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LAST WEEK IN TÜRKİYE

A weekly roundup of the top news and developments in Türkiye

MARCH 19 PLATFORM
UNITED FOR DEMOCRACY IN TÜRKİYE

NOVEMBER 20, 2026

REMINDERS BY NUMBERS



607 DAYS

Since the Istanbul Mayor and opposition presidential candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu was jailed. His trial is still ongoing.



32 DAYS

Since journalist Murat Ağırel was jailed over a news story he did not write.



56 DAYS

Since retired police officer Ali Şekeroğlu committed suicide during a protest over pensioners' financial struggles in front of the Constitutional Court



37 DAYS

Since authorities placed opposition broadcaster Halk TV under state trusteeship and halted its independent news broadcasts following a police raid on October 14.



İMAMOĞLU SENTENCED IN CHP CONGRESS CASE

An Ankara court sentenced jailed Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and eight other defendants to two years and one month in prison on November 18 over alleged vote manipulation at the CHP's 2023 congress. Three defendants were acquitted. The ruling is appealable; the accompanying political restrictions depend on the conviction becoming final.



NINE OPPOSITION MUNICIPAL LEADERS JOIN RULING AKP

On November 19, seven mayors and two acting mayors from opposition parties joined the ruling AKP. They included Tekirdağ Mayor Candan Yüceer, Antalya Acting Mayor Büşra Özdemir, and Beyoğlu Acting Mayor Sefer Karaahmetoğlu. Özdemir and Karaahmetoğlu assumed office after the CHP-elected mayors Muhittin Böcek and İnan Güney were jailed. The other transfers involved Korkuteli, Demre, Yumurtalık, Tirebolu, Enez, and Karahallı.



COURT REJECTS İMAMOĞLU'S DIPLOMA APPEAL

Türkiye's Council of State rejected Ekrem İmamoğlu's appeal against the cancellation of his university diploma, Medyascope reported on November 19. His lawyers said they had not been formally notified and could not yet see the decision in the judicial records system. They argue that the university's cancellation was politically motivated and violated legal certainty.



COURT FREES EIGHT IN İBB TRIAL

A November 12 hearing ordered the release of eight defendants in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality trial, a decision reported on November 13. The defendants include İmamoğlu's lawyer Mehmet Pehlivan, municipal executive Fatoş Pınar Türker, and Volkan Ateş. İmamoğlu remains among the 38 defendants held pending trial. The next hearing is scheduled for January 4, 2027.





İSMAIL ARI AND FATIH ERGIN RELEASED

BirGün reporter İsmail Arı was acquitted of insult and disinformation charges and released on November 19. A day earlier, Nefes journalist Fatih Ergin was released after 52 days in detention over a social media post; his trial continues. The Turkish Journalists' Association welcomed both releases and called for the release of other journalists imprisoned over their work.



SÖZCÜ TV PLACED UNDER STATE TRUSTEESHIP

Authorities placed Sözcü TV and its news website under state trusteeship on November 17. Broadcasts briefly stopped before resuming that day. On November 20, authorities released three detained executives with reporting requirements and travel bans; they placed finance manager Yonca Yücekaleli under house arrest. The Turkish Journalists' Association condemned the takeover's impact on media pluralism.



AHMET ŞIK QUESTIONS BILLIONS RECOVERED IN PROBE

On November 18, Workers' Party of Türkiye (TİP) MP Ahmet Şık submitted 20 questions after the Justice Ministry said it had recovered TL 40.4 billion (approximately $800 million) from 75 people in an investment fund investigation. He asked who returned the money, how much had reached affected investors, and how payments were allocated. Şık also sought details of independent oversight and the contributors' continuing legal liability.



AHMET ŞIK'S WIFE DETAINED, FRIEND REMAINS JAILED

TİP MP Ahmet Şık accused authorities of targeting his family and friends in connection with his investigation into an investment fund scandal. His wife, Yonca Verdioğlu Şık, was detained on espionage allegations on November 10 and later released under a travel ban. His close friend Ahmet Saymadi remains imprisoned. Şık alleged that intermediaries offered to prevent Saymadi's imprisonment if he deleted a social media post.



MP REPORTS OVERCROWDING IN JOURNALIST GÜNDAY'S PRISON

After visiting detained journalist Selahattin Günday, MP Turhan Çömez reported severe overcrowding and pest problems in his prison ward. Çömez said 63 people were held in a space intended for 42, and Günday had initially slept on the floor for 33 days. He also described rodent infestations and bedbug bites, citing the journalist's account.



ENGINEERS CHALLENGE ACCOUNTS OF DEADLY HABAŞ BLAST

On November 18, Türkiye’s metallurgical engineers’ chamber challenged early accounts of the HABAŞ steel plant disaster in İzmir, which killed 19 workers. It said a crane support system collapsed during maintenance, causing a furnace shell to fall onto gas equipment. The chamber said production had stopped, no molten metal was involved, and pledged to continue examining the disaster.



