

Breaking News from Türkiye

İmamoğlu Faces Growing Legal Pressure With a New Case

Mayor İmamoğlu, facing charges that EU inspectors call baseless, is now accused of insulting prosecutors, seen as part of the efforts to end his presidential bid and political career.

-Page 2

İmamoğlu's Family Targeted in Smear Campaign

After raids on family properties, pro-Erdoğan media alleged a suspicious money transfer by Selim İmamoğlu.

-Page 2

Debate on Bill Targeting Olive Groves Postponed to Next Week

The debate on mining in olive groves was postponed amid protests and expert criticism. Erdoğan's party, AKP, rescheduled it under its own chair to avoid opposition.

-Page 3

Why Are Environmental Defenders Opposing the Proposal?

The new bill may open 468,000 acres of olive groves in Muğla to mining, prioritizing coal and mining interests. Environmentalists warn it threatens agriculture, biodiversity, and local livelihoods.

-Page 3

Ten Press Organisations Demand Release of Fatih Altaylı

Journalist Fatih Altaylı was jailed after criticizing the lifetime presidency. Press freedom groups called his arrest politically motivated and warned of growing censorship targeting online media.

-Page 4

Police Blocked Lawyers' March For Mayor's Detained Attorney

Lawyers across Turkey protested the arrest of İmamoğlu's lawyer, Mehmet Pehlivan, calling it a political move. Police blocked the protest.

-Page 4

Özel Warns EU on Rising Authoritarianism in Türkiye

Speaking in Brussels, Özgür Özel condemned Erdoğan's repression, including İmamoğlu's arrest, and called it a "March 19 Coup." He urged EU action and reaffirmed CHP's EU commitment.

-Page 5



Photo: ayasligroup.com

Freedom of Press in Türkiye: Alarming Trends in Early 2025

Press freedom in Türkiye continues to erode: 157 journalists have been tried, 25 arrested, and opposition media have been fined over 25 million TL. New laws and RTÜK actions deepen censorship concerns.

-Page 5

Intellectuals and Alevi Leaders Urge Kılıçdaroğlu to Resist Plot

Democratic intellectuals and Alevi leaders urge Kılıçdaroğlu to "break the government scheme" ahead of the June 30 CHP trial.

-Page 6

Former CHP Leaders to Kılıçdaroğlu: Stand with Özel!

Ahead of the June 30 hearing, former CHP leaders called on Kılıçdaroğlu to reject judicial interference and stand firmly with Özel.

-Page 6

Lawyer: Neither Nullification nor Trusteeship Is Legally Possible

-Page 6

OP-ED

Opinion | While Erdoğan Meets Trump, Domestic Crises Deepen in Türkiye

As Erdoğan poses as a peacemaker abroad, repression deepens at home, with arrests of journalists, mayors, and activists, economic hardship mounting, and rights steadily eroded under authoritarian rule.



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com

İmamoğlu Faces Growing Legal Pressure With a New Case



Reuters

Istanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, detained on March 19, 2025, **faces numerous legal cases widely seen as politically motivated**, with EU inspectors deeming them baseless. The most recent charge, accepted on June 24, accuses him of insulting two prosecutors during his March 23 testimony in a terrorism-related probe. **Prosecutors are seeking over 4 years in prison and a political rights ban** under Article 53 of the Turkish Penal Code.

A prominent case, the "Fool Case" ("Ahmak Davası"), sentenced İmamoğlu in 2022 to 2 years and 7 months for allegedly insulting Supreme Election Council members by calling them "fools." **This ruling, still under appeal, includes a proposed lifetime political ban.**

Other charges include alleged tender manipulation during his tenure as Beylikdüzü mayor (a possible sentence of 3–7 years), accusations of misusing public funds, claims of targeting prosecutor Akin Gürlek (up to 7 years), and attempts to influence a court expert. İstanbul University revoked his university diploma following a questioned 1990 transfer, though his MBA remains valid. He also faces multiple compensation lawsuits, including from President Erdoğan.

