

Breaking News from Türkiye

Türkiye Passes Bill Allowing Mining Activities in Olive Groves

Türkiye's parliament passed a controversial law allowing mining in olive groves for electricity production, sparking environmental protests and legal challenges over concerns it violates protections and threatens natural areas.

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Four Months of Injustice: US Protests Continue Against March 19 Detentions

U.S.-based Turks protest under the 'March 19 Platform' against arbitrary detentions and authoritarianism in Türkiye.

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"Don't Tell Us Heroic Tales—Fix the Problem": Forest Fire Claims 10 Lives

At least 10 people, including forest workers and AKUT volunteers, died in devastating wildfires in Türkiye, highlighting severe government failures in preparedness, coordination, and infrastructure.

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TİP Members Detained: "This Operation Aims to Silence Society"

Ten TİP members were detained over CHP rally slogans, prompting outrage over tactics echoing Turkey's 1990s repression and warnings of growing authoritarianism.

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Eroding Labor Protections in Türkiye:

Türkiye Legalizes 10-Day Workweeks for Tourism Workers

Türkiye passed a law allowing tourism workers to work ten consecutive days without rest and without overtime pay, sparking criticism from labor unions who warn it is unconstitutional, exploitative, and driven by economic pressures favoring employers

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Akkuyu Nuclear Plant Workers Face Harsh Gendarmerie Response

Workers at Türkiye's Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant have halted work over three months of unpaid wages, facing violent crackdowns while protesting, as subcontractor TSM Enerji's massive debt threatens operations and exposes labor rights violations.

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Shifting Alliances Reshape Parliament Ahead of Constitutional Reform

To pass a new constitution, 400 parliamentary votes are required or 360 to send it to a public referendum. With shifting alliances and narrow margins, the future of Türkiye's political system hinges on cross-party negotiations.

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Was Murat Çalık's Forensic Report Deliberately Altered?

İYİ Party MP Dr. Turhan Çömez accused authorities of manipulating medical reports to downplay a potential cancer recurrence in detained Beylikdüzü Mayor Mehmet Murat Çalık, warning his life is at risk and calling for his urgent release and treatment.

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instagram.com/diyojem1870

CHP Challenges Istanbul Chief Prosecutor Over Politically Charged Investigations

Türkiye's main opposition party, CHP, filed a complaint accusing Istanbul prosecutors of politically motivated investigations and judicial bias aimed at suppressing CHP mayors, warning that such actions threaten judicial impartiality and public trust

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March 19 Platform Panel with Cem Toker on Türkiye's Authoritarian Turn

In our third panel, Former LDP leader Cem Toker analyzed Türkiye's slide into authoritarianism, highlighting referendums that weakened democracy, criticizing Erdoğan's centralized control, emphasizing the need to restore the rule of law and democratic freedom.

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Symbol of the Saturday Mothers, Emine Ocak, Commemorated in Galatasaray Square

Emine Ocak, a founding figure of the Saturday Mothers movement demanding justice for the forcibly disappeared, passed away at 89, leaving behind a legacy of peaceful resistance against state repression and a powerful symbol of conscience.

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Anniversary of Censorship's Abolition:

The Past: A Legacy of Press Freedom

July 24, 1908, once celebrated as Press Day for marking the end of press censorship in Türkiye, is now observed as a Day of Struggle by journalists following the 1971 coup's renewed restrictions on media freedom.

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The Present: Censorship Rebranded

117 years after press censorship was abolished, Türkiye's media regulator RTÜK imposed heavy penalties on opposition channels.

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OP-ED: Bakırhan to CHP: Learn from Demirtaş, Not Repeat Him

DEM co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan suggested that the CHP's cooperation with the AKP on constitutional reform might secure Ekrem İmamoğlu's release, warning that this reflects the politicization of justice and urging the CHP not to legitimize an undemocratic system through backroom deals.

