

Breaking News from Türkiye

100 Days Without İmamođlu: CHP Rallies for Justice

CHP rallies in Saraçhane as Özgür Özel declares İmamođlu will defeat Erdoğan.

-Page 2

İzmir Crackdown: 157 Detained

157 detained in İzmir probe tied to ex-Mayor Soyer, fueling claims of political targeting.

-Page 2

EU Lawmakers Back İmamođlu

MEPs display "Freedom for İmamođlu" banner outside European Parliament, denouncing political pressure on Türkiye's opposition.

-Page 2

CHP Lawsuit Delayed, Snap Elections Demanded

As a lawsuit challenging CHP's congress is postponed to September, party leaders dismiss it as baseless and call for snap elections.

-Page 3

LeMan Under Fire for Peace Cartoon

Satirical magazine LeMan faces prosecution and mob attacks over a cartoon calling for peace, sparking free speech concerns in Türkiye.

-Page 3

Özel: Erdoğan Tried to Buy My Silence

CHP leader Özgür Özel says Erdoğan offered him power in exchange for abandoning İmamođlu, denouncing it as a political bribe and vowing to resist.

-Page 3



Medyascope

Saraçhane Trial: Torture Claims to Be Investigated

An İstanbul court will investigate police abuse allegations from protests over İmamođlu's detention, including claims of torture and mistreatment.

-Page 4

Pride Crackdown: Activists and Politician Detained

Three LGBTI+ activists were jailed and politician İrfan Değirmenci detained as police violently cracked down on İstanbul Pride events, drawing human rights outcry.

-Page 4

Kavala: 8 Years Without Justice

Despite ECHR rulings, Osman Kavala remains imprisoned after eight years, as rights groups denounce his detention as politically motivated.

-Page 4

Türkiye's Climate Law Falls Short

Türkiye's first Climate Law proposal lacks binding targets, oversight, and sectoral strategies, raising concerns it won't deliver real climate action.

-Page 5

Deadly Wildfires Rage in Türkiye as Government Fails to Prepare

Devastating wildfires have displaced over 50,000 people across Türkiye, with experts blaming not just extreme heat but years of government neglect and underfunding of firefighting efforts.

-Page 5



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

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Özgür Özel, at the 100th day rally, addressed Erdoğan: "You will be defeated by just a basic portrait photo of İmamoğlu."



X/CHP

On the 100th day since the March 19 arrests of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and several opposition figures, the CHP held a mass protest in Saraçhane. CHP leader Özgür Özel addressed President Erdoğan directly: "You will be defeated by a simple photo of İmamoğlu. He will be president."

Thousands rallied under banners like "Hope of the People: President İmamoğlu" and "Freedom for İmamoğlu." Özel called the protest a fight for justice and democracy, criticizing the legal double standard between Erdoğan's past conviction without detention and İmamoğlu's ongoing pretrial jailing with no indictment.

İmamoğlu's written message warned of a regime silencing opponents, stating, "The seal belongs not to those who act like sultans, but to the people." His wife, Dilek Kaya İmamoğlu, delivered an emotional speech on the toll of his detention. The event also honored the youth's activism.



Telet

Crackdown on Opposition Spreads to İzmir, 157 Detained

Türkiye's widening crackdown on the opposition reached İzmir on July 1, with 157 people detained in an investigation targeting alleged corruption during former Mayor Tunç Soyer's administration. **The arrests, announced by broadcaster NTV, follow similar moves in İstanbul and have fueled accusations of politically motivated judicial pressure.** The İzmir Chief Prosecutor's Office claims the detentions are linked to irregularities in nine municipal tenders. Among those briefly taken into custody was Soyer, a key figure from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), who was released after giving a statement.

CHP MP Murat Bakan condemned the operation, calling it a politically charged act aimed at discrediting opposition-led municipalities. The party views these moves as part of a broader effort to suppress dissent ahead of potential early elections.



Tunc Soyer Getty Images

Government officials deny political motives, insisting the judiciary is acting independently to root out corruption.

Freedom for İmamoğlu banner in front of the European Parliament

In Brussels, outside the European Parliament, Türkiye Rapporteur Nacho Sanchez Amor, Iratxe Garcia Perez, the President of the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) Group, and several MEPs displayed a banner reading "Freedom for İmamoğlu" in a show of solidarity with İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. Amor posted on social media that many members of the S&D Group, including Garcia Perez, support İmamoğlu and condemn the ongoing political pressure against the Turkish opposition. He highlighted recent developments in İzmir, where over 150 individuals, including former Mayor Tunç Soyer, were detained. These actions, Amor said, demonstrate continued attacks on local democracy and the main opposition party CHP. The protest in Brussels signals **growing concern among EU lawmakers about democratic backsliding in Türkiye**, especially regarding the treatment of elected opposition figures. The S&D Group's demonstration underscores broader European support for democratic principles and local governance in Türkiye amid escalating government crackdowns.