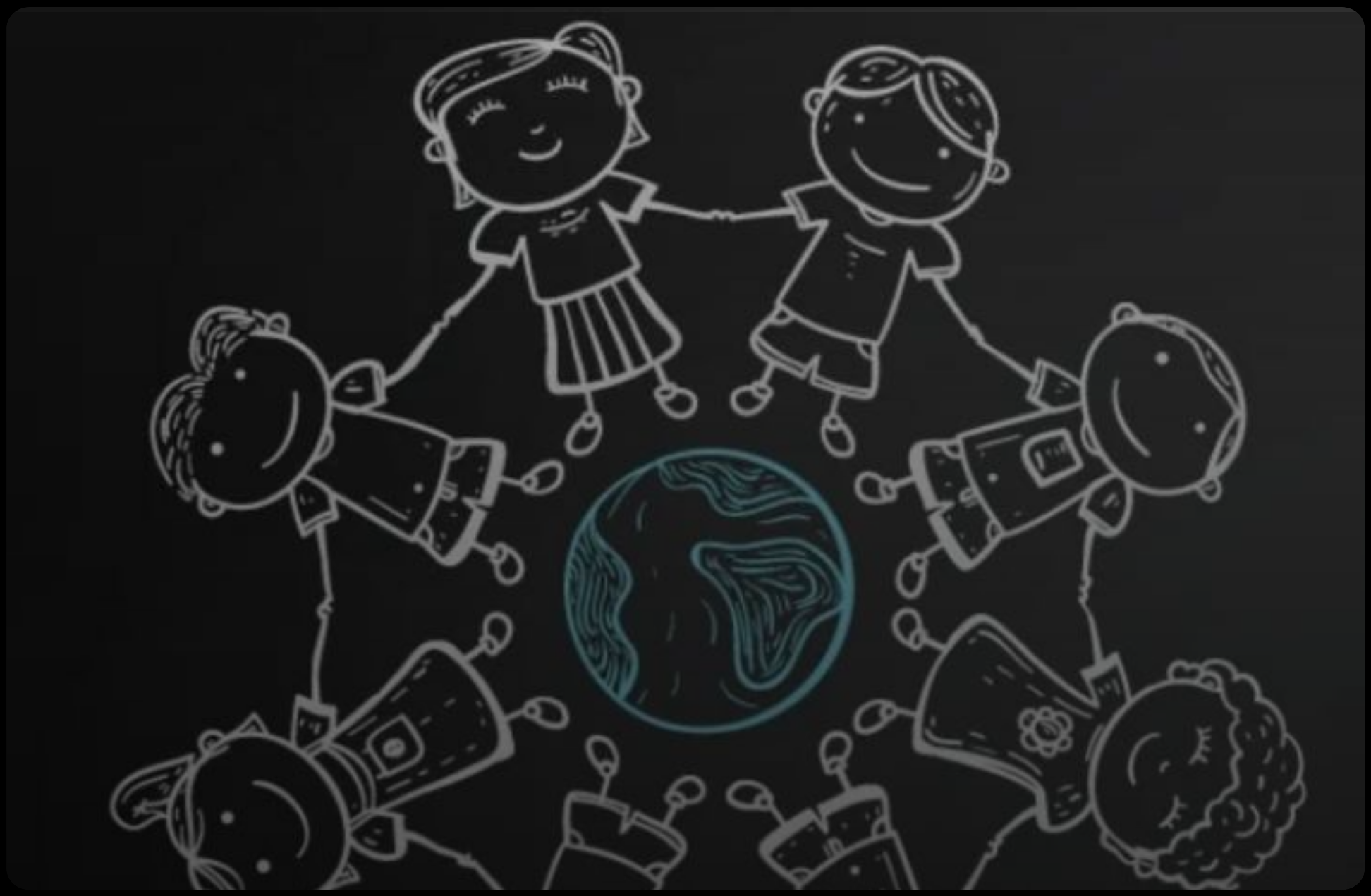
HABAŞ WORKERS PROTEST PHONE BAN AFTER DEADLY BLAST

HABAŞ workers in İzmir protested a mobile phone ban on November 13, days after a blast killed 19 colleagues. Gendarmes intervened; they detained seven workers and two labor organizers, who were later released. A worker told Evrensel on November 16 that the protest forced management to lift the ban. Workers also demanded paid mourning leave and independent safety inspections.



THOUSANDS MARCH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE IN ANTALYA

Thousands marched in Antalya on November 14 during COP31, demanding an end to fossil fuels and a greater public voice in climate decisions. The demonstration opened the alternative People's Climate Summit, bringing together participants from 80 countries. Organizers called for lasting climate policy changes and challenged development projects that put corporate interests ahead of communities and nature.



CHILDREN'S DAY BRINGS CALLS TO END EXPLOITATION

On World Children's Day, November 20, the education union Eğitim Sen called for stronger protections for children in Türkiye. The union criticized vocational training centers (MESEM) for exposing children to labor exploitation and demanded an end to child labor. It also called for free school meals, protection from violence and abuse, and public policies that prioritize children's safety, education, and well-being.

RESOURCES

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