

**ISSUE 42**



# **LAST WEEK IN TÜRKİYE**

**BY**

**MARCH 19 PLATFORM**

**FEBRUARY 14, 2026**



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# AKIN GÜRLEK BECOMES MINISTER OF JUSTICE

*ANOTHER HIT TO THE JUDICIARY'S  
INDEPENDENCE*



Akin Gürlek was appointed Minister of Justice by President Erdoğan after serving as Istanbul's Chief Public Prosecutor. Over the course of his career, he's been involved in political cases concerning Ekrem İmamoğlu, members of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Selahattin Demirtaş, Canan Kaftancıoğlu, and Ümit Özdağ. His rise from local judge to minister has been widely noted and marked by political controversy.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# FIGHT IN PARLIAMENT OVER NEW JUSTICE MINISTER



A physical fight broke out between CHP MP Mahmut Tanal and AKP mp Osman Gökçek in Turkey's parliament after opposition lawmakers tried to block the swearing-in of Akin Gürlek as justice minister. Gürlek, formerly Istanbul's chief prosecutor, oversaw high-profile cases against members of the main opposition CHP, which critics have long described as politically motivated. Despite the clash, he ultimately took the oath of office surrounded by ruling party lawmakers.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# AYŞE BARIM SENTENCED IN GEZI CASE

*TALENT MANAGER RECEIVES 12.5-YEAR TERM  
TIED TO 2013 DEMONSTRATIONS*



A court sentenced talent manager Ayşe Barım to 12 years and six months for allegedly aiding an attempt to overthrow the government linked to the 2013 Gezi Park protests. Barım denies the charges, and although she was released on health grounds, she remains under travel restrictions as she appeals.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# CONCERT CANCELLATIONS SPARK CENSORSHIP CONCERNS

*THREE BANDS CANCELLED AS OFFICIALS IMPOSE A  
TWO-DAY BAN ON EVENTS.*



Concerts by Slaughter to Prevail, Behemoth, and God Is an Astronaut at Zorlu PSM were cancelled following backlash and pressure from conservative groups accusing the bands of promoting “satanism” and clashing with “societal values.” The Beşiktaş District Governor’s Office subsequently banned all events at the venue for two days, escalating concerns about censorship in the arts.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# İMAMOĞLU DARES ERDOĞAN TO CALL EARLY ELECTIONS

*ELECTIONS ARE NOT SCHEDULED UNTIL 2028*



Jailed Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu has challenged President Erdoğan to call early elections, saying he would be defeated at the polls. İmamoğlu, who denies corruption charges against him, remains a central opposition figure despite his imprisonment. Elections are not scheduled until 2028, and calling them would require significant parliamentary support.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# STUDENTS BARRED BEFORE PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN'S CAMPUS VISIT

*POLICE DEPLOYED AT BOĞAZIÇI AHEAD OF ERDOĞAN'S  
ARRIVAL*



Police blocked student access to Boğaziçi University and deployed officers on campus ahead of President Erdoğan's visit, restricting movement and raising concerns among students and activists about repression and the ongoing erosion of academic freedom. The heightened security measures came amid long-running tensions between the government and the university community over issues of autonomy and political interference.



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

# NEW INTERIOR MINISTER DRAWS CRITICISM

*OPPOSITION VOICES WARN APPOINTMENT REFLECTS  
IDEOLOGICAL SHIFT*



TURKISH MINUTE

President Erdoğan has appointed Mustafa Çiftçi as the new interior minister, a former provincial governor whose record has drawn criticism from secularist and opposition voices as signaling a culture-war shift in the government's approach. Supporters cite his administrative experience, while critics argue the appointment reflects a broader ideological turn in state policy.



# OUR NEXT PANEL WITH BİLGE KAĞAN ŞARBAT

*LIVESTREAMED ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL  
AT 12:00 PM EST. ON FEBRUARY 15, 2026*

March 19 Platform  
**BİLGE KAĞAN ŞARBAT'IN KATILIMIYLA**

15 Subat 2026 Pazar

09.00-10.00 PST  
12.00-13.00 EST  
20.00-21.00 TSİ

Youtube Canlı Yayını

[www.youtube.com/@March19Platform](http://www.youtube.com/@March19Platform)

**Bilge Kağan Şarbat**  
CHP Kadıköy Gençlik Kolları  
Başkan Yardımcısı

**Onur Morkan**  
Moderatör

**Ceren Garner**  
Moderatör

Bilge Kağan Şarbat, a CHP Kadıköy youth leader, has been active in protests for labor rights, democracy and freedom, and was jailed for a week for defending a dignified life. He continues his studies at Boğaziçi University.

# RESOURCES

- <https://www.birgun.net/haber/from-local-judgeship-to-the-ministry-a-success-story-a-portrait-of-the-new-minister-of-justice-akin-gurlek-691984>
- [https://apnews.com/article/turkey\\_politics-erdogan-cabinet-reshuffle-gurlek-3288c44b6b3eb8e341c3dd34fd0f0b2b](https://apnews.com/article/turkey_politics-erdogan-cabinet-reshuffle-gurlek-3288c44b6b3eb8e341c3dd34fd0f0b2b)
- <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/turkish-talent-manager-jailed-12-years-over-2013-gezi-park-protests-2026-02-11/>
- <https://www.birgun.net/haber/two-targeted-concerts-cancelled-all-events-at-zorlu-banned-for-two-days-691796>
- <https://www.reuters.com/world/jailed-istanbul-mayor-dares-erdogan-call-early-elections-now-2026-02-13/>
- <https://bianet.org/haber/student-access-blocked-police-deployed-ahead-of-erdogan-s-visit-to-bogazici-university-316695>
- <https://www.turkishminute.com/2026/02/11/a-hardliner-critics-cite-signals-of-culture-war-in-erdogans-pick-for-interior-minister/>