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Congress Lawsuit Postponed - CHP Calls for Snap Elections



Gazete Oksijen

The lawsuit seeking to cancel CHP's congress has been postponed to September 8. Filed by former Hatay Mayor Lütfü Savaş and several delegates, the case alleges that delegate votes were bought with bribes.

The lawsuit aims to annul both the 38th Ordinary Congress and the 21st Extraordinary Congress, where Özgür Özel was re-elected. Plaintiffs demand Özel's removal and the reinstatement of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Neither Savaş nor Kılıçdaroğlu attended the hearing.

CHP argues the court cannot declare absolute invalidity and says even if it does, the former leadership can't return before all appeals are resolved—a process that could take two years. To preempt this, the party may fast-track the 39th Congress.

CHP's Ali Mahir Başarır dismissed the case as baseless, saying, "We want snap elections. This lawsuit has no merit. We are sure of its outcome."

The court will await the jurisdiction ruling before proceeding. While some suggest a trustee could be appointed, others fear the legal battle may prolong internal conflicts or delay party elections. **AKP's YSK representative argues the court cannot override YSK decisions.**

Freedom of Expression once more under attack in Türkiye

Türkiye's iconic satire magazine LeMan faces state persecution and mob violence after publishing a June 26, 2025 cartoon critiquing the Iran-Israel conflict. **The image, showing Moses and Muhammad greeting each other as winged figures rising from a bombed city, was meant as a plea for peace.** The Istanbul Chief Prosecutor launched an investigation for "insulting religious values," detaining the managing editor, cartoonist, and others for "inciting hatred and enmity." Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç defended the move, saying sacred values outweigh free speech. Anadolu Agency inflamed the backlash by labeling the cartoon "anti-Muslim." On June 30, members of the Great Eastern Raiders Association attacked LeMan's Istanbul office with stones and sticks, chanting pro-Sharia slogans. Police reportedly did not intervene. **Some attackers called for the building to be burned, evoking the 1993 Madımak massacre.** LeMan defended the cartoon's message and cited its consistent support for Palestinians, including five Gaza-focused issues. It condemned the violence and urged authorities to act against those using religion to incite hate.



Euronews

Özgür Özel: Erdoğan Offers Me a Political Bribe

CHP Chair Özgür Özel claimed President Erdoğan offered him a political bribe: stay on as party leader if he abandoned jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and his allies. **"Erdoğan wants me to betray my friends in exchange for power,"** Özel said. "But true republicans don't sell out their comrades." He accused Erdoğan of using prosecutors to launch a judicial conspiracy against the opposition, calling the charges against İmamoğlu and others slanderous. "Those I vouch for walk with their heads high," he said, contrasting their integrity with Erdoğan's political manipulation.

Özel called for an end to unlawful detentions, family intimidation, and coerced statements without legal counsel. He demanded trials without detention, investigation of law-breaking judges, swift indictments, and reversal of trustee appointments in Kurdish municipalities. Rejecting attempts to criminalize CHP's Kurdish alliances, Özel urged live broadcasts of trials so the public can see the truth: "Only then will Türkiye awaken from this nightmare."



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Allegations of Torture and Ill-treatment to be Investigated in the Saraçhane Trial



Bianet.org

In the İstanbul 49th Criminal Court, the trial of 139 defendants accused of protesting pressure on the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality continues. **The court has decided to file criminal complaints against some police and public officials over allegations of torture and ill-treatment during detentions.**

After reviewing video recordings from June 20 and 30 hearings, the court ordered the İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate unlawful procedures cited by defendants. It also requested full police footage to verify actions and dispersal announcements near Bozdoğan Kemerleri and the İBB building.

Allegations include hair pulling, reverse handcuffing, sexual harassment, insults, threats, suffocation, and inhumane detention conditions.

The Lawyers' Voice Initiative reported the court paused proceedings to reconsider demands for torture complaints, immediate acquittal, and legal review. The next hearing is scheduled for December 4, 2025.

Background: After Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's detention on March 19, protests erupted in Saraçhane. Police detained many, including CHP's Berkay Gezgin and students. Prior hearings revealed reports of police abuse.

Osman Kavala Stands Strong Despite Unlawful Imprisonment in Türkiye

Businessman and human rights advocate Osman Kavala has been unjustly imprisoned in Türkiye for eight years. Convicted of aggravated life imprisonment over alleged links to the Gezi Park protests, Kavala remains behind bars despite rulings from the European Court of Human Rights demanding his release.

On July 1, the Human Rights Association (İHD) held a press conference outside Silivri Prison, denouncing Kavala's detention as politically motivated and in direct violation of decisions by both Türkiye's Constitutional Court and the ECHR. The association emphasized that although the government aims to silence him, Kavala remains steadfast and defiant.

