

BİA MEDIA MONITORING 2009 / ANNUAL REPORT

According to the 2009 annual report published by the BİA Media Monitoring Desk, a total of **323** people stood trial in the context of freedom of thought in 2009, among them **123** journalists.

The report comprises the cases and struggles of 978 people. Violations of freedom of expression are divided into seven sections: "**Attacks and Threats**", "Arrests and Detentions", "**Trials concerning Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression**", "Corrections and Legal Redress", "**European Court of Human Rights**", "Reactions to Censorship" and "**Implementations of RTÜK**".

While the report makes no claim to be complete, it aims at giving an impression of the variety and intensity of targetting press freedom and freedom of expression.

Attacks and Threats

A group of 15 young leftists protested against the arrest of 3 friends in the city centre of Edirne in the north- western region of Thrace on 27 December. Their friends had been taken into custody for alleged membership of an illegal organization. A crowd of about 750 people physically attacked the young protesters and shouted slogans like "This is Edirne, there is no traitor here" and "Down with the PKK". In a press release, the young leftists demanded the USA to withdraw from the İncirlik base in Adana and the detainees to be released. They also initiated a signature campaign in the same context. The police were not able to take the situation under control. 6 people were injured in the course of the incident.

Conscientious objector **Enver Aydemir** claims that he was exposed to torture and maltreatment in prison for refusing to wear military clothes on 26 December. Aydemir started a hunger strike to express his protest. His wife, his father and lawyer Yılmaz filed a criminal complaint. Aydemir told lawyer **Davut Erkan**: "They told me to wear the standard prison clothes. I told the person on duty that I was not going to wear those clothes, so they heavily beat me with truncheons. They undressed me and let me wait in my underwear in a cold room until the next morning". Aydemir said that he was repeatedly exposed to beating for his refusal to wear the standard clothes and for going on hunger strike. It was announced that Aydemir, who is married and father of two children, was taken to the hospital ward and treated with infusions by force. The Association for Free Thought and Educational Rights (Özgür-Der) condemned the implications.

Journalist **Cihan Hayırsevener** from Güney Marmara'da Yaşam newspaper ('Life in Southern Marmara') had been threatened for a while before he was shot on Atatürk Boulevard on 18 December. He bled to death after the attacker had shot several bullets in Hayırsevener's leg. 29-year-old **Serkan Erakkuş** was arrested on 23 December in the town of Edincik. The Bandırma High Criminal Court took Erakkuş into detention under charges of murder and brought the defendant to the Bandırma M Type Closed Prison. Defendants **Tolga Ö.** and **Ali T.** were arrested in the Balıkesir district of Burhaniye. The court decided to prosecute them un-detained. The police stated to have confiscated the weapon used for the murder and

furthermore confirmed upon eye-witnesses and footage of security camera that two cars had been used in the incident. The cars had been rented and were found in the districts of Susurluk and Bandırma respectively. Marmara TV declared, "We will follow this malicious and treacherous attack up till the end. We believe that punishment will be pronounced to the suspects and the focus of power behind them and we share the trust we have in the judiciary with the public". Balıkesir Journalists Association President **Ramazan Demir** and **Ümit Babacan**, owner of Güney Marmara Yaşam newspaper stated that journalist Hayırsevener was not killed as a result of a personal attack but that he became a victim of organized crime.

On 7 December, journalist **İzzetin Oktay** from Duruş newspaper was attacked by the police when he covered a press release and the following events organized by the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (**DTP**) Siirt Provincial Organization in eastern Anatolia. Oktay filed a criminal complaint because he was assaulted by the police and his camera was broken. The journalist from Duruş daily claimed that the police confiscated his pictures when he was working on a news report. Oktay argued that the policemen surrounded him and beat him with their fists and truncheons. "They confiscated the memory card of my camera. They damaged my camera beyond repair by slamming it to the ground a couple of times. They beat me with their fists and truncheons. They also addressed me with insulting curses. They wanted to arrest me. I had trouble to recover. I collected the parts of my camera and moved away", Oktay described the incident.

DİHA news agency **Ömer Çelik** stated that police officers insulted him and deleted pictures and footage when he was following up a protest action concerning prison conditions of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party, in the Ümraniye district on the Anatolian side of Istanbul on 6 December. The police allegedly returned the camera to its owner after having deleted the pictures of the event.

Anatolian news agency (**AA**) reporter **Seyfullah Ayvalı** was attacked on 2 December by municipality employees when he attempted to cover the monthly council meeting of the Tire Municipality (Izmir). Ayvalı was hurt at his left eye by the attack. He filed a criminal complaint at the police station and obtained a medical report from hospital proving evidence of physical assault. Izmir Journalists Association President **Atilla Sertel** drew attention to the fact that verbal and physical attacks against journalists have increased. Sertel said in his written announcement, "We expect the people involved in the attacks to be brought to justice as soon as possible".

The Adıyaman Gerger Criminal Court of First Instance launched a trial against Mayor **Arif Karatekin** and his brother **İlhan Karatekin** on the grounds of their assault against **Gerger Fırat** newspaper owner **Hacı Boğatekin**. The journalist had been attacked when he took pictures of a fire at a municipality waste dump on 28 July. He suffered injuries in his face and his camera was broken. Un-detained defendant İlhan Karatekin stated at court, "I have no idea how Boğatekin's injuries occurred. His camera fell down during a scuffle, I did not break it". Boğatekin on the other hand claims that Karatekin insulted him and punched him in his face twice to prevent him from taking pictures. He stated that they took the camera from him and threw it away. The court heard the statements of five soldiers, **Budaklı Köy** village headman **Şeyhmus Kılınç**, **Şerif Kuş** and four other persons. The soldiers said they were ordered to the scene by the Commander to extinguish the fire and that they did not witness a

fight. Kılınç and Kuş stated, "By the time we arrived the fighting persons had already been separated". The case is to be continued on 29 January 2010.

Joint attorney of the Hrant Dink case **Fethiye Çetin** considered the allegations regarding a "Cage Operation Action Plan" published by Taraf newspaper on 20 November as "grave and frightening". The "Cage Operation Action Plan" was supposedly worked out as a coup plan by the Naval Forces, targeting non-Muslims and aiming to charge them of their religious beliefs. Daily Taraf claimed that the plan listed homes and business places of non-Muslims and included a plan which marked 939 non-Muslim representations. Lawyer Çetin expressed her astonishment about the matter, "I am in horror right now. Some forces of this country sit down and they will make a plan to define their fellow citizens of their own country as enemies. They will kill Armenians and non-Muslims in the psychological war they conduct against the ones defined as their enemies, both in terms of supplies and casualties". Çetin stated that the Hrant Dink murder case might be merged with the Ergenekon trial in case of a tangible connection with the Dink case and a verification of the claims. On the same day the General Staff announced that they filed a criminal complaint at the Ministry of Justice against Tarfa newspaper.