İmamoğlu denies all allegations, asserting **these proceedings aim to end his presidential bid and silence political opposition ahead of national elections.**

İmamoğlu's Family Targeted in Smear Campaign

As legal proceedings against İstanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu continue, recent developments suggest that Turkish authorities are widening their scope to include members of his family.

Earlier this year, law enforcement carried out **unannounced searches at the summer residences** of İmamoğlu's father and wife, located in Bodrum and Balıkesir. The raids, conducted while the properties were unoccupied, **involved forced entry.** They took place shortly before one of İmamoğlu's scheduled court hearings, prompting the mayor to describe the actions as "a form of intimidation" aimed at applying personal pressure through family channels.

More recently, allegations involving İmamoğlu's son, Selim, have appeared in pro-government media. The reports claim that Selim transferred a large sum of money abroad under suspicious circumstances. CHP Chair Özgür Özel responded publicly, stating that the funds in question originated from family savings and were legally documented. "This is a smear campaign, not a legal matter," Özel said, defending the family against the allegations.

Observers note that the inclusion of İmamoğlu's relatives in politically charged narratives reflects a broader pattern of pressure on opposition figures in Türkiye. While no formal charges have been brought against the mayor's family members, **the public targeting raises concerns about the politicization of judicial and media institutions.**



T24



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com



duvarenglish

Debate on Bill Targeting Olive Groves Postponed to Next Week

The parliamentary debate on a controversial amendment to the Mining Law, which would allow mining activities in olive groves, has been postponed until next week. The discussion will reportedly be held in a session chaired by AKP Deputy Speaker of Parliament Bekir Bozdağ.

The bill, which passed a parliamentary committee in the early hours following tense and confrontational discussions last week, was expected to be brought before the General Assembly but was delayed. According to Sözcü, the "Climate Law" was addressed in the General Assembly yesterday instead. It is claimed that the delay was intended to avoid a potential crisis, as the session was chaired by Pervin Buldan of the DEM Party. As a result, the debate was rescheduled for a session to be overseen by AKP's Bozdağ next week.

The proposal has sparked nationwide backlash. Farmers, villagers, and environmental defenders from across Turkey gathered in protest in front of the TBMM Dikmen Gate, holding banners reading "Stop the plunder" and "Don't touch my air, soil, or water."

Why Are Environmental Defenders Opposing the Proposal?

If the bill being discussed today in the Parliamentary Industry and Energy Commission passes, extensive olive groves in Muğla could be opened to mining. New mining sites near the privatized **Muğla-Yatağan, Yeniköy, and Kemerköy thermal power plants** would cover an area of 468,000 acres.

The proposed law aims to streamline and accelerate permit processes to boost renewable energy investments. However, it also includes temporary measures to prevent the closure of coal-fired power plants due to shortages of raw materials. **Mining exploration and operation permits would be completed before licenses are issued**, and coordination between environmental impact assessments and other permits would be strengthened. For strategic and critical minerals, the **bill introduces fast-track expropriation and mandatory stockpiling**. Permits for these minerals would be granted by a special committee including relevant ministers. A security deposit will be required to obtain an exploration license, and licenses can be revoked if commitments are not met. The bill also introduces new regulations and penalties related to production and site rehabilitation.

Environmental advocates argue that the **law prioritizes fossil fuel and mining interests over ecological and agricultural preservation, particularly threatening long-protected olive groves that are essential to local livelihoods and biodiversity.**



Instagram/yircahanimeli



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com

Ten Press Organisations Demand Release of Fatih Altaylı



fayn press

On June 25, 2025, the International Press Institute (IPI) and nine other press freedom organisations issued a joint statement demanding the immediate release of journalist Fatih Altaylı in Türkiye.

Altaylı was **detained on June 21 after a segment from his YouTube broadcast, in which he discussed a poll showing 70% of Turks opposing a lifetime presidency, went viral.** Pro-government accounts circulated edited clips accusing him of “threatening speech,” prompting a presidential advisor to say he was “in hot water already.” He was detained roughly ten hours after that tweet. Although Altaylı’s remarks were political commentary with historical references, they were devoid of explicit threats. Prosecutors **initially charged him with a light offense, later invoking a harsher law meant for direct threats against the president.** This legal escalation enabled pre-trial detention, based on the argument that the crime carried a minimum five-year sentence.

