish movement and it is possible to monitor this in waves...
- ▶ We see that arrests of people in the legal area are on the rise. The HDP is especially targeted, which is of course not free from the political process.
- ▶ Today, the number of prisoners is as many as 210,000 and this figure was around 50,000 until 2006. We see a four-fold increase...The rate of political prisoners has reached 30%-40%. This is a serious increase.
- ▶ Since violence infiltrates every aspect of daily life, a violent method of "closing down" becomes a method that is more frequently used.
- ▶ Of course, such efforts don't deliver a solution. Closing down doesn't heal; on the contrary, it is a pathological means and it deepens the problem.
- ▶ If one wants to understand a country's democracy, then he/she should first look at the prisons of that country. The more intense the crackdowns and arrests are, the more problematic that democracy is.

(1) Tarık Işık (2012). KCK Bilançosu. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kck-bilançosu-1096191/>

(2) Nuri Fırat (2015). Politikanın Kürtçesi. İstanbul: Everest Yayınları



FROM THE UNEMPLOYED JOURNALISTS

KURDS - 3

The tradition of parties that started with the HEP in 1990's continues with the HDP. Closure cases were brought against seven of the 10 parties and five of them were closed. Almost all of the party chairs served time in prison.

**Almost All Party Chairs
Served Jail Term**

Nuri Firat
Yılmaz Yıldız



People's Labor Party (HEP) 1990-1993

After the September 12, 1980 coup, one of the Kurdish politicians' addresses was the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). The politicians that preceded the Kurdish question entered the parliament from SHP's list in 1987. However, path of these figures separated from the SHP due to the Kurdish question. Malatya MP İbrahim Aksoy was discharged from the SHP for stating at the Turkey-Europe Joint Parliamentary Commission in February 1989

that there is a Kurdish question in Turkey. The France-Libertés Foundation and Kurdish Institute organized a joint Kurdish Conference on October 14-15, 1989 in Paris. MPs Ahmet Türk, Mahmut Alınak, Adnan Ekmen, Mehmet Ali Eren, Salih Sümer, İsmail Hakkı Önal and Kenan Sönmez attended the meeting along with Aksoy. The SHP management discharged the seven MPs who attended the conference on November 17, 1989 on the grounds that they committed a party crime and that they carried out activities to separate the country. 12 MPs who protested the discharges resigned from the SHP.

People's Labor Party (HEP) was found in June 7. And then 10 political parties followed its ideology; closure case was brought against seven of the 10 parties and five of them were closed. Almost all of the party chairs served prison sentences.

The HEP was founded on June 7, 1990. 11 of the 19 MPs who were discharged or resigned from the SHP took part in the establishment of the HEP. Fehmi Işıklar became the first chair of the HEP.

The HEP allied with the SHP in the snap elections held on October 20, 1991. The SHP entered the parliament with 88 MPs, 22 of whom were from the HEP. The SHP-HEP coalition had its first crisis in the parliamentary oath-taking ceremony on November 6, 1991. During the oath-taking, Leyla Zana said in Kurdish that she “read that text for the sake of Turkish-Kurdish fraternity”. The SHP and HEP crossed with each other for the second time due to the events that occurred during the Newroz

celebrations in which 57 people lost their lives on March 21, 1992. 18 HEP MPs except Fehmi Işıklar, Adnan Ekmen and Salih Sümer resigned from the SHP and continued their activities under the roof of HEP in the parliament.

Fehmi Işıklar quit his post at the HEP when he was elected MP from the SHP. On December 15, 1991, Feridun Yazar replaced his position at the HEP and became the party’s new chair. On September 19, 1992, Ahmet Türk became the chair.

The Constitutional Court (AYM) closed the HEP on July 14, 1993 on the charge of “bearing the intention of disrupting state’s indivisible integrity” and “being

the focal point of illegal political activities”.

Fehmi Işıklar

Işıklar was born in Urfa in 1941. He worked as a technician at various factories.