Taraf newspaper writer **Sevan Nişanyan** was targeted by about 400 e-mails after his article entitled "Speech to the Youth" published on 29 October. The author complained at the Selçuk (Aegean coast) Prosecution and regards the incidents as an "organized activity". Nişanyan opened his article with the following words: "86 years are enough in my opinion. A language not reaching beyond blood-motherland-enemy rhetoric has enslaved this country for so many years. It is time to think of something new". He described "Kemal Pasha" as "the peak of "blood-fatherland-enemy literature". Nişanyan argued, "I think this is an organized action by non-civilians who were directed by a certain place. Therefore I am not very hopeful related to the legal procedures. Some judges receive their instructions from the same place as the ones who sent me threatening messages". Several people who showed a negative reaction to Nişanyan's article on the internet send a petition form demanding 4.5 years imprisonment for the writer based on Law no. 5816 on Crimes Directed Against Atatürk enforced in 1951. Nişanyan also received messages containing death threats.

The Bakırköy 4th Court of First Instance in Istanbul adjudged Brigadier General **Dursun Ali Karaduman** from the Giresun Gendarmerie Regional Command on the eastern Black Sea Coast to pay 2,000 Turkish Lira (TL) (approximately € 900) in compensation for damages for mental anguish. Karaduman had targeted assassinated editor-in-chief of the Armenian Agos newspaper **Hrant Dink** in a poem he read out at a soldier's funeral. Furthermore, he was quoted as saying at another soldier's funeral, "They even condemn it and raise their voices when a traitor is killed". The Dink family symbolically set the amount of the compensation to TL 1. Yet, in order to be able to hear the case the court raised it to TL 6,000. Lawyer of the Dink family **Deniz Tuna** told **bianet** that the family partially accepted the amount claimed by the court and said that the family plans to donate the 2,000 TL decided by the court on 6 November to **Nesin Foundation** to support victims of the flood that hit parts of Istanbul in September this year. Karaduman allegedly defamed Dink twice after the journalist had been assassinated on 19 January 2007. The first time he targeted Dink in a speech Karaduman made at a soldier's funeral on 9 April 2007. The second time he mentioned Dink's name to his disfavour in a poem he read out at another soldier's funeral on 20 June 2007. The court found

Karaduman guilty of attacking Dink's moral integrity on the grounds of his speech and his poem.

Yüksekova Haber newspaper editor-in chief **Zeki Dara** was assaulted by the site manager and builders on 3 November when he tried to take pictures of the construction of a primary school in Değerli Village in the Yüksekova district of Hakkari at the south-eastern tip of the country. The site manager said the journalist did not have permission to take pictures. He attacked him and broke his camera. Hereupon the situation escalated. Dara filed a complaint at the Yüksekova District Gendarmerie. The site manager was taken to the Yüksekova State Hospital after the incident where he died. According to the hospital report, journalist Dara suffered from an oedema at his head. He expressed his sorrow about experiencing such a situation and said that he was just trying to fulfil his duty. The builders from the construction site stated that the journalist did not have any contact with the site manager and that he slumped himself to the ground. The District Gendarmerie Command launched an investigation into the matter.

Eight gendarmerie officers stand trial on the grounds of neglect in the murder case of **Hrant Dink**, Turkish-Armenian editor-in-chief of Armenian Agos newspaper assassinated on 19 January 2007. Statements were taken of two of a total of six informants of the Trabzon Pelitli Municipality that claimed to have fulfilled their duty on behalf of the gendarmerie. The Trabzon 2nd Magistrate Criminal Court refrained from hearing the other four informants. The court wants the statements on the substance of the matter to be presented in the next hearing on **12 February 2010** in case the lawyers of the Dink family do not request the investigation to be extended. On 23 October 2009 it was found out the the Trabzon Gendarmerie Command had six informants registered in Pelitli. Former Trabzon Chief of Police Ramazan Akyürek and former Governor Hüseyin Yavuz Demir stated that in the protocols of 2005, 2006 and 2007 they did not come across any registry regarding Yasin Hayal. The Dink lawyers requested to take the statements of both Akyürek and Demir as witnesses. The court declined. The lawyers applied to the European Court of Human Rights (**ECHR**) upon the fact that non of Trabzon Police officers is being prosecuted. The persons tried because of neglect prior to the Dink murder are Trabzon Gendarmerie Regiment Commander Colonel **Ali Öz**, intelligence branch officers Lieutenant **Metin Yıldız**, non-commissioned officers **Gazi Günay** and **Hüseyin Yılmaz**, Sergeant Major **Okan Şimşek**, Special Sergeant Majors **Veysel Şahin**, Hacı Ömer Ünalır and **Önder Araz**. The eight officers face imprisonment of up to two years.

Chief of Police General Directory Intelligence Office **Ramazan Akyürek** was deposed from office as announced on 16 October. He is accused of remaining passive prior to the murder of journalist **Hrant Dink** in 2007 instead of having taken measures to protect the Agos newspaper editor's life. At the time of the murder Akyürek was chief of police in Trabzon and had made **Erhan Tuncel** a police informant with the help of a faculty member. Tuncel is prosecuted in the Ergenekon case the instigator of the crime. Dink family lawyer **Fethiye Çetin** stated that Akyürek did not do what would have been necessary according to reports he had received from several intelligence units before the Dink murder regarding preparations to the journalist's assassination. Çetin furthermore argued that the issue was also influenced by illegally making Tuncel an undercover informant. Çetin reminded that the Prime Ministry Inspection Council had issued a report concerned with several police officers, among them Akyürek, who did not their duty, "It was a big mistake and a major obstacle for revealing the

truth that police officers, who paved the way to murder with intentional neglect, deficiency and mistakes, were still on duty. After the murder, Akyürek demanded information and documents related to the incident. It was also reported to the court trying the case that some documents had been destroyed. We hope and wish that the reposition of duty will provide the missing documents. I am sure that the documents claimed to be destroyed are stored somewhere". Akyürek was transferred to the central office.

