

LAST WEEK IN TÜRKİYE



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IMAMOGLU TRIAL ENTERS SECOND MONTH



The corruption trial of Istanbul's jailed Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu entered its second month on April 10, with prosecutors seeking a staggering 2,430 years in prison across 407 defendants. İmamoğlu, widely seen as President Erdoğan's most dangerous political rival, declared: 'In this case, there is only one criminal organization, and that is the prosecution.' On April 7, prosecutors launched yet another investigation into the political prisoner—this time for allegedly 'insulting a public official'—adding to an ever-growing pile of cases critics say are designed to erase him from Turkish political life.



April 13, 2026

BIANET

ECHR QUESTIONS TURKIYE ON IMAMOGLU'S DETENTION



The European Court of Human Rights turned up the pressure on Ankara on April 13, demanding it respond to İmamoğlu's application — asking six pointed questions including whether his arrest was politically motivated to prevent him from standing in the 2028 presidential election, and whether his imprisonment has interfered with his right to stand for election. Critics note the parallel with Osman Kavala, jailed since 2017 in defiance of ECHR rulings Ankara has never implemented.



MORE CHP MAYORS DETAINED NATIONWIDE



Crackdown on opposition expands to new cities Police detained Bornova district mayor Ömer Eşki in İzmir on April 9 on fraud accusations, while 20 people were detained in a probe targeting the CHP-run Üsküdar district municipality in Istanbul on April 7. CHP Ankara provincial chair Ümit Erkol was also detained in a separate İzmir-linked investigation. CHP says such investigations are part of a systematic campaign to undermine opposition municipalities following the party's sweeping 2024 local election victory



BASILICA CISTERN TRANSFERRED FROM İBB



The historic Yerebatan Cistern, which was taken under İBB management during Ekrem İmamođlu's administration and restored after being in poor condition, has now been transferred to the Directorate of Foundations (Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü). CHP criticized the decision, calling it unjust and part of a broader political pattern of taking control of municipal assets. They emphasize that the İBB had invested in restoring and preserving the site before it was taken back by the state.



TÜRKİYE MANDATES REAL-NAME SOCIAL MEDIA



Justice Minister Akın Gürlek announced on April 3 that all social media accounts will require Turkish national ID verification, with anonymous accounts banned after a three-month transition period. The Freedom of Expression Association condemned the plan as building a system where the state knows the identity behind every account, tweet and post – warning it would drive citizens, journalists and activists to self-censor. Critics say the real goal is surveillance and control, not child protection as the government claims.



83 JOURNALISTS CHARGED UNDER DISINFORMATION LAW



Turkiye's notorious 'disinformation law' has been used to investigate, detain, or prosecute 83 journalists since it took effect in 2022, with 8 journalists charged in 2026 alone as of April 8. The law has led to 54 investigations and 39 court cases, with measures including house arrest, travel bans and mandatory police check-ins used against reporters. Journalist İsmail Arı of BirGün newspaper has faced the charge six times and was arrested in March, exemplifying what press freedom groups describe as a systematic regime of legal harassment.



32 WOMEN KILLED IN MARCH



At least 32 women were murdered by men in Türkiye in March 2026, while 58 more died under suspicious circumstances, according to data compiled by Bianet and reported by the Stockholm Center for Freedom. Of those killed, 20 were murdered by current or former partners, and at least 13 were killed for asserting autonomy over their own lives—refusing a marriage proposal, seeking a divorce, or rejecting a relationship. Women's rights groups hold the AKP government directly responsible, pointing to Erdoğan's 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and courts' consistent leniency toward perpetrators.



INTELLECTUAL YALÇIN KÜÇÜK DIES



Prof. Dr. Yalçın Küçük, one of Türkiye's most influential intellectuals, died in Ankara on April 6 at the age of 87 after a prolonged illness. An economist, historian and prolific author of dozens of books including the multi-volume *Türkiye Üzerine Tezler*, Küçük was dismissed from his academic post at METU following the 1971 military coup and spent decades prosecuted and detained by the Turkish state. He was swept up in the AKP-era Ergenekon prosecutions in 2009—a case later widely recognised as a politically engineered frame-up—before being acquitted in 2017.



STATE SEIZES IZMIR'S VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER



Residents mount 24-hour vigil as police block building The government-controlled Directorate General of Foundations seized the Meslek Fabrikası — a historic vocational training center run by the CHP-led İzmir Metropolitan Municipality — in a pre-dawn police operation on April 6, surrounding the building with barricades and cutting off access. Mayor Cemil Tugay, who personally led a continuous vigil now in its seventh day, called the seizure an act of political intimidation, noting the building was granted to İzmir by Atatürk in 1926 and has trained thousands of young people and the unemployed. Activists warn: "Today the Meslek Fabrikası, tomorrow your property deeds."



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GIDATARIM.COM

GIRESUN VILLAGERS RESIST MINING INVASION



85% of province was handed to mining firms despite court orders. AKP-linked Alagöz Mining began drilling in Giresun's Sekü village this week despite a court injunction, with gendarmerie escorting equipment past resisting villagers. State authority MAPEG had awarded 12,511 hectares of licenses across five districts on April 1–2, threatening 38 villages and 100,000 hazelnut farmers. CHP lawmaker Sibel Suiçmez condemned what she called "colonial mining spreading village by village across the entire Black Sea region."



İKİZKÖY VILLAGERS TAKE OLIVE GROVE FIGHT TO ANKARA



Akbelen resistance continues as activist faces prison Villagers from İkizköy and Akbelen in Muğla marched to Ankara this week to appeal to the Constitutional Court to halt emergency expropriation orders covering 679 parcels of farmland earmarked for coal mine expansion. Esra Işık, the resistance's most prominent figure, remains in İzmir Women's Prison after being arrested on March 30 for allegedly obstructing a court surveying team — a move villagers say was designed to intimidate them into surrendering their land to holding companies Limak and İçtaş.



JUDGE LINKED TO CRIME BOSS CAR PAYMENT



Bank records entered into the Ayhan Bora Kaplan money laundering case show that Kaplan's assistant paid 343,650 lira in October 2019 labelled "Yüksel Kocaman vehicle payment," with a BMW registered in the Court of Appeals member's name the next day. Earlier allegations also claim Kocaman closed 7 of 8 investigations into Kaplan while serving as Ankara chief prosecutor. Kocaman – who visited Erdoğan's palace with his bride on his wedding day before his judicial appointment – has said nothing, prompting DEM Party MP Gergerlioğlu to protest outside the court building on April 13.



ORBÁN FALLS; İMAMOĞLU WATCHES FROM PRISON



Viktor Orbán conceded defeat on April 12 after 16 years in power, as Péter Magyar's Tisza party swept Hungary's elections with a two-thirds supermajority on record 77.8% turnout. İmamoğlu sent a message from Marmara Prison: "From a prison cell in Silivri, I send my warmest congratulations — your victory belongs to all of us who believe that ballots are stronger than fear." CHP leader Özgür Özel said the result proved "the will of the people is stronger than one-man rule." Erdoğan, who had maintained close ties with Orbán, issued no statement.



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