While he was the Confederation of the Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK) Secretary General, the September 12 coup occurred and he was kept in custody for more than three months. Several lawsuits were filed against him. He was elected Bursa MP from the SHP.

He was elected HEP chair in 1990. He resigned from his post in 1991 and entered the parliament as the SHP

Diyarbakır MP. He didn’t join the HEP MPs who resigned from the SHP in 1992 and he continued in politics in the SHP. However, when the AYM closed the HEP, he was relieved of his MP duties on August 17, 1993 for being the former chair of the party.

Feridun Yazar

Yazar was born in 1944 in Urfa. He worked as a lawyer. After the March 12, 1971 Memorandum, he was arrested on the allegation that he was a member of the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Associations (DDKO).

He was released through the amnesty



declared in 1974. He continued in politics in the People's Republican Party (CHP) and was elected Urfa mayor in 1997. He was relieved of his duties after the September 12 coup and was arrested, and he served 2 years in prison. He then returned to politics with the SHP.

He became the SHP Urfa provincial chair in 1988. Protesting the MP expulsions in 1989, he resigned from the SHP. He became HEP chair in 1991 and remained in the post for almost a year.

He was sent to prison through Anti-Terror Law Article No. 8, which regulates the crime of "propagandizing against the state's indivisibility" in 1998. On

November 1, 2015, he became an Urfa MP candidate from the HDP but he wasn't elected. He lost his life on June 12, 2016.

Ahmet Türk

Türk was born in 1942 in Mardin. He started politics in the 1970s. He was elected Mardin MP from the Democratic Party (DP). A year later, he moved to the CHP.

He was elected Mardin MP in the general elections in 1977. He was arrested when he was an MP during the September 12 coup. He served 3 years in Diyarbakır prison. He was elected Mardin MP, this time from the SHP, in 1987.

He was among the MPs who were discharged from the SHP in 1989. He was elected Mardin MP in the HEP-SHP coalition in the general elections held in 1991. He left the SHP with the other HEP MPs and was elected HEP Chair in the same year. He moved to the Democracy Party (DEP) when the HEP was closed.

He was among the MPs who were relieved of their MP duties in 1994. He was arrested again and was tried through the former Turkish Penal Code Article No.168, which regulates illegal organization membership, and remained in prison for two years.

He served as Democratic Society Party (DTP) co-chair between 2005-2009. He was elected Mardin MP twice, on July 22, 2007, and June 12, 2011. A political ban was imposed on him for five years when the DTP was closed on December 11, 2009 and he was relieved of his MP duties.

He became a candidate for the Peace and Democracy Party's (DBP) Mardin Mayor on March 30, 2014 general elections and he won. He was suspended from his duty by the Ministry of Interior on November 17, 2016, arrested on November 24, 2016 and released on February 3, 2017. He faces 18 years in prison on charges of "opposing the Law on Rallies and Demonstrations", "propagandizing for an illegal organization", and "being a member of an illegal organization".

He was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in prison in the KCK Main Case through the verdict rendered on March 28, 2017 in Diyarbakır.

Freedom and Equality Party (ÖZEP) 1992

In case the HEP were to be closed, the Freedom and Equality Party (ÖZEP) was founded on June 25, 1992. Mahmut Alınak was selected chair, however, after its establishment, a closure case was opened against the ÖZEP on the grounds that the party "bears the intention of disrupting the state's indivisible integrity". Upon that reasoning, the HEP was dissolved 13 days after its foundation.

Mahmut Alınak

Alınak was born in 1952 in Kars. He was a very well known politician, lawyer and writer. He was elected Kars MP from the SHP. He was among those discharged from the SHP in 1989. In 1991, he was elected Şırnak MP in the HEP-SHP coalition.

He was among those who were relieved of MP duties in 1994. He was tried through the former TCK Article 168 and he served time in prison. He was arrested in a KCK operation on December 8, 2011, and released on July 18, 2012. He is being tried through TCK 314/2.





