

Breaking News from Türkiye

Nine Opposition Mayors Join Erdoğan's Party as CHP Claims Blackmail

President Erdoğan announced that nine mayors, including Aydın Metropolitan Mayor Özlem Çerçioğlu, have joined his ruling AKP, prompting accusations from CHP leader Özgür Özel that Çerçioğlu was blackmailed with threats of prosecution into switching parties. Özel claims she was coerced under the threat of being linked to a corruption probe, while Erdoğan dismissed the opposition's criticism and welcomed the mayors as part of the "Century of Türkiye" vision.

In Aydın, CHP Members Hold Shoe Protest

After quitting CHP to join AKP, Aydın Mayor Özlem Çerçioğlu faced backlash, with CHP members leaving high heels at the municipality. The act referenced her nickname, "High-heeled Efe"—Efe being an Aegean folk hero symbolizing bravery. Once seen as a fearless defender, she was now accused of betraying that image. CHP's Aydın chair vowed to resist "betrayal of the people's will," with similar protests planned in Ankara.

Former AKP Official Faces Bribery Probe After Opposition Claim

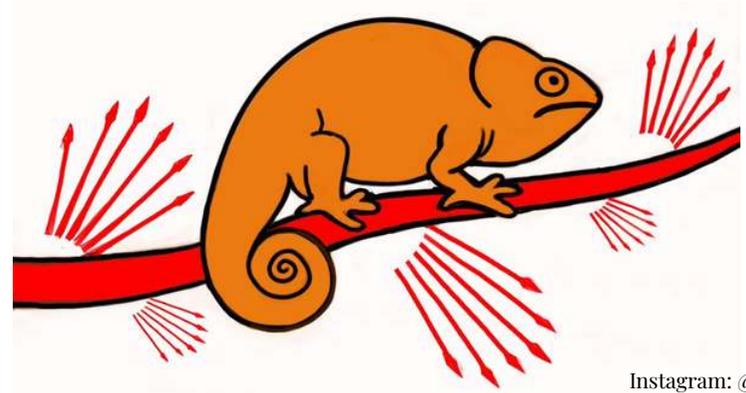
The İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has launched an investigation into claims that Mücahit Birinci, an AKP executive committee member, demanded a \$2 million bribe from a detained businessman in exchange for false testimony against suspended İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. The allegations, which the AKP member denies, come amid a broad corruption probe targeting the CHP-run İstanbul municipality, which the opposition claims is politically motivated.

Fake Diploma Scandal Rattles Faith in the Turkish State

A forged documents scandal in Türkiye involving nearly 200 arrests over fake diplomas and other official records created through the country's e-government system has intensified political tensions, public distrust in state institutions, and scrutiny of high-ranking officials.

Beyoğlu Mayor Detained in Opposition Crackdown

Authorities in Türkiye have detained İnan Güney, mayor of İstanbul's Beyoğlu district, and around 40 officials in a corruption probe, intensifying a crackdown on opposition-held municipalities. Critics say the arrests are politically motivated to weaken the CHP's influence, while the government claims the judiciary acts independently.



Instagram: @gurbuz.de

Arrested in İBB Probe, Turned Informant, Then Won Another Tender

Ahmet and İsmail Sarı, who were detained in the fifth wave of judicial operations against Türkiye's main opposition figure, Ekrem İmamoğlu, and later released after turning informants, won another İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality tender through their company shortly after their release. Their firm, Sarılar AŞ, was the sole bidder in a non-competitive tender worth nearly 1.49 billion Turkish lira (approximately \$36.4 million) for construction equipment rental.

OP-ED: Dismantling Democracy in Türkiye

By all conventional measures, Türkiye's ruling party should be preparing for a democratic transfer of power. Inflation remains volatile despite central bank interventions. Yet instead of competing in free elections, the government has escalated a coordinated legal and political offensive against the main opposition party. *Read the full op-ed on our website.*

Panel Announcement: Aug 17, 1 PM EST

As the March 19 Platform, we will host esteemed **CHP MPs Utku Çakırözer and Dr. Ceyhan İrgil** on Sunday, August 17, to inform the public and create space for debate during this critical period in Türkiye's democracy struggle. The panel will address judicial cases against CHP, operations targeting municipalities, future political scenarios, pressures on the party, civil society's role, and opportunities for democratic solidarity abroad. Open to all, with audience Q&A, and **streamed live on our YouTube channel.**



MARCH 19 PLATFORM

UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

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