On 13 October, Habertürk newspaper sports journalist **Erhan Telli** was beaten by reason of a news item related to a conversation between **Fatih Terim**, coach of the national football team, and Head of Bursaspor sports club **İbrahim Yazıcı**. Journalist Telli claimed that he was attacked by Yazıcı himself because of the news entitled "Have I resigned or what?". The Habertürk reporter stated that security personnel standing close by just watched the incident without stepping in. The news item dealt with the confusion caused by the resignation of Fatih Terim in order to renew his vote of confidence, whereas Federation President Mahmut Özgener did not accept Terim's resignation. The article reports about Terim communicating his disturbance about Özgener's attitude to Yazıcı from Bursaspor. The **International Press Institute National Committee** condemned the assault: "We expect the officials to show the necessary sensibility regarding the incident". The Turkey Sports Journalists Association strongly criticized Yazıcı and his bodyguards: "Attacking a sports journalist who is fulfilling his public duty together with bodyguards is nothing else but banditry. This clearly constitutes a crime according to current legislation". The **Press Council** forwarded Yazıcı's comment that he was not answering any questions on the matter, he would use his legal rights and denied the actual attack. The Turkish Journalists' Society (**TGC**) made the following announcement: "It has increased our worry that violence against our colleagues as previously experienced at political party congresses, demonstrations or press conferences has now entered the area of sports".

On 12 October the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court decided to take the statement of detained defendant **Yasin Hayal** from the Intelligence Office Directorate regarding Hayal's connections to a planned attack on author **Orhan Pamuk**. Hayal stands accused for instigating the murder of Hrant Dink. Defendant Ogün Samast had a close look at the weapon used for the murder and answered questions at court. The court asked what kind of information related to Pamuk was obtained by **Ramazan Akyürek** when he was still Head of the Intelligence Office Directorate and until 2006 when Akyürek was Head of the Trabzon Police. The court wanted to know what Akyürek did in return for the information and which results came out of it. Furthermore it was asked if there were any connections between the plan of this attack and Yasin Hayal and his organization. President Judge **Erkan Canak** declared that the secret witness of the murder will be heard at the coming hearing on **8 February 2010** since there was not enough time to hear all defendants, the joint attorneys of the Dink family objected. The following detained defendants are tried in the scope of the case: **Ogün Samast**, Erhan Tunel, **Yasin Hayal**, Ersin Yolcu and **Ahmet İskender**. **Zeynel Abidin Yavuz**, Tuncay Uzundal, **Salih Hacısaliolu**, Veysel Toprak, **Osman Altay**, Osman Hayal, **Coşkun İğci**, Halis Egemen, **Yaşar Cihan**, Erbil Susaman, **Alper Esirgemez**, Numan Şişman, **Şenol Akduman**, Mustafa Öztürk and **İrfan Özkan** are prosecuted un-detained. The court requested relevant information, documents and ascertainments concerning Durmuş Ali Özoglu to be sent by the Ergenekon trial prosecutors. The Ergenekon defendant is mentioned in the indictment in the context of "psychological war" regarding topics such as the "Armenian question". The lawyers investigated a scheme they had previously forwarded to

Prosecutor **Zerkeriya Öz** related to information on communication between several Ergenekon and Dink murder case defendants. FBI officials from the American Consulate in Istanbul will be interrogated about the msn traffic of defendant **Erhan Tuncel**. The first time since the case is tried, Erhan Tuncel said that he was told by Yasin Hayal, who came to his house, that Ogün Samast will be the one who was going to target Dink. According to the joint lawyers, the intelligence information brought to court by Ramazan Akyürek showed that triggerman suspect Samast met with several people after he had arrived from Trabzon at the Istanbul Bus Terminal. The lawyers stated, "The document shows that state intelligence organizations observed Samast before and after the murder". Moreover, the lawyers reminded that Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate spokesman and Ergenekon defendant **Sevgi Erenerol** held briefings with members of the General Staff, of the Air Force Commandership and various security institutions which created a negative perception about minorities. The court requested a CD related to such seminars in 2006 from the Istanbul police. Results of the seminars at the General Staff Directorate had previously been sent to court. The court had not accepted requests for criminal complaints against the Telecommunication Communication Presidency (**TİB**), and Security officials from the Intelligence Office Directorate and the Trabzon Police; the requests were reiterated. The court declined the prosecutors request to release **Ahmet İskender** and **Ersin Yolcu**.

Lawyer **Mebuse Tekay** received death threats via electronic mail from the Turkish Revenge Brigade (**TİT**) and declared to file a criminal complaint against the organization. Tekay commented, "This is nothing to comprehend or to accept. We presented a legal application, what is therein?". The lawyer added, "Chief of General Staff **İlker Başbuğ** does not need this sort of protection". In the course of the religious holiday after the fasting month of Ramadan, Başbuğ went to the province of Mardin in the southeast of Turkey and gave a speech at the Sınırtepe Police Station. He was quoted as saying: "Especially people from this region, our citizens, including eastern Anatolia, these people support the aghas [village clan chiefs]. If we are at this point today, this is one of the basic foundations. Those who have suffered from aghas are now suffering from political and terrorist aghas. One of the basic questions is how to free our people from political and terrorist aghas". Istanbul Independent MP **Ufuk Uras** and activist **Cengiz Algan** filed a complaint against Chief of General Staff **İlker Başbuğ**. The petition was also signed by **Oya Baydar**, Baskın Oran, **Ahmet İnsel**, Mithat Sancar, **Mebuse Tekay**, Aydın Engin and **Sezgin Tanrıkulu**. The prosecutor transferred the petition to the Military Prosecutor's Office, saying that it "exceeded his authority".

On 24 September the Siirt High Criminal Court Prosecutor **Erdal Bozoğlu** requested heavy prison sentences for detained defendants **Feyzi Aldemir**, Hamit Kurt, **Feyaz Aldemir** and Tahir Aldemir over allegations of assaulting and seriously injuring journalist **Diya Yarayan**. Prosecutor Bozoğlu requested heavy prison sentences for the defendants on the grounds of a "deliberate attempt to kill a person". Upon the prosecutor's final request Bozoğlu summarized the incident, saying that on the day of the assault the police was informed about a fight in front of Selami Değer High School. The people who had injured Yarayan escaped in a car and ignored orders to stop. The car's plate could be identified. The people in the vehicle threw 2 sticks out of the rear window when they tried to escape from the scene. Bozoğlu placed on the record that the Forensic Medicine Report confirmed mortal danger for Yarayan resulting from the injuries from the assault. The court decided to hear the statements of the witnesses of the defendants. **Sedat Çakmak**, Abdulhakim Siper and **Mahmut Uğur** unanimously stated

that they did not know who assaulted the victim. This also concurred in the defendant's statements.