Freedom and Democracy Party (ÖZDEP) 1992 - 1993

The Freedom and Democracy Party (ÖZDEP) was the second party that to be founded in case the HEP were closed. Its chair was Mevlüt İlik but a closure case was filed against the party on the grounds that it was a substitute of the HEP and took part in separatist activities. ÖZDEP dissolved itself on April 30, 1993. However, the AYM ordered closure of the party on November 21, 1993 even though the party didn't exist anymore.

Democracy Party (DEP) 1993 - 1994

after the HEP was closed. DEP's first chair

was Yaşar Kaya. Kaya left his post to Hatip Dicle on December 12, 1993.

On September 4, 1993, DEP Mardin MP Mehmet Sincar was murdered. DEP Headquarters and eight buildings of the party were bombed on February 18, 1994.

On March 2, 1994, 13 DEP MPs were relieved of their MP duties. The DEP MPs were arrested. The AYM closed the DEP through Constitution's Articles No. 68 and 69 on June 16, 1994.

Yaşar Kaya

Kaya was born in Kars in 1938. He was a politician, writer and economist. He was arrested in "the Case of 49s" in 1959 and in "the Case of 23s" in 1963. He became



the DEP leader since he was the owner of the Özgür Gündem newspaper.

He was arrested through former TCK Article No. 168 on September 16, 1993. A large number of suits were brought against him due to the Özgür Gündem. He was able to return to Turkey in 2014 after having left in 1994. He lost his life on March 9, 2016.

Hatip Dicle

Dicle was born in Diyarbakır in 1954. He is a civil engineer. He was elected MP in the HEP-SHP coalition in 1991. He moved to the HEP in 1992 and to the DEP in 1993 with his fellow members. He was relieved of his MP duties along with his 12 MP

fellows on March 2, 1994 when he was the DEP Chair and he was arrested. He was convicted through the former TCK's Article No. 168 in the case in which Leyla Zana, Orhan Doğan and Selim Saddak were tried as well.

When his punishment was revoked by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), he was re-tried and he was released from prison with his three fellows after 10 years. He continued to do politics through the parties that come from the same tradition. He was elected Diyarbakır MP in 2011 but he was relieved of her MP duties due to his prison sentence.

He was arrested on December 24, 2009 within the scope of the KCK Main Case, released on June 29, 2014, and sentenced



to 9 years in prison on March 28, 2017 through TCK Article 314/2.

People's Democracy Party (HADEP) / 1994 - 2003

The People's Democracy Party (HADEP) was founded on May 11, 1994. Its first chair was Murat Bozlak. He returned to his post, which he left to Ahmet Turan Demir on September 8, 1999, on November 26, 2000.

Among the parties that come from the same tradition, the HADEP lived longest in the political arena and was the first party that entered the elections.

The HADEP received 4.16% of the votes in

the December 24, 1995 general elections but couldn't make it to the parliament due to the 10% electoral threshold.

Increasing its votes in the April 18, 1999 general and local elections, the HADEP won 37 municipalities including Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality with its vote percentage of 4.75%.

HADEP experienced things similar to what HEP and DEP experienced. When the Turkish flag was taken down during the 2nd HADEP Congress held on June 24, 1996, Chair Bozlak and 50 party assembly members were detained, and many people including Bozlak were arrested.

HADEP's headquarters and party buildings were frequently raided by the

police, especially in 1998. Thousands of people were detained in raids. A closure lawsuit was filed against the HADEP on January 29, 1999. The AYM ordered closure of the party on March 13, 2003, once again through Constitution Articles No. 68 and 69.

Murat Bozlak

Born in Ankara in 1952, Murat Bozlak was a politician and an attorney. He took part in the SHP, HEP and DEP and served as HADEP chair for five years.

He was assaulted with a gun and was heavily wounded on February 4, 1994 when he was the DEP Secretary General.

Being detained after the congress in which the Turkish flag was taken down, he was arrested along with many party members through former TCK Articles No. 168, 169 and 8.

Bozlak was arrested on similar charges on February 16, 1998, November 19, 1998, and February 24, 2000.

When the HADEP was closed in 2003, a 5-year political ban was imposed on Bozlak who served in prison for almost 3 years in total.

