



LAST WEEK IN TÜRKİYE



- 18 People Released in the İstanbul Municipality Case
- Another Key Witness Withdraws Statement in İBB Case
- The Crackdown Has Reached the Fourth-Largest City
- Environmental Activist Esra Işık Jailed
- New Decision From the Constitutional Court for Tayfun Kahraman
- İstanbul Governor Orders Faster Removal of Stray Animals
- Will there be a new NATO headquarters in Türkiye?
- Identity Verification for Social Media Users



April 5, 2026

18 PEOPLE RELEASED IN THE ISTANBUL MUNICIPALITY CASE

WHY DID THEY SPEND OVER ONE YEAR IN JAIL?



TURKISH MINUTE

A Turkish court released 18 defendants—many of whom had been held in jail for over a year—including figures such as Kadriye Kasapoğlu, who were under judicial supervision in a major corruption case targeting the Istanbul Municipality. Despite these releases, Ekrem İmamoğlu and 88 people remain in pretrial detention, drawing criticism over unequal treatment. The case is widely seen by critics as part of broader political pressure on the opposition CHP, with proceedings still ongoing.



April 5, 2026

ANOTHER KEY WITNESS WITHDRAWS STATEMENT IN IBB CASE

MORE EVIDENCE THAT THE CASE IS POLICIAL



TV24

At a recent hearing in the İBB (Istanbul Municipality) case, defendant Elif Güven withdrew her previous “effective remorse” (informant) statement, and her lawyer claimed she was taken from prison under the pretense of going to a hospital but was instead brought to the courthouse by ambulance. The defense argued that her testimony was obtained under pressure and that parts of her statements were selectively used in the indictment. She’s the 4th defendant to withdraw their statements.

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THE CRACKDOWN HAS REACHED THE FOURTH-LARGEST CITY

ARREST OF BURSA MAYOR SIGNALS ESCALATION



CUMHURİYET

Bursa Mayor Mustafa Bozbey was arrested along with more than 50 others in a sweeping corruption probe targeting CHP-linked figures. Opposition figures say the case is part of an expanding campaign against municipalities won by the CHP after the 2024 elections. Since the March 2024 elections, control of 85 municipalities has shifted through arrests, removals, and trustee appointments, affecting 8.8 million voters —about 20.5 percent of all ballots cast nationwide.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST ESRA IŐIK JAILED

PROTECTING THE NATURE IS NOT A CRIME



BIANET

In Muęla's Akbelen forest resistance, activist Esra IŐik has been jailed since March 31 after being detained during a protest against land expropriation, and the court recently rejected an appeal to have her detention lifted. Her mother, Nejla IŐik, released a statement saying she is waiting "with her head held high" for the day her daughter sees justice. Nejla emphasized that their struggle is for life and nature, and expressed confidence that Esra will soon regain her freedom and return to her village.

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NEW DECISION FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT FOR TAYFUN KAHRAMAN

HE'S BEEN A POLITICAL PRISONER FOR 4 YEARS



DEUTSCHEWELLE

Türkiye's Constitutional Court (AYM) has ruled again that Tayfun Kahraman's rights were violated, after a lower court ignored its earlier decision. Kahraman, who has multiple sclerosis, remains imprisoned despite the court's unanimous ruling. Supporters and rights groups are calling for the decision to be enforced immediately and for him to be retried or released.

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ISTANBUL GOVERNOR ORDERS FASTER REMOVAL OF STRAY ANIMALS

THIS CAN BE A DEATH SENTENCE TO ANIMALS



T24

Istanbul Governor Davut Gül instructed the city's municipalities to accelerate the collection of stray dogs and transfer them to shelters by the end of May, warning that those who fail to comply will face legal action. Animal rights advocates criticize the decision, arguing that many shelters are overcrowded, poorly maintained, and may expose animals to neglect or unsafe conditions, raising concerns that the policy could endanger their lives.



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WILL THERE BE A NEW NATO HEADQUARTERS IN TÜRKİYE?

WHAT WOULD THIS MEAN FOR TÜRKİYE?



BBC TÜRKÇE

Recent reporting says Türkiye will host and command a Black Sea NATO task force headquarters until at least 2028 as part of a broader expansion of NATO military command structures, but Ankara insists it will not compromise the 1936 Montreux Convention that governs passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. The Montreux Convention remains a central legal framework regulating naval access to the Black Sea and limits the transit of foreign warships, which Türkiye emphasizes as key to regional security and stability.

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IDENTITY VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

SOCIAL MEDIA WEAPONIZED TO ADD PRESSURE



BIANET

Justice Minister Akın Gürlek announced that Türkiye and major social media platforms have agreed to require users to log in with their national ID numbers within about three months, effectively ending anonymous or fake accounts online. Under the planned rules, accounts that don't comply will be closed, and users will be legally accountable for their posts, including insults or defamatory content. Critics say this move marks a major expansion of state control over online expression and could chill free speech by eliminating anonymity on digital platforms.

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RESOURCES

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