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Türkiye Passes Bill Allowing Mining Activities in Olive Groves



instagram.com/diyojem1870

Türkiye's parliament passed a controversial bill on July 19, enabling mining in registered olive groves if needed for electricity production. Approved with 255 votes in favor and 199 against, the bill includes a "super permit" provision, allowing agricultural land to be used for mining under certain conditions. Two olive-growing areas in Muğla are now designated as lignite mining zones to supply thermal power plants. The Energy Ministry is authorized to approve mining if relocation is not possible, with the condition that olive trees are to be transplanted and the land rehabilitated. Critics argue the new law violates environmental protections and the Olive Law. Renewable energy projects also receive new incentives, including fee reductions and urgent expropriation powers until 2030. In protest, local environmental groups launched the "We Won't Give Up Our Land" campaign, calling the law a "seizure of public living spaces" and pledging resistance to protect Türkiye's groves, coasts, and natural areas from mining expansion. CHP has applied to the Constitutional Court of Türkiye, requesting the suspension and annulment of five laws, including the Climate Law.

Four Months of Injustice: US Protests Continue Against March 19 Detentions

Under the banner of the "March 19 Platform," Turks in the U.S. held protests in Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York to oppose arbitrary detentions in Türkiye. Demonstrators gathered around empty chairs symbolizing detainee Murat Çalık, read the letter they had written to political prisoners with health issues, chanting slogans like "Freedom for Murat Çalık" and "No to Arbitrary Punishment." They also called for the release of Ayşe Barım and Tayfun Kahraman, citing deteriorating health conditions, and demanded justice for Ekrem İmamoğlu, Osman Kavala, Selahattin Demirtaş, and Can Atalay. Canan Güllü, head of the Federation of Women's Associations of Türkiye, joined the New York protest, emphasizing that the movement encompasses broader legal injustices, not just individual cases. She underlined the importance of restoring the rule of law in Türkiye. The platform also hosted its third online "Democracy Vigil" panel, featuring Cem Toker, a former leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, to discuss Turkey's growing authoritarianism (see p4). Organizers pledged to continue protests until justice is restored.



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"Don't Tell Us Heroic Tales—Fix the Problem": Forest Fire Claims 10 Lives



gazeteoksijen

At least 10 people have died in forest fires sweeping across Türkiye. Five forest workers and five AKUT volunteers perished after being trapped by flames in Eskişehir's Seyitgazi district. A sudden shift in wind left them unable to escape. Some took shelter in a cave but were overcome by smoke.

Nevşin Mengü's broadcast shared personal stories of the victims, including Bayram Eren, an AKUT volunteer recently returned from the Adıyaman earthquake zone, and Tolunay Kocaman, who had just gotten married. One forest worker had messaged a union days before his death: "We're starving. Will there be a raise?" On the ground, CHP MP Yaşar Tüzün of Bilecik said, "State agencies are responding, but it's extremely insufficient. There's a major coordination failure, and firefighting trucks can't access the terrain. Firefighting planes and helicopters are urgently needed."

Villagers and volunteers are fighting fires with buckets and plastic water jugs. Osmanieli's mayor said some forestry officials fled the scene, leaving locals to tackle the blaze with just one vehicle.

Mengü criticized pro-government media for glorifying "martyrdom" rather than demanding accountability:

"Don't tell me stories of heroism. Tell me how this will be solved."

The government's lack of preparedness, poor coordination, inadequate infrastructure, and emotional deflection through patriotic rhetoric once again reveal Türkiye's failure to address recurring wildfire disasters with sustainable solutions.