He was elected as an independent Adana MP backed by the BDP. He lost his life on January 4, 2015.



Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) 1997 - 2007

The Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) was founded as a back-up party on October 24, 1997 in case the HADEP were to be closed. DEHAP's first chair was Veysi Aydın. Mehmet Abbasoğlu replaced him when his party membership was revoked by the Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor's Office on May 9, 1998. Tuncer Bakırhan was elected chair on June 8, 2003.

The DEHAP began its active political life starting in 2002. The DEHAP entered the general elections held on November 3,

2002 under the name of "Labor Peace and Democracy Bloc", and received 6.22% of the vote, but couldn't enter the parliament due to the electoral threshold. After the closure of the HADEP, 35 mayors moved to the DEHAP on March 26, 2003. The DEHAP increased its number of mayors to 54 in the March 28, 2004 local elections. The DEHAP dissolved itself on November 19, 2005.

On March 13, 2003, charging the DEHAP with "entering the elections without completing its organization", the Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor's Office applied to the AYM through the Law on Political Parties No. 2,820. With a supplementary indictment, the Chief



Public Prosecutor's Office demanded that the DEHAP be closed permanently through Constitution Articles No. 68 and 69.

The case lasted until 2007 even though the DEHAP had dissolved itself.

Mehmet Abbasoğlu

Born in Diyarbakır in 1955, Abbasoğlu was a retired noncommissioned officer. During his term as DEHAP Chair, he was charged with forgery of official documents and sentenced to 1 year and 11 months in prison.

He served time in prison between October 30, 2003 – August 11, 2004. Later, he continued to participate in politics

through the DTP. He was detained in a KCK operation on April 14, 2009, arrested and released on April 12, 2014.

He lost his life on June 5, 2015 during the duration of his trial through TCK Article 314/2.

Tuncer Bakırhan

Bakırhan was born in Kars in 1970. He started to work at the parties coming from the HEP tradition since his youth. He became a candidate for the DEHAP for mayor and MP but he wasn't elected.

He was arrested in a KCK operation on January 17, 2012. He was tried through TCK Article 314/2 and released on April



30, 2013. He was elected Siirt mayor from the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) in the March 30, 2014 local elections.

On November 16, 2016, he was arrested through TCK 314/2 and suspended from duty by the Ministry of Interior a day after the arrest.

Free Party / 2003-2007

The Free Party was founded on June 6, 2003 under the presidency of Ahmet Turan Demir in case the DEHAP were to be closed.

The Free Party, which didn't carry out any political activities, was dissolved on June 26, 2007.

Democratic Society Party (DTP) / 2005 - 2009

The Democratic Society Party (DTP) was founded on the promise of a more inclusive politics on November 9, 2005 in case the DEHAP were to be closed, with Ahmet Türk and Aysel Tuğluk as co-chairs.

Nurettin Demirtaş became chair on November 8, 2007, followed by Emine Ayna. Ahmet Türk was elected chair again on October 4, 2009.

The DTP entered the parliament with 21 independent MP candidates in the July 22, 2007 general elections due to the electoral threshold of 10%. So, the same tradition subsequent to the DEP was



represented in the parliament after 13 years. The DTP won 99 municipalities in the March 29, 2009 general elections.

The Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor's Office filed a closure case against the DTP on November 16, 2007.

The AYM closed the party through Constitution Articles No. 68 and 69 and the Law on Political Parties Article No. 2,820 on December 11, 2009.

Ahmet Türk and Aysel Tuğluk were relieved of their MP duties and many members political bans.

Ahmet Türk

Please see the HEP section

Aysel Tuğluk

Born in Elazığ in 1965, Aysel Tuğluk worked as a lawyer. She served as co-chair at the DTP with Ahmet Türk. She was elected MP from Diyarbakır on July 22, 2007 and from Van on June 12, 2011.

She was arrested through TCK Article 314/1 on December 28, 2016 when she was HDP Deputy Co-Chair.