Owner and editor-in-chief of the Batman GAP newspaper **Mansur Obut** filed a complaint against Governor **Ahmet Turhan**. The journalist accused the governor of attacking him in his office after publishing a news article on 24 September entitled "No interest in Bayram". Bayram is the religious holiday in the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. The news item went as follows: "Especially regarding the official institutions, Ramadan Bayram has passed extremely cold and quietly. This year for the first time the celebrations happened only in the garden of the governorship and were not crowded at all. The lack of people at the celebration and people not joining the Bayram vists are a result of governor Turhan's mismanagement and his not integrating the people". Obut claimed that after the article was published he was called to the governor's office. The journalist explained, "After insulting me very badly, Turhan pushed me against the wall and started to punch me with his fists on the pit of the stomach and on the chest. He said that he would not let me lead my life in Batman and that he would give instructions to all institutions to deny entry to me and my newspaper". According to the statement from the governor's office, Obut as the president of the 'GAP Media in the Development of Social Society Press Support Association' applied for a "Women's Rights Awareness Project" called SODES. He allegedly showed this kind of behavior because the project had been found inadequate and thus was rejected by the State Planning Agency (**DPT**). The journalist replied to the governor's office's allegation by explaining that this project belongs to the previous governor's term in office.

Yakup Önal, owner of the local Sesi ('Voice') newspaper, was assaulted when he took pictures of a bus that had tipped over after an accident on 9 September. The incident happened in the Şarköy district of Tekirdağ, a city west of Istanbul. 3 bus drivers from the Istanbul Seyahat Company attacked the journalist. Önal's back was injured as a result of the assaults. The journalist complained at the district's Police Department. The journalist explained what happened after the assault: "Under the surveillance of the police I came to the emergency room of Şarköy State Hospital. Several tests were made and I was kept there for three hours under observation. Then I was taken to Tekirdağ State Hospital where I had done a tomography since the severe hits on my back could have caused inner bleeding. I was kept under observation for some more time and then was released from hospital. I cannot work right now because of the pain resulting from the assault". The bus drivers that had attacked the journalist were arrested. After having taken their statements, the public prosecutor released the aggressors.

The GAP Journalists Association condemned the attack of journalist **Ömer Pınar** from Doğan News Agency (**DHA**). On 7 August Şanlıurfa Mayor **Ahmet Eşref Fakıbaba** visited tradesmen in the Tarihi Hanlar region. Pınar expressed his compassion for the knife attack Fakıbaba had escaped and upon asking him questions about the incident, the mayor kicked the journalist. The nearby factory staff members stepped on the journalist. The Contemporary Journalists' Association (ÇGD) and the Photo Journalists Association condemned Fakıbaba's attitude towards journalists. The GAP Journalists Association criticized, "Press freedom is not a freedom only used in connection with the press and press institutions. In democratic countries the freedom of the press is perceived as the people's freedom to be informed. And in order to make free news about individuals in an age of communication, the ruling people

should claim press freedom, watch and protect it". As far as Fakıbaba was concerned he stated that the news published did not reflect reality.

Gerger Fırat newspaper owner **Hacı Boğatekin** was assaulted on 28 July when he tried to take pictures of a fire that broke out in a municipality waste dump at the edge of Gerger district in the south eastern province of Adıyaman. Newspaper owner and editor-in-chief Boğatekin was attacked by municipality staff when he wanted to take pictures of the forest fire. He underwent medical treatment in the Gerger Health Centre because of injuries in his face. Boğatekin stated that he had been assaulted by municipality personnel and mayor Arif Karatekin. The journalist's camera was damaged beyond repair. Journalist Boğatekin filed a criminal complaint against mayor Arif Karatekin and the mayor's brother İlhan Karatekin. The Gerger Fırat newspaper had published an article, entitled "**Municipality Shocked by Confiscation**", concerning a trial against the municipality launched by workers who had been made redundant without receiving compensation payments. Newspaper owner Boğatekin said that one of the attackers addressed him before the assault, "You cannot make news out of us, you cannot take our pictures". Boğatekin had been tried dozens of times for harshly criticizing the actions of the Greger officials. He served a 109 days prison sentence for being found guilty of connecting a prosecutor with the religious Fetullah Gülen movement. The Press Institute Foundation and the Press Council condemned the attack.

On 24 July the Trabzon 2nd Magistrate Criminal Court decided to launch an investigation into activities of **Yasin Hayal** from the Trabzon Province Gendarmerie Command who is tried for instigating people to the murder of Hrant Dink. Hayal is one of the defendants in the case against 8 gendarmerie officers under allegations of negligence towards the murder. Former Provincial Gendarmerie Commander Colonel **Ali Öz** and 7 un-detained soldiers did not attend the hearing. The judge decided to acquire information and documents from various institutions to obtain new information. Joint lawyer of the Dink family **Bahri Bayram Belen** stated that in case the request will be accepted, the murder could be investigated from several directions. "Colonel Öz did not say anything clear about what he did. However, it is obvious that he brought it up in the weekly or more frequent provincial security meetings with Hayal and his colleagues", Belen said. The judge demanded to disclose the names of Hayal's informants in the Gendarmerie Command of the Trabzon district of Pelitli where Hayal used to live prior to the murder. The judge decided to summon these people to court to hear their statements.

Söke Gerçek newspaper owner **Durmuş Tuna** was beaten in front of his 8-year-old daughter and 11-year-old niece by 8-10 attackers with sticks on 6 July. He suffered fractures in his right arm. The attackers ran away when they were noticed by a by-passer. The journalist underwent medical treatment in a hospital. Tuna stated to the police that he had been attacked by 7-8 people he did not know. Tuna claimed, "It is our job to write what we think is the truth. And we do that within the framework of law and democracy. For whatever reason, this attack on my person and on my profession is beyond any understanding, I am sorry". The Turkey Journalists Society (**TGC**) announced, "We are sadly observing a rising number of attacks and threats against the people and institutions that support the thriving of democracy in this country and against journalists working under very difficult conditions in the local media".