March 19 Platform

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TİP Members Detained: “This Operation Aims to Silence Society”



T24 Website

The Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) announced that 10 members and officials, including Party Assembly Member Arzum Yalçın, were detained and referred to court for arrest over slogans chanted at a July 17 opposition rally organized by the Republican People's Party (CHP) in Istanbul's Bakırköy district. The detainees also include Gülhan Özgün, Melda Kaya, Savaş Sarı, Elif Berfin Şahin, Kadir Kalem, Esra Bakar, Serkan Yavuz, Özgür Tan, and Erdem Kök. TİP condemned the arrests as a political crackdown on dissent and a return to the oppressive tactics of the 1990s. CHP Istanbul Chair Özgür Çelik and TİP Central Committee member Özgür Urfa criticized the late-night raids and accused the government of weaponizing the judiciary to suppress opposition. TİP vowed to continue resisting, declaring the operation a broader attempt to isolate the CHP and intimidate civil society. “This regime will fall, and the people will win,” said Urfa, emphasizing TİP's commitment to democracy, labor rights, and freedom.

Eroding Labor Protections in Türkiye:



Bianet

Türkiye Legalizes 10-Day Workweeks for Tourism

Türkiye has passed a law allowing tourism workers to work up to ten consecutive days without a weekly break, eliminating overtime pay during this period. Dev Turizm-İş union's Gökhan Aslan condemned the law as unconstitutional and exploitative, warning that it will increase unsafe and precarious work. He also criticized Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy for backing employer-friendly policies that erode labor protections amid economic pressures.

Akkuyu Nuclear Plant Workers Face Harsh Gendarmerie Response During Wage Protest

Workers at the Akkuyu Nuclear Plant in Mersin, built by Russia's Rosatom, have not been paid for 3 months. Employed via subcontractor TSM Enerji, now facing \$58 million in debt, Turkish and Russian laborers halted work and protested. Gendarmerie responded with tear gas and water cannons as workers marched to the management office. The Revolutionary Construction and Road Workers' Union condemned the crackdown and official silence, calling it a violation of labor rights. Rosatom denies responsibility, as Russian workers sign contracts with TSM upon arrival.

Alliances Reshape in Turkish Parliament Ahead of Constitutional Reform



duvarenglish.com

Since the 2023 elections, six MPs have resigned from the Gelecek Party, reducing its presence from 10 to 4 seats. Among them, Serap Yazıcı Özbudun, Mustafa Nedim Yamalı, and Hasan Ekici joined the ruling AKP, which now holds 274 seats. Özbudun, formerly a co-author of the opposition's “Table of Six” constitutional draft, now chairs the AKP-led Constitutional Commission, a reversal that has sparked criticism over political integrity.

The Cumhur İttifakı now has 335 seats:

AKP (274), MHP (50), YRP (5), HÜDA PAR (4), BBP (1), and DSP (1)

The opposition now has 265 seats:

CHP (129), İYİ Parti (38), DEM (56), TİP (4), and others (~38)

Passing a new constitution requires 400 parliamentary votes, or 360 to trigger a referendum. Chief presidential advisor Mehmet Uçum argued a referendum should follow even a 400-vote approval, though constitutionally, this is only allowed if President Erdoğan deems it necessary.

Was Murat Çalık's Forensic Report Deliberately Altered?



sonmuhur.com

İYİ Party MP Dr. Turhan Çömez criticized the Forensic Medicine Institution's report on Beylikdüzü Mayor Mehmet Murat Çalık, suggesting it was manipulated to show a blast cell rate below 5%, concealing a possible cancer recurrence. Çalık, who survived cancer twice, was arrested on March 23 amid investigations into the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Despite health concerns, he was transferred to İzmir's Buca Prison on June 4 without explanation. Dr. Çömez raised alarms in parliament, claiming the initial hospital report indicated a 4–5% blast rate—implying cancer recurrence—while the forensic report suspiciously lowered it. He urged the Justice and Health Ministers to act, warning Çalık may not survive prison. Çalık, having lost 18 kg and experiencing breathing issues, underwent multiple biopsies and surgery in early July. Despite medical findings, he was returned to prison. The situation sparked public outcry, with politicians emphasizing that Çalık is detained, not convicted, and calling for his release and continued treatment in a medical facility.