Nurettin Demirtaş

Demirtaş was born in Elazığ in 1972. He was tried through TCK Article 168 during his university years and he served 11 years and 6 months in prison. He entered politics with the DTP after his prison time.

He became DTP chair but he was prosecuted for forging document in order to avoid military service. He was relieved of his duty and he served one year in prison. He left Turkey after doing the military service.

Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) / 2008 - 2014

The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was founded under the presidency of Mustafa Ayzit on May 2, 2008. Demir Çelik replaced Ayzit on September 7, 2008. Selahattin Demirtaş and Gülten Kışanak took over Çelik's position on February 1, 2010.

The DTP MPs and mayors moved to the BDP when their party was closed. The BDP entered the June 12, 2011 general elections with independent candidates as the DTP did, and entered the parliament with 36 MPs.

When Hatip Dicle was relieved of his MP duties by the YSK, the BDP was represented in the parliament with 35 MPs. In the March 30, 2014 local elections, it won 102 municipalities, three of which were metropolitan cities.

The BDP dissolved itself on April 28, 2014 through the foundation of the HDP with the pledge of being a more inclusivist party, and the BDP MPs joined the HDP.

Selahattin Demirtaş

Demirtaş was born in Elazığ in 1973. He practiced law. He was elected MP from Diyarbakır on July 22, 2007, from Hakkari on June 12, 2011, and from İstanbul on June 7 and November 1, 2015.

He ran for president in the August 10, 2014 elections and received 9.76% of the vote. The HDP, of which Demirtaş is the co-chair, overcame the 10% electoral threshold in the June 7 and November 1, 2015 general elections.

When parliamentary immunity was lifted on May 20, 2016, he started to face prosecutions due to a large number of charges pressed against him.

He was arrested along with nine other HDP MPs on November 5, 2016. He faced charges of "Opposing the Law on Rallies and Demonstrations", "Opposing the Electoral Law", "Inciting people to hate and hostility (TCK 216)", "Inciting people to not obey the law (TCK 217)", "Inciting people to commit crime (TCK 214)", "Promoting crime and criminal (TCK 215)", "Insulting the president (TCK 299)", "Insulting government and state of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish nation, state institutions and bodies (TCK 301/1)", "Propagandizing for an illegal organization (TMK 7)", "Managing an armed organization (TCK 314/1)", "Being a member of an armed organization (TCK



314/2)". He was sentenced to 5 months in prison on February 21, 2017 through TCK 301/1.

Gülten Kışanak

Kışanak was born in Elazığ in 1961. She practiced journalism. She was elected MP from Diyarbakır on July 22, 2007 and from Siirt on June 12, 2011. She served as BDP Co-Chair with Selahattin Demirtaş.

She was elected Diyarbakır Co-Mayor with Fırat Anlı in the March 30, 2014 local elections.

During the time of the September 12, 1980 coup, she was arrested and she served three years in prison. She was arrested

on October 31, 2016 as she was serving as the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Mayor and was suspended from her duty.

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) was founded under the co-chairship of Yavuz Önen and Fatma Gök on October 15, 2012. On October 27, 2013, Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Sebhat Tuncel were elected as co-chairs. On June 22, 2014, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ were brought to the positions of co-chairship.

The HDP entered the June 7, 2015 general elections as a party. Entering the parliament with 80 MPs through a vote rate of 13.12%, the HDP won 59



MPs through a vote rate of 10.75% in the November 1, 2015 snap elections.

53 of the 148 MPs whose parliamentary immunities were lifted on May 20, 2016 were from the HDP. 14 HDP MPs have been arrested since November 5, 2016, and 13 of them are still in prison.

Ertuğrul Kürkçü

Kürkçü was born in Bursa in 1948. He is known for being an activist, a journalist, a publisher, and a politician. He was a prominent figure of the 68 generation. He served as Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (DEV-GENÇ) chair. He is one of the founders of IPS Communication Foundation and bianet.

He was the only survivor in the Kızıldere event (March 30, 1972) in which Mahir Çayan and his friends were murdered. He served 14 years in prison. He has been continuing his political activism through the BDP and HDP since 2011. He was elected MP from Mersin on June 12, 2011 and from İzmir on November 1, 2015.