At the tenth hearing of the Dink murder trial at Istanbul's 14th Heavy Penal Court on 6 July, the court warned the Istanbul police, the Ankara Telecommunications Directorate, the Police

General Directorate and the Trabzon police to send the information requested by the joint attorneys. Defendant **Yasin Hayal**, was described as a "good guy" by the Trabzon gendarmerie, according to the statement of **Veysel Şahin**, himself detained in Malatya prison but called as a witness. The detained witness had apparently seen Hayal only once during his sporadic visits of the Trabzon Gendarmerie Command between 2003 and 2005. Şahin, who said that he himself sometimes worked as an "intelligence officer", stated that he did not know **Erhan Tuncel** who is tried under allegations of persuading others to act on his behalf. Şahin told the court that Tuncel worked for the Trabzon Gendarmerie Command lead by Colonel **Şinasias** an intelligence officer because he stayed in Chechenya and was fluent in Arabic. Şahin had been told by branch president **Feridun Yüzdaşı** about Hayal, "He is a good guy, he loves his country and nation." When Hayal was asked about Şahin's utterances, he said he did not recognize him. Tuncel requested to join a Witness Protection Program as soon as he was released since his name had been revealed which made him a target of terror organizations. **Mesme Havva**, supposedly the first person on the scene after Dink was murdered, turned to defendant Samast and said "This is probably the culprit. I cannot fully remember. Since it was winter their faces were obscured". The court decided to invite witness statements of seven people, and to force those who had been called before to come to court, namely Mithat Alkan, Ergün Çağatay, Serkan İskender, Lerna Atan, Ayşe Pamış, Şahabettin Şahin and Cemal Yıldırım. The judges further declined the demand for release of five detained defendants **Ogün Samast**, Erhan Tuncel, Yasin Hayal, **Ersin Yolcu** and **Ahmet İskender**. Ogün Samast, the young man accused of fatally shooting journalist **Hrant Dink** on 19 January 2007, threatened the Dink family and joint attorneys by saying "Only five more years...", implying that he would then be released. The eleventh hearing will take place on **12 October**. An unidentified witness will be heard, and it was demanded that the necessary technical preparations be made. Furthermore, the gun used to kill Hrant Dink will be brought to court. The court decided to again ask the Police General Directorate to send a transcript of a conference entitled "Missionary Activities in Turkey", organised by Ergenekon detained defendant **Sevgi Erenerol**. Should the directorate not comply, the court will initiate legal proceedings. The joint attorneys had also complained about **Ramazan Akyürek**, head of the Police Intelligence Unit, and his unit, for not sending the documents and reports relating to the time prior to the murder. The court decided to request the relevant documents F3, F4 and F5 again.

Ozan Kılıç, license owner and editor of the daily **Azadiya Welat** newspaper has, applied to the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecution because he has been receiving death threats via SMS messages on his mobile phone. On 18 June, he told the prosecution that he had been told via the phone that if he did not stop publishing the newspaper, his life would be in danger. He further told the prosecution that he received another message from the same number the next day, reading; "Did you get my warning? **TİT**". TİT is known to be the abbreviation of the ultranationalist Turkish Revenge Brigade, which became known after an armed attack on Akın Birdal, president of the Human Rights Association (**İHD**) in 1998. Kılıç said in his criminal complaint that the two messages have left him in fear for his life. The TİT organisation has also in the past threatened singer and activist **Ferhat Tunç**, lawyer and former İHD activist **Eren Keskin**, as well as the **İstanbul Özgür Radio**. Furthermore, in October 2008, Prof. Dr. **Baskın Oran**, former member of the Prime Ministerial Human Rights Advisory Board, had received a threatening email signed by the organisation.

Major **Metin Yıldız**, Trabzon Province Gendarmerie Command Intelligence Unit Manager, on trial for negligence in the murder of journalist **Hrant Dink**, was asked whether he had informed the police and the secret service (**MİT**) of intelligence relating to Dink. He said, "It was not clear whether the information received was true. If the source and the truth had been confirmed, I would have informed the relevant institutions... Because they were not and because they were not clear and trustworthy, I did not inform MİT or the Trabzon police intelligence unit." Yıldız made this statement at the Bolu Criminal Court of Peace on 8 June. He further said that Colonel **Ali Öz**, then Gendarmerie Regiment Commander and himself on trial for negligence, did not order any disclosure of information relating to Dink to any other intelligence units. **Hakan Bakırcıoğlu**, a lawyer for the Dink family, said that Yıldız' statement was worthless, pointing out that when Öz gave a statement to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecution on 18 November 2008, he handed over a document which outlined the authorities and responsibilities of Yıldız' position.

On 15 May, the Bursa 3rd Criminal Court of Peace heard the statement of Colonel Ali Öz, the highest-ranking of eight gendarmerie officers on trial for negligence in the murder of Hrant Dink. Öz said, "I did not receive any information that Dink was going to be killed." Following the statements of gendarmerie officers **Okan Şimşek** and **Veysel Şahin**, both also on trial, the Trabzon 2nd Criminal Court of Peace had prepared an indictment on Öz and five officers, and then decided to merge the cases. Öz has rejected accusations of negligence, saying that intelligence on a planned murder that gendarmerie informant **Coşkun İğci** spoke about did not reach him. Öz was then asked about the bomb attack on McDonald's in Trabzon in October 2004, in which later Dink murder suspect **Yasin Hayal** was involved: "Trabzon is a small place, and Yasin Hayal was known. Did you not have any information about his activities?" Öz said he did not. However, **Ramazan Akyürek**, then Trabzon Chief of Police and now head of the intelligence unit of the Police General Directorate, told the Parliamentarian Investigating Committee that he had met with the governor and Öz on a weekly basis and that Hayal had been talked about several times. When Öz was asked if he did not receive information through those channels, he said "no".

A group of hackers describing themselves as nationalist sabotaged the website of the **Günlük** newspaper, www.gunlukgazetesi.com on 14 May, publishing racist and uncouth messages on the site. Under the name "by The hacker&fatih&suskun&", the hackers caused the site to crash. Not long before, hackers had put a video clip of the song "My homeland" onto the site of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (**DTP**). Calling themselves "AYYILDIZ TEAM- Siber Savunma Ordusu" (Crescent Star Team - Cyber Defence Group), they also added a text opposing the DTP and excerpts from the Qur'an.

On 8 May, reporter **Sedat Şahinler** for the **Mahmutlar News** newspaper was attacked by **Abdullah Pişkin**, member of the AKP's municipal council in the Mahmutlar town in Alanya district, province of Antalya. Şahinler had entered the municipal building and briefly talked to Pişkin, and was later kicked by him. The attack was also recorded by municipal security cameras. The journalist said that prior to the attack, Pişkin had reminded him of an article he had written about a fight between former AKP mayor **Alaattin Çakır** and a market woman: "He said 'here, this is for what you wrote', and started to punch me. If a municipal councillor beats a journalist, how can he serve the public? I invite him to resign." Şahinler's camera was damaged and he was injured in the face, necessitating treatment in the Alanya State Hospital. He filed a criminal complaint against Pişkin.