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CHP Files Complaint Against İstanbul Chief Prosecutor Over Political Investigations



euronews.com

Türkiye's main opposition party, CHP, has filed a complaint with the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) against İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor Akın Gürlek and two other prosecutors. The party accuses them of leading politically motivated investigations targeting CHP-run municipalities, particularly İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

The complaint highlights systemic legal violations, including obstruction of legal defense, unlawful detentions, and biased judicial conduct. CHP condemned the social media post of a prosecutor posing with a "white Toros" model car, a symbol of 1990s-era forced disappearances, calling it a threat to judicial impartiality and human rights.

CHP claims the investigations are orchestrated from the political center to suppress opposition and intimidate elected officials. With over 15 CHP mayors detained, the party accuses the judiciary of operating outside constitutional bounds and conducting a psychological campaign. It urged HSK to act swiftly, warning of lasting damage to judicial legitimacy and public trust.

March 19 Platform Panel with Cem Toker on Türkiye's Authoritarian Turn

In the March 19 Platform's third panel discussion, former Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) chairman Cem Toker offered a sweeping analysis of Türkiye's authoritarian transformation and prospects for democratic renewal. Toker, who led the LDP for over a decade and is known for his sharp, liberal-democratic critique of Türkiye's political trajectory, identified the 2010 and 2017 referendums as pivotal moments in the country's slide toward authoritarianism. The 2010 vote enabled a restructuring of the judiciary, while the 2017 referendum cemented a complete regime change. These changes contributed to Türkiye's sharp decline in global democracy indices, culminating in its designation as a "not free" country by Freedom House. He argued that elections alone do not constitute democracy and noted that without free speech, press freedom, access to information, and judicial independence, democratic legitimacy cannot exist. Toker described Erdoğan's leadership as fostering "cult-like" loyalty, sustained by centralized control over both economic and bureaucratic institutions. He praised CHP leader Özgür Özel's recent assertiveness and street-level mobilization, while cautioning against potential legal crackdowns on opposition figures. On the economy, Toker described the ongoing crisis as a symptom of institutional collapse and urged diaspora communities to engage Western policymakers. Reestablishing the rule of law, he concluded, is essential to restoring both democracy and economic stability.

Watch this and our earlier panel discussions on the March 19 Platform's website and YouTube channel.



March 19 Platform

The Symbol of the Saturday Mothers, Emine Ocak, Commemorated in Galatasaray Square

Emine Ocak, one of the most iconic figures of Türkiye's Saturday Mothers movement, passed away at age 89 on July 23 following a heart attack. Her son, Hasan Ocak, was detained on March 21 1995 following the Gazi events. After 58 days, his body was found in a cemetery for the nameless in Beykoz, bearing signs of torture.

Following his death, Emine Ocak joined other families in launching the Saturday Mothers protest: a silent vigil held every Saturday since May 27 1995 at Galatasaray Square, demanding accountability for people forcibly disappeared under custody. The demonstrations were halted in 1999 due to state repression, but resumed in 2009.

In 2011, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with the group and promised justice. However, over time, the government banned the gatherings and responded with police violence, adopting an increasingly anti-democratic stance toward the peaceful protest.

Emine Ocak was farewelled on July 24 2025 in Galatasaray Square, then buried after a second ceremony at Gazi Cemevi. Her daughter Maside Ocak called her a "monument of conscience."