Kavala's continued imprisonment raises serious concerns about the state of judicial independence and human rights in Türkiye. İHD pledged to keep speaking out against this injustice and to maintain their solidarity with Kavala.



Bianet.org

Three LGBTI+ Activists Jailed After İstanbul Pride March Crackdown

Three LGBTI+ activists were remanded in custody on July 3 following their detention during the banned İstanbul Pride March on June 30. According to lawyer Levent Pişkin, the court ordered their pretrial detention on charges of violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations.

A total of 55 individuals—including demonstrators, journalists, and lawyers—were detained as police violently dispersed the march. Human rights groups condemned the crackdown, warning that peaceful assembly and LGBTI+ identity are increasingly criminalized in Türkiye.

Politician İrfan Değirmenci Among 41 Detained at Pride Week Event



Oda TV

On June 29, police raided a private Pride Week gathering in İstanbul's Kadıköy district, detaining 41 participants. **The police intervention occurred while Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP) member and former TV anchor İrfan Değirmenci was delivering a speech in Yoğurtçu Park. Officers forcibly detained him mid-speech.** A prominent journalist, Değirmenci decided to enter politics in 2023 and publicly came out as gay in 2024.

Of those detained, 28 were released the same day. Thirteen—including Değirmenci—were later released under judicial control with travel restrictions. LGBTI+ and human rights groups condemned the intervention as yet another attempt to suppress queer organizing and democratic participation in Türkiye.



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Türkiye's Climate Law Proposal: Insufficient and Unbalanced



Yeniarayis

On **February 26, 2025**, Türkiye's first Climate Law proposal passed the Environmental Commission and now awaits parliamentary discussion. Although it sets a 2053 net-zero target and introduces an Emissions Trading System (ETS), **the draft law has drawn heavy criticism for lacking enforceable measures and prioritizing international trade concerns over real climate action.**

Key concerns raised by experts and civil society include:

- **No Binding Targets or Enforcement**
 - No science-based, legally binding emission reduction targets.
 - No interim milestones or measurable benchmarks toward net-zero.
 - Vague language leaves room for non-compliance without consequences.
- **No Independent Oversight**
 - All authority is concentrated in the Climate Change Presidency, which is appointed by the executive.
 - Parliament and independent scientific bodies are excluded.
 - No public or institutional checks on progress.
- **Sectoral Gaps**
 - No adaptation plans for agriculture, biodiversity, water management, or urban infrastructure.
 - Fails to address tourism, transportation, or public health vulnerabilities to climate change.
- **Weak and Market-Driven ETS**
 - The ETS focuses on preparing for the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism but lacks emission caps.
 - No clear rules for allocating allowances or spending carbon revenues.
 - Risks becoming a "pay-to-pollute" system without environmental integrity.
- **No Operational "Just Transition" Plan**
 - Though the law mentions "just transition," it provides no funding, retraining, or support for fossil fuel-dependent workers or regions.
- **Lack of Public Participation and Transparency**
 - No public access to emissions data or decision-making processes.
 - No role for civil society or citizens in monitoring or implementation.

In short, **Türkiye's draft Climate Law lacks the tools to deliver real change and risks serving as a symbolic gesture rather than a transformative step forward.**

Deadly Wildfires Rage in Türkiye as Government Fails to Prepare

Türkiye is once again engulfed in devastating wildfires during an intense heatwave with **342 fires** since June 27, forcing over **50,000 people** to evacuate across **İzmir, Bilecik, and Hatay**. While extreme temperatures and climate change are key drivers, critics say the scale of destruction reflects years of institutional neglect and underinvestment in disaster preparedness.

In İzmir alone, **more than 10,000 hectares** of forest have been lost. At least two people have died, including a backhoe operator and a bedridden elderly man. Fire crews, just over 1000 in total, have struggled with **inadequate resources, outdated equipment, and limited aerial support**. Despite increasingly frequent and severe fires in recent years, Türkiye's emergency infrastructure remains **critically under-equipped** for large-scale response.

Each summer brings new disasters, yet experts note that prevention strategies, such as controlled burning and firebreak maintenance, remain inconsistently implemented. Civil society groups have long warned of structural deficiencies in agencies like the General Directorate of Forestry and AFAD, which they say **lack both funding and autonomy to respond effectively.**

Instead of sustained investment in emergency planning, critics argue the government has focused on **media management and top-down control**, leaving local communities and responders unsupported. Images of villagers battling flames with garden hoses have again circulated widely, prompting renewed outcry.

According to environmental groups, forestry unions, and opposition politicians, these wildfires are **no longer solely natural disasters – they are symptomatic of broader governance failures.** Unless there is a fundamental shift in disaster policy and resource allocation, they warn, Türkiye will continue to face mounting loss, displacement, and ecological devastation every summer.



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