Sebahat Tuncel

Born in Malatya in 1975, Tuncel started her political career in the DTP. She was arrested in 2006 through TCK Article 314/2. She was released from prison after 8 months of imprisonment when she was elected MP from İstanbul on July 22, 2007. However, the lawsuit brought against her concluded on September 18, 2012 and she



was sentenced to 8 years and 9 months in prison. Her file was sent to the Supreme Court of Appeals. She was elected MP from İstanbul again on June 12, 2011. She served as co-chair with Ertuğrul Kürkçü at the HDP and with Kamural Yüksek at the DBP. Tuncel was arrested on November 6, 2016 on charges of “Opposing the Law on Rallies and Demonstrations” and “Being a member of an armed organization”.

Figen Yüksekdağ

Born in Adana in 1971, Yüksekdağ is a politician and a journalist. She served as co-chair at the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP). She became HDP co-chair on June 22, 2014. She was elected as MP from Van in the June 7 and

November 1, 2015 general elections. Her parliamentary immunity was lifted on May 20, 2016 and she was arrested on November 5, 2016. Lawsuits have been brought against her through TCK Articles No. 214., 215., 216., 217., 314/1., 314/2 and TMK Article No. 7.

She was sentenced to prison within the scope of TMK No. 7 on November 27, 2013, and her sentences were upheld by the Supreme Court of Appeals. Following these sentences, she was relieved of her MP duties on February 21, 2017 and of her party duties on March 9, 2017.

Selahattin Demirtaş

Please see the BDP section...

Democratic Regions Party (DBP) / 2014-

The Democratic Regions Party (DBP) was founded in the place of the BDP, which dissolved itself on July 11, 2014. DBP participates in regional politics through local administrations. Hence, the BDP MPs moved to the HDP and BDP mayors moved to the DBP. DBP's first co-chairs were Kamuran Yüksek and Emine Ayna. When Ayna retired from politics on January 31, 2016, Sebahat Tuncel took over Ayna's position.

Kamuran Yüksek

Yüksek was born in Erzurum in 1980.

Yüksek entered politics in his youth. He was arrested as part of the KCK Main Case on April 14, 2009 as he was the deputy co-chair of the DTP. He was released on April 12, 2014. He received a jail term of 21 years through TCK Article 314/1 on March 28, 2017.

He was arrested also on May 13, 2016 and released on October 7, 2016. A lawsuit was filed against him through TCK Article 314/2. The court ordered 8 years and 9 months in prison for him and a detention warrant was issued.

Sebahat Tuncel

Please see the HDP section...



Nuri Fırat

Fırat graduated from the Faculty of Communication at İstanbul University. He worked at Aram Publishing and Özgür Gündem Newspaper between 2002-2011. His four books titled “Şemdinli” (Aram Publishing, 2006), “Kürtler Aslında Yoklar!” (Kurds Actually Don't Exist!) (Med Publishing, 2010), “Aşiret ve İsyan – Batı'nın Kürt Algısı” (Tribe and Insurgency- Perception of the West About Kurds) (Avesta Publishing, 2015) and “Politikanın Kürtçesi” (Kurdish of the Politics) (Everest Publishing, 2015). He contributed to the book titled “İnatçı Bahar-Kürtçe ve Kürtçe Edebiyat” (Stubborn Spring-Kurdish and Kurdish Literature) (Ayrıntı Publishing, 2012) in which Vecdi Erbay worked as editor with his article titled “Kürt Edebiyatı Üzerine Bir Deneme: Politik Edebiyat mı, Politikanın Edebiyatı mı?” (An Essay on Kurdish Literature: Political Literature or Literature of Politics?).

Yılmaz Yıldız

Yıldız is a student at the Department of Media at Anadolu University. He worked in the fields of photography editing, color separation and graphic design at Özgür Gündem and BirGün newspapers between 1996-2013, and at ABC Media and Gün Matbaa between 2013-2016.



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