Oksijen.com

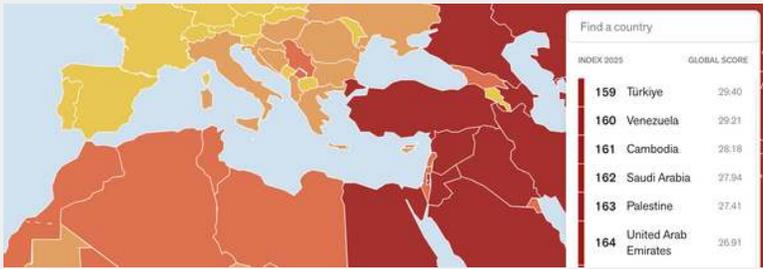


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On the Anniversary of Censorship's Abolition, Censorship for Opposition Media



<https://rsf.org/en/index>

The Past: A Legacy of Press Freedom

July 24, 1908, marks a milestone in Turkish press history. With the advent of the Second Constitutional Era, censorship officers were barred from entering printing houses, thereby granting journalists the right to publish freely for the first time. The day was celebrated as "Press Day" from 1946 to 1971. However, following the 1971 military coup, which reinstated martial law and press restrictions, the Turkish Journalists' Association redefined it as a "Day of Struggle for Press Freedom."

The Present: Censorship Rebranded

117 years later, the fight continues. On July 24, 2025, Türkiye's media regulator RTÜK imposed a 5-day blackout and 5% fine on TELED and a 3% fine on TELED and Halk TV for airing opposition views. These fines are based on each outlet's monthly ad revenue, potentially hundreds of thousands of lira. Nazmi Bilgin, president of the Turkish Journalists' Association, called it "a dark message to society," warning that RTÜK is silencing dissent. TELED now risks license revocation, along with additional penalties. According to the Journalists' Union of Türkiye, at least 30 journalists remain imprisoned. Censorship hasn't disappeared; it has evolved.

Ekrem İmamoğlu is Everywhere:

Free İmamoğlu posters appeared prominently at Tomorrowland festival grounds in Boom, Belgium, on July 18, 2025, signaling the widespread reach of his support.



instagram/postmodeern

OP-ED: Bakırhan to CHP: Learn from Demirtaş, Not Repeat Him



Cumhuriyet

In an [interview](#) with T24, DEM Party co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan added a new layer to Türkiye's constitutional debate, hinting that CHP's cooperation with the ruling AKP might lead to the release of jailed Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. "If CHP is at the table, maybe İmamoğlu will be outside," he said, suggesting a quid pro quo between political negotiation and judicial outcomes.

The comment recalls Selahattin Demirtaş's defiant 2015 stance: "We won't let you become president." Many believe that declaration led to his imprisonment in 2016, where he remains. Bakırhan's message seems clear: if dialogue can bring political prisoners home, don't repeat past mistakes.

At the same time, Bakırhan walks a tightrope, framing DEM as committed to opposition values but open to pragmatic engagement. He claims cooperation does not equal endorsement, vowing to resist regressive laws and defend workers' rights. He also highlights DEM's record of transparent local governance in contrast to widespread corruption. His message to CHP is blunt: stop expecting unconditional support. "Why is it always DEM that is expected not to spoil things? Why can't we win?" he asks.

The more profound implication is troubling: few in Türkiye believe the judiciary remains independent. If İmamoğlu's or anyone's fate hinges on constitutional negotiations, justice has become a bargaining chip.

This reflects a broader erosion of the rule of law. Verdicts appear contingent not on evidence but on political alignment. The constitution is not written to serve the citizens but politicians, becoming a tool for power consolidation rather than a safeguard of democratic rights.

What's unfolding isn't just political maneuvering. It's a public acknowledgment that justice in Türkiye no longer functions as it should. While freeing political prisoners is urgent, doing so through backroom constitutional deals risks legitimizing an illegitimate system. When you bargain with those who undermine the law, you risk reinforcing their power.

One can only hope CHP stays out of such negotiations, and that Özgür Özel stands firm on his promise not to rewrite laws with those who refuse to follow them—and avoids repeating his predecessor Kılıçdaroğlu's mistakes, such as enabling the lifting of MP immunities, remaining silent on Erdoğan's third-term candidacy, failing to challenge the YSK's validation of unstamped referendum ballots, and being complicit in the continued imprisonment of elected representatives like Can Atalay and Selahattin Demirtaş by remaining passive in the face of judicial defiance.



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