On 6 May, the case of two gendarmerie officers on trial at the Trabzon 2nd Criminal Court of Peace for negligence in the **Hrant Dink** murder was merged with that of Gendarmerie Regiment Commander Colonel **Ali Öz** and five other gendarmerie officers. Gendarmerie Sergeant Major **Okan Şimşek** and Gendarmerie Sergeant **Veysel Şahin** have been on trial at the Trabzon court since 22 January 2008. Following their statements, Colonel Öz and five gendarmerie officers stand accused of having been warned about murder plans and not having acted on the warning. Öz and the five others face between six months and two years imprisonment. They are being tried not for "abusing their position", but for "negligence", an offence which will result in a lower sentence. The Dink family lawyers requested at the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court to accept them as defendants on the grounds of "neglect that caused death". The other five officers are from the gendarmerie intelligence unit: Captain **Metin Yıldız**, Noncommissioned officers **Gazi Günay** and **Hüseyin Yılmaz**, and Sergeants **Hacı Ömer Ünalır** and **Önder Araz**. The Trabzon court hearing was attended by Şimşek, Şahin, Ünalır and Yılmaz, all of them being tried without detention. Dink family lawyers demanded that Öz and his junior officers be tried for faking documents as well, but this demand was rejected. The four gendarmerie officers questioned at the hearing said that they had been given information by gendarmerie informant Coşkun İğci, but that they had not received any orders, despite being aware that the issue was important. Lawyers for the Dink family asked Ünalır and Yılmaz whether they were active in far-right political groups. When they asked the defendants whether extreme nationalist activities were not far-right activities, the defendants negated this. They said that far-right activities for them meant al Qaida, Hizbullah and other reactionary activities.

On Monday, 20 April, was the 9th hearing of the Hrant Dink murder case at the Istanbul 14th Heavy Penal Court. The court decided to continue the detention of suspects **Ogün Samast**, Erhan Tuncel, **Yasin Hayal**, Ersin Yolcu and **Ahmet İskender**. It rejected demands by lawyers to listen to Istanbul Chief of Police Celalettin Cerrah, former Istanbul intelligence unit head Ahmet İlhan Güler, Police General Directorate intelligence department head Ramazan Akyürek, former Trabzon Chief of Police Reşat Altay, and former Trabzon Gendarmerie Regiment Commander Colonel Ali Öz, saying that their statements would bring "nothing new to the case". The court has asked the police to transcribe a speech by Ergenekon detained suspect Sevgi Erenerol which she gave at a conference entitled "Missionary Activities in Turkey". The court also decided to take a statement from **Ertuğrul Balcı**, son of former Istanbul Chief of Police **Şükrü Balcı** and convicted of murder, based on the statements of prisoners **Volkan Eryedi**, Şinasi Erşentürk, **Veli Halis Çelik**, Orçun Cülek and **Adil Orhan**, who serve in the same prison in Silivri. The court has also accepted the demand of third party lawyers for **Murat Güneş** to be listened to as a witness. Furthermore, the court demanded a copy of the indictment on Colonel Ali Öz and the other gendarmerie officers on trial, and decided to ask the prosecutors in the Ergenekon investigation for Öz' telephone records and bank transactions again. A report by the Intelligence Department, sent to the court on 22 January 2009, yet also containing information about people not in the trial, was included in the proceedings by judge **Rüstem Eryılmaz**. The court further called Assoc. Prof. **Yavuz Tekelioğlu** of the Black Sea Technical University to attend the court as a witness concerning the relationship between Erhan Tuncel, accused of being an instigator to the murder, and **Ercüment Ovalı**. The court has also renewed its demand for reports on the physical pursuit of Yasin Hayal when he went to different provinces, among them Van, Elazığ and Erzurum. It has also demanded msn and email transcripts of the communications of Erhan Tuncel between 1 January 2006 and 20 January 2007 from Microsoft. Following the demand

by third party lawyers, the court has also asked the Ankara Telecommunications Directorate to identify the users of three mobile phone numbers at the time of the murder and to list the numbers that called or were called.

On 11 April, far-right Great Union Party (**BBP**) Istanbul youth branch chair **Mustafa Kayatuzu** physically attacked Taraf daily columnist **Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı**. During a television show the journalist mentioned BBP leader Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu's involvement in the Maraş massacre. Yazıcıoğlu died in a recent helicopter accident. Kütahyalı was leaving a talk show at Kanal 7 when Kayatuzu attacked him. He fainted and was taken to a hospital. Following a complaint Kayatuzu faces legal action. Kütahyalı's lawyer **Ergin Cinmen** argues that this assault should be taken as "an attempt to debar someone from expressing political or philosophical ideas" as described in Article 115 and 117 of the Penal Code. If accepted by the court, this crime carries a heavier penalty than sole physical assault. Kayatuzu said he was sorry after attacking Kütahyalı. The columnist said he knew Kayatuzu previously and received a blow as he was greeting him after the TV show.

Yasin Hayal, a suspected instigator of the **Hrant Dink** murder in 2007, has been tried for the second time in the case regarding the bombing of a **McDonald's** branch in Trabzon in 2004. On 9 April, the Trabzon 1st Heavy Penal Court sentenced Hayal to three years and four months imprisonment, as well as a TL 183 fine, for his involvement in the bombing that injured six people. The **Northern Express** newspaper in Trabzon reported on its website that Hayal had not been brought to the hearing from the prison in Tekirdağ, western Turkey, where he is currently held. The judges found Hayal guilty of using explosives in a way that spread fear, worry and panic among people, of injuring six people by throwing an explosive, and of damaging a person's car with explosives. After the bombing on 24 October 2004, Hayal had been arrested. On 17 April 2006, he had been imprisoned to a total of six years and eight months imprisonment for making an explosive, injuring people and damaging the environment. However, he was released from prison after 11 months. The 8th Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals had approved the punishment for producing an explosive, but had reevaluated the punishment given for injury and damage to the environment.

Lawyer and writer **Hüseyin Aygün** filed a criminal complaint with the Tunceli Chief Public Prosecution on 7 April, saying that a video entitled "Famous Informants of Dersim" on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and news items on the websites [rojamunzur.com](https://www.rojamunzur.com) and [neweddersim.com](https://www.neweddersim.com) were insulting to him and his family. The former president of the Tunceli Bar Association believes that he has been targeted because he supported independent candidate Murat Kur and not the DTP in the local elections of 29 March.