IPI and partner organisations, including ARTICLE 19, CPJ, RSF, EFJ, ECPMF, MLSA, SEEMO, PJA, and FMA Turkey, **declared the arrest an abuse of criminal law,** labelling it a dangerous precedent that stifles critical press and political commentary. They insist that political critique must not be criminalised under vague legislative interpretations.

A further blow came on June 23, when Turkey’s broadcast regulator, RTÜK, **ordered Altaylı’s YouTube channel to obtain a license within 72 hours or face closure,** a move seen as part of growing regulatory pressures on free internet media outlets currently outside RTÜK’s legislation.

Police Blocked Lawyers' March For Mayor's Detained Attorney

Lawyers across Türkiye gathered at the İstanbul Courthouse on Monday to **protest the arrest of Mehmet Pehlivan,** lawyer for jailed İstanbul mayor and presidential candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu. They were united under the slogan of **“Defending the Defense”** but were blocked by police as they attempted to march to the city’s bar association headquarters in the central Taksim neighborhood, the Anka news agency reported.

Hundreds of lawyers rallied, chanting “Rights, Law, Justice,” in defiance of a recent court decision to jail Pehlivan last week. Prosecutors claim Pehlivan’s legal work amounted to aiding a so-called “crime ring.” Rallying lawyers continued chanting with slogans such as “Governor Davut Gül, resign!” in reference to İstanbul Governor Gül and “Article 34: **Marching is a constitutional right”**, the article of the Turkish Constitution protecting the right to peaceful assembly.

Pehlivan was arrested last Thursday by İstanbul’s 9th Criminal Court of Peace **on charges of membership in a criminal organization.** He had previously been questioned in connection with a sweeping corruption probe that led to İmamoğlu’s arrest in March. Pehlivan was previously detained in March and released under judicial supervision amid separate accusations of money laundering. He denied the accusations, saying he was being targeted for representing the jailed mayor. Following the courthouse demonstration, İstanbul Bar Association President İbrahim Kaboğlu delivered a statement on behalf of bar associations from several provinces.



Sozcu.com.tr



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com

Özel Warns EU on Rising Authoritarianism in Türkiye



[Instagram/chp](#)

At the PES (Party of European Socialists) Leaders' Meeting in Brussels, CHP Chair Özgür Özel delivered a **forceful speech exposing the Erdoğan government's growing authoritarianism and hypocrisy**. He praised European solidarity with Palestine but urged concrete action, such as suspending trade with Israel. At home, he said, repression has deepened since March, with the arrest of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and 10 other CHP mayors. Calling the crackdown a **"March 19 Coup,"** Özel noted that **CHP has organized 29 mass rallies in response, with a 30th on the way**.

He warned EU leaders against treating Erdoğan as untouchable, stating, **"Erdoğan doesn't even feel 10% of the pressure he should from Europe."** Reaffirming CHP's commitment to full EU membership, he stressed that **"Türkiye is not just the Erdoğan regime"** and that a change in power is only a matter of time.

Some **important highlights** from his speech :

- "Democracy and justice in Türkiye are under an unprecedented assault."
- "We have mounted a response appropriate to what we call the 'March 19 Coup.'"
- "Erdoğan does not even feel 10% of the pressure he should from EU countries."
- "Security concerns must not push us into the authoritarian trap."
- "Türkiye is not just the Erdoğan regime."
- "Europe must not push Türkiye away—it must pull it closer."
- "We aim for full EU membership."

Freedom of Press in Türkiye : Alarming Trends in Early 2025

The quarterly report published by Expression Interrupted, in Türkiye, 157 journalists were tried in 90 separate cases in the first quarter of 2025. Twenty-five journalists were arrested, and 50 were detained. The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) imposed fines exceeding 25.3 million TL on opposition TV channels. This report covers the months of January, February, and March 2025 in Türkiye.

The first quarter of 2025 was marked by intensified pressure on journalists, not only through legal means but also across various areas, from covering protests to producing digital content.