The second indictment in the Ergenekon investigation, published on 25 March, speaks of retired general **Veli Küçük** as the "person pressing the button" in the Hrant Dink assassination. This information is based on notes said to have been written by **Sinan Aygün**, president of the Ankara Chamber of Commerce and an undetained suspect in the Ergenekon trial. A person only identified as "X" is said to have been in contact with Küçük since 1978 and points to Küçük as having planned an attack on Dink for a long time. The indictment of the cases filed on charges of "membership of an illegal organization" mentions that the text written by Aygün includes "Section 5: Assassinations-Hrant Dink, State Council" on "targets and strategies of gangs". In the notes, the person with the code name "X" refers to Veli

Küçük's playing a role in Hrant Dink's murder saying that Dink "had been targeted by Veli Küçük for years, that he was an important and influential figure who had been killed. The button was pressed by the same person once more and nothing more had to be written on the topic since everything was clear". **Fethiye Çetin**, lawyer for the Dink family, says that the statements in the indictment are not legally sufficient to solve the murder. Rather, the suspects' relations to the murder need to be investigated. She announced that they would make all the relevant applications to court.

The Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecution has reopened the case into the murder of Kurdish journalist **Musa Anter** seventeen years ago, following statements by former JİTEM member **Abdülkadir Aygan**, now living in Sweden. The prosecution has issued warrants of arrest for the JİTEM members said to be involved in the murder. After Turkey has renewed its demand for Aygan to be extradited to Turkey, the Swedish government has asked the Ministry of Justice's General Directorate for International Law and Foreign Affairs for the reason of the demand. The Ministry then cited the arrest warrant for Aygan issued by the Diyarbakır prosecution. His previous statements make him a suspected perpetrator and witness in many extrajudicial killings, including that of Anter. His extradition, so the ministry, would allow other perpetrators to be identified and for cases to be solved before they reach a statute of limitations. Police and gendarmerie departments in all of Turkey's provinces have ordered the arrest of **Mahmut Yıldırım**, **Cemil Işık**, **Ali Ozansoy** and **Hamit Yıldırım**, all suspected of involvement in the murder. The prosecution has started an investigation into the PKK informants-turned JİTEM members **Cemil Işık**, **Ali Ozansoy**, **Abdulkadir Aygan**, **Hamit Yıldırım**, and **Mahmut Yıldırım** (code name "Green"), as well as into JİTEM commander Major **Ahmet Cem Ersever**, who was himself killed in an unsolved murder in Ankara in 1993. Aygan has announced that he will resist extradition to Turkey. "If I cannot prevent it, I will kill myself. I prefer to join my family in a grave to going to Turkey and being killed there."

Emin Bal, reporter for the **DHA** news agency, says that he was threatened by village guards related to AKP candidate **Kamil Durmuş**, who lost the local elections in the Beytüşşebap district of Şırnak, specifically **Reşit Durmuş**, brother of the candidate and leader of the guards, as well his sons and other relatives who were also village guards. Bal notified the police by telephone. He said, "As members of the press, we cover everything we see, be it positive or negative. Unfortunately those who cannot stomach their loss and who trust their village guard weapons can approach those carrying out their journalistic duties with arrogance and target us personally."

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) supports a request which the family and lawyers of slain Turkish- Armenian journalist **Hrant Dink** have addressed to an Istanbul court asking it to seriously consider the possibility that the clandestine ultranationalist group **Ergenekon** was involved in Dink's January 2007 murder. The court is trying a group of men accused of the murder and is due to hold its next hearing on 20 April. "The court must examine the links that may have existed between certain Ergenekon members and Dink's murderers," Reporters Without Borders said. "If the court takes account of this evidence, the trial could enter a new phase that could lead to an impartial verdict in the weeks ahead."

On 1 April, members of the **Istanbul Students' Collective** were handing out information about a planned protest in front of the Greater Istanbul Municipality. They were then attacked

by a group which called itself "religious". One of the five injured students had to be taken to hospital. The attacked students told **bianet** that they were handing out information about a planned protest the day before when they were threatened by a group of self-labelled "religious" people. The threatening group had taken issue with a sentence in the flyer, which read, "The sects and religious communities of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) have created reactionary attitudes in society." The Turkish Communist Party (TKP) condemned the attack in a written statement.

Fırat Akyol, TV reporter for the local **Tempo** channel in Giresun, was attacked in front of the district building of the AKP, which lost the local municipal elections. It was alleged that the attackers were party members. Akyol was reporting to the TV channel by phone about the mood at different party headquarters when he was hit in his face and on his head. He was taken to hospital. He said that he had been attacked by a big group of people, and that AKP mayor Hürşit Yüksel's official driver Alpaslan had said "Stop, don't do it" just before he was beaten. Police officers and some AKP members made efforts to protect him.

The second indictment of the Ergenekon trial, accepted by the Istanbul 13th High Criminal Court on 25 March, writes about the notebook of suspect **Yüksel Dilsiz**, in which, on page 167, is a list of handwritten names: "Doğan Güreş, Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu, **Hrant Dink**, B...G Aydın Doğan, former Air Forces Commander, Veli Küçük, K and =R". The indictment says that Dilsiz wrote the notes as part of the organisation's actions and that the list contains names of "Chiefs of staff, a murdered journalist, force commanders, businessmen and members of the Ergenekon terrorist organisation." The indictment writes about defendant **Levent Temiz** that he took part in a protest meeting organised by the nationalist Great Lawyers' Union at the Beyoğlu court on 21 September 2006, on "the threat of military occupation and splintering due to the Global Great Middle East Project". At the meeting, threats were expressed against writers, including Hrant Dink. Temiz, the former district president of the ultranationalist Ülkü Ocakları organisation in Üsküdar, had shouted during a protest in front of Dink's Agos newspaper on 26 February 2004: "Hrant Dink, from now on you are the target of all our anger and hatred." Several other defendants are named in relation to Hrant Dink.

Kanal D reporter **İbrahim Gündüz** and Star TV reporter **Özden Erkuş** were attacked at the Atatürk Sportshall in Ankara when they wanted to cover a meeting by the trade union of municipal and general services workers (Belediye-İş) on 25 March. The journalists said they had been targeted by a group of people loyal to Melih Gökçek, then mayor of Metropolitan Ankara and AKP candidate for the same post again. The reporters said that while they had tried to argue with a person telling them to leave, 15 to 20 people walked over to them and, beating them, threw them out of the building.