The report indicates between January and March 2025, a total of 90 trials were held at the first-instance courts involving 157 journalists. Of these, 32 cases were concluded: 19 ended in convictions and 14 in acquittals. In the cases that resulted in convictions, 28 journalists received a total of 41 years, 1 month, and 12 days of imprisonment and were fined 8,850 TL. New cases were opened against 25 journalists, and investigations were launched against 10 others.

The most common charges in these trials were "membership in an organization" and "propaganda for an organization." The other charges include "insult/insulting a public official; "insulting the President" (TCK 299)" and "denigrating state institutions" (TCK 301).

During the first quarter, which saw a continued wave of detentions and arrests, protest sites became increasingly risky for journalists.

In the first three months of 2025, RTÜK imposed a total of 25,344,068 TL in fines on Halk TV, NOW, SZC TV, and TELE 1. Over 22 million TL of these fines were issued due to broadcasts related to İmamoğlu's arrest. News outlets such as Cumhuriyet newspaper, Fatih Altaylı, and FluTV operating on YouTube were required to obtain broadcasting licenses.



Birgun.net



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com

Intellectuals and Alevi Leaders Urge Kılıçdaroğlu to Counter Political Plot



Teled

The court hearing on the legitimacy of the CHP's 38th Ordinary Congress will take place on June 30. Ahead of the session, **some media outlets claimed a "null and void" ruling was imminent** and that former CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu could return to power.

Kılıçdaroğlu himself supported these claims in recent interviews. Following these reports, a group of democratic intellectuals and Alevi community leaders issued an open call to Kılıçdaroğlu, **warning of a grave threat to Turkey's democracy.** They **condemned the AKP government for dismantling the secular system, eroding the rule of law, and transforming the judiciary into a political tool.** "Turkey is at a historic crossroads," they said, **"being dragged toward dictatorship."**

They urged Kılıçdaroğlu to help dismantle what they call a **political scheme targeting CHP** and the broader opposition, which intensified after the March 19 crackdown on Istanbul's municipal leadership. They warned that the government aims to **exploit internal CHP tensions** and use the June 30 trial to nullify the party congress or appoint a trustee, thus undermining public opposition.

The signatories called on Kılıçdaroğlu to stand firm with the current CHP leadership and **defend democracy against judicial manipulation and sectarian division.**

Former CHP Leaders to Kılıçdaroğlu: Stand Firmly with Özgür Özel!

Former CHP leaders Altan Öymen, Hikmet Çetin, and Murat Karayalçın issued a public statement ahead of the June 30 hearing on the party's 38th Congress. In their call, the former chairmen addressed the ex-leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, directly. "We believe the core solution lies in our former Chairman **taking a firm stance by rejecting all attempts to use judicial mechanisms to restructure our party,** and by standing resolutely with Özgür Özel," they wrote.

"A Duty of Patriotism"

The joint statement emphasized that the party's recent momentum, marked by victory in the March 31, 2024, local elections, was now **under threat from "judicial and administrative maneuvers."** They warned that creating the perception of internal division at such a critical time would do great harm to the party.

"The lessons of our recent history show this is not only a party duty but also a patriotic one," they said, urging unity. Referring to the extraordinary congress where delegates reaffirmed their support for Özel, **the statement called for political and moral solidarity.**

"What's at stake is the happiness of our people, and a CHP government that can deliver it. All other manufactured debates are details. Long live the Republic, long live the Republican People's Party!"



Teled

Lawyer Guner: Neither Nullification nor Trusteeship Is Legally Possible

Former CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu signaled he may return as party chair if a "null and void" ruling is issued at the June 30 hearing on the 38th Congress. Lawyer Ece Güner, however, stated that such a ruling is not legally possible. She noted that objections to the congressional results were not filed within the two-day legal deadline, making annulment invalid. Additionally, she emphasized that **Turkiye's Political Parties Law does not allow a butlan ruling for congresses held under judicial oversight, nor does it permit trusteeship (kayyum) for political parties.** Both scenarios, she concluded, **have no legal basis.**



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

Instagram: @direnamerika

X: @direnamerika

Bluesky: @direnamerika.bsky.social

Website: march19platform.com