On 24 March, writer **Latife Tekin** was assaulted by several people at a panel organised by the Gümüşlük Environment and Education Foundation in the Bodrum district of Muğla. Tekin wanted to ask a question about the nationalisation of land in relation to excavations in Myndos, but some people tried to get her thrown out of the discussion. According to Berrin Esin Kaya, spokesperson of the Aegean Environment and Culture Platform (ECEÇEP), Tekin's "crime" was "to feel responsibility for the antique city of Myndos, that is, our cultural heritage. Just like those who support the protection of Alliano and Hasankeyf, she has become the target of profit makers."

On 23 March, the Turkey Journalists' Society (TGC) condemned an utterance made by Metropolitan Ankara mayor **Melih Gökçek** during an election campaign speech. Referring to two well-known journalists, he had said, "After the elections, I swear, I will make **Mehmet Ali Birand** and **Uğur Dündar** uncomfortable in Turkey." The TGC expressed its worry at the accusations against media organs and journalists, which recently had turned into threats. Ahmet Abakay of the Contemporary Journalists' Association (ÇGD) called on prosecutors to act in the face of this "petty crime". Uğur Dündar, Star News Group president, said that he had been threatened openly. He said, "If anything happens to me, Melih Gökçek is responsible."

Show TV reporters **Ediz Alç** and **Rengin Gültekin**, as well as cameraman **Kadir Puslu**, were attacked by a group when they tried to cover a protest by the Democratic Society Party (DTP) in Adana's Dağlıoğlu neighbourhood. Their cameras were broken and they were treated in hospital. They underwent a forensic medical examination and filed complaints against the assailants. The Çukurova Journalists' Society condemned the attacks.

It has been claimed that Mersin MP Prof. Dr. Akif Akkuş of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) called **Cemal Dolaşmaz**, president of the Tarsus Journalists' Society and the editor of the **Tarsus Merhaba** newspaper, and threatened him. It is said that Akkuş called Dolaşmaz after the publication of a column on 23 February 2009 and said: "Your surname is Dolaşmaz [meaning 'does not stroll around'], and I will make sure you cannot walk around Tarsus." The journalist filed a criminal complaint.

At the eighth hearing of the Hrant Dink murder trial on 26 January, three detained defendants were released: Tuncay Uzundal, Mustafa Öztürk and Zeynel Abidin Yavuz. The next hearing was set for 20 April.

On 17 February, the Trabzon 2nd High Criminal Court decided that Gendarmerie Regiment Commander Colonel **Ali Öz** and five other officers, accused of negligence in not preventing the murder of journalist Hrant Dink despite being warned that his life was in danger, should be tried not at a High Criminal Court but at a criminal court of peace. They will be tried not for "abusing their position" but for "negligence of duty". Judge Şevki Uluçam of the Trabzon 2nd Criminal Court of Peace had argued that there was a more serious crime involved and had sent the file to the 3rd Criminal Court of Peace, which had rejected the argument. On objection, the file had come to the 2nd High Criminal Court.

On the anniversary of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's capture, reporters **Meral Özdemir** (Anadolu Ajansı), **Mahmut Bozarıslan** (NTV) and **Mehmet Emek** (Habertürk) were attacked when covering protests in Diyarbakır in the middle of February.

Diya Yarayan, owner of the local Birlik newspaper in Siirt, was seriously wounded after being attacked by four people with face masks and sticks in front of his home in the night of 17 February. His wife said that he was beaten severely and then left lying in the street. He was initially kept in the intensive care unit. She believes that he was attacked for his journalistic activities. The journalist believes that Siirt mayor **Mervan Gül** is responsible: "When he was not put forward as candidate again, he took his revenge like this, I believe." He asked for support for his independent line of reporting. Reportedly, Gül's press advisor Diyaddin Temiz

rejected the accusations, expressing the good relations the mayor had with the press and their shock at the attack.

Lawyers filed a criminal complaint against the state **TRT 1** channel and a production company for a documentary in which **Ökkeş Şendiller**, accused by some of being a planner of the Maraş massacre in 1979, was allowed to show murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink as the person responsible for the massacre. The programme, entitled "**Labyrinths of Shahs**" was broadcast on 24 December 2008. The lawyers submitted their complaint on 11 February, arguing that Dink was accused without basis, insulted and defamed. The lawyers demand compensation from the TRT General Directorate, the production company making the film and Şendiller, a defendant in the Maraş massacre trial. Şendiller said, "There was no conflict between Alevis and Sunnis. There were leftist organisations founded by Hrant Dink and his friends who were involved. Hrant Dink and his friends' organisations did these things. Anyway, how were the bodies of 6-7 uncircumcised men who died there related to Alevis and Sunnis?" The Haber-Sen trade union condemned the words, and demanded that TRT general director İbrahim Şahin apologise.

Following the report of the Prime Ministerial Review Committee, the Ministry of the Interior decided to reopen the examination into Trabzon police chief **Ramazan Akyürek** and **Ali Fuat Yılmaz**, then intelligence branch director in relation to **Hrant Dink's** murder. Deniz Tuna, joint attorney in the murder trial, said that lawyers were not being informed of administrative procedures and only found out about issues when writing letters to the ministry. She warned that if the joint attorneys were again not involved, a reexamination would not find anything new.

A group of around 15 people entered the office of the **Bizim Kocaeli** newspaper and vandalised the office in reaction to a news item entitled "Shooting in Suadiye". The attackers overturned furniture, threw chairs, broke windows and doors and then disappeared. The police started an investigation and identified the attackers with security camera recordings. The assailants were taken to court on 2 February. Editor **İlker Akşit** said that their dissident publications sometimes met with such attacks. "We then file our complaints. But we have heard that the prosecution released the last attackers."

On 30 January, some AKP supporters attacked journalists when Prime Minister Erdoğan opened a new subway station in Istanbul. Following his criticism of the media, the crowd shouted, "Say shoot, we will shoot. Say die, we will die." Some of them then punched the journalists present, others threw the sticks of their flags at them. Around 70 journalists faced such attacks. **Oktay Ekşi**, president of the Press Council and editor for the **Hürriyet** newspaper condemned the attack and said that the PM's hostile attitude had caused the attack.

The **G-9 platform** of journalistic organisations has condemned the call of PM Erdoğan to boycott certain media institutions, saying that it was "inacceptable to target newspapers, journalists and readers." On 27 January, Erdoğan had said, "What happens is different from what they write and say. They say the same at meetings in Brussels, that we censor the media. No, we don't censor the media, this is not true. But I say, let's use some civil initiative. What does that mean?"