

NEWSLETTER

Editor In Chief: Ahmet Dirican Editor of Turkish Weekly: Duygu Guvenc Contributors: Göksel Bozkurt, Erdal Saglam, Mehtap Belen **GET IN TOUCH** 







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## MAR 16-22 WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

2020

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### **MEASURES TIGHTENED IN PRISONS AFTER COVID-19**

A campaign for the release of political prisoners launched in social media. HDP Deputy Omer Faruk Gergerlioglu alleged that inmates in Edirne Open Prison are quarantined, stressing that there are more than 2 thousand 500 people.

Gergerlioglu called for their release. Edirne Republican Prosecutordenied these claims stating that such news don't reflect the truth. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir said, "Concerned by new measures, linked to COVID19, limiting contact between imprisoned journalists and their families to a weekly 10 minutes phone call in Turkey. I call on authorities to allow these journalists, who should never have been detained, and to reunite with families in this period."

### 19 DETAINED ABOUT PROVOCATIVE INFORMATION SHARING ABOUT COVID 19

Nineteen people above 93 suspects are taken under custody for sharing "unfounded and provocative information" in social media about coronavirus. Some claimed that Turkey would declare a curfew, and some others alleged that the government is not taking necessary measures against that virus. The interior ministry statement said the social media posts which were targeting officials and spreading panic and fear by suggesting that the virus had spread widely in Turkey and that officials had not taken sufficient measures aimed to target the institutions and the officials.

### ONLY 45 PERCENT TRUST TO GOVERNMENT ON CORONAVIRUS

The recent survey showed that only 45 percent believe the Ministry of Health is taking adequate measures, and only 45 percent believe that health institutions are sharing accurate information with the public, according to a survey by KONDA. The government aims to create a positive perception in public on Turkey's fight against Coronavirus and usually highlights its success. The survey showed that 97 percent is aware of the virus, but only 55 percent are applying necessary measures in their daily life. 91.4 percent thinks, the ones older than 64 should not leave their homes, another survey by Andy Ar showed.







DOMESTIC POLITICS

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### THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MAYORS IN TURKEY

The performance of the mayors in the districts of big cities showed that CHP mayors are the most successful ones. Among 12 mayors, in the districts of big cities, 9 is ruled by CHP, 2 is by AKP, and 1 is by MHP. The mayor of the Cukurova district of Adana, Soner Cetin, is found successful by 76,5 percent while the mayor of Karatay district in Konya is the second.

### POLICE PROTECTION IN MOSQUES TO DISSUADE THE PRAYERS

Directorate of Religious Affairs suspended collective worship in mosques and masjids due to the fight against COVID19. A religious government, under the leadership of Erdogan, for the first time, took measures to deter the prayers. The police took security measures to prevent the entrance of the prayer to the mosques. It is a critical step since Erdogan has been blaming CHP for banning azan.

### HEALTH MINISTER WINKLES AN EXCEPTION FOR THE CORONA EXPERT

Minister of Health is expected to meet with the Covid expert, Mustafa Ulasli, who prepared a thesis on Coronavirus during his doctorate. Ulasli was dismissed by the decree-law issued after the coup attempt. HDP lawmaker O. Faruk Gergerlioglu said Minister of Health, Fahrettin Koca, gave positive signals during their phone conversation, and Koca is presumed to meet with Ulasli on Monday.

### THE LAST ASSYRIAN COUPLE IN THEIR VILLAGE FOUND DEATH

Hurmuz and Simoni Diril, a couple, who was living in the village of Meer in district Beytüşşebap of Şırnak province, the last remaining Assyrian people in their town was kidnapped on January 11th. Their son Remzi DİRİL, a priest in the Catholic Chaldean Church in Istanbul, said most probably her body drifted to the brook, and he thinks his father is also killed.







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### MAR 16-22 2020 WEEKLY NEWSLETTER **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### JIHADISTS ARE THE ENEMY OF TURKISH SOLDIERS FROM NOW ON

After the Turkish-Russian ceasefire agreement in Idlib, for the first time, the Ministry of Defense announced that Turkish troops are attacked by "some radical groups," and two Turkish soldiers died. The writer stresses that the attack shows, the first joint Turkish-Russian patrol along M4 highway in Muhanbel is interrupted. Then the writer mentions that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham(HTS) is fighting with another group named Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaeda affiliate since it doesn't want any other power in the region. The article alleges that the US is a supporter of HTS, referring to the statements of James Jeffrey, Special Representative of the U.S. since he said the priority of other radical groups in Idlib is to fight against the

Calling Ebu Muhammed el-Cevlani as the leader of HTS, the writer refers to his interview with Aljazeera in 2015, where he said, "We will never target the US and the West" and guestions how he was released from Bucca prison.

### AFTER THE QUARTET'S TELECONFERENCE, TURKEY CLOSED THE WESTERN BORDER

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a teleconference with leaders of France, Germany, and Britain. Soon after the quartet teleconference, Turkey announced the closure of borders with Bulgaria and Greece due to coronavirus, which was opened on February 28 due to migration crises. Erdogan abstained from giving photos after the spread of coronavirus, and his photos during the teleconference was shared with the public after a week. Those photos also showed the importance of that teleconference for Erdogan since all the high-level officials attended. But the opposition criticized the attendance of AKP Spokesman since he is not a public servant.

### **RUSSIA EXPECTS SECOND CONTRACT FOR S-400 SYSTEMS**

Head of Russia's Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation Dmitry Shugayev said Turkey and Russia might sign a contract for the second regiment set of S-400 systems. Shugayev said, "I believe we will conclude the second contract in the foreseeable future" and added that talks continue on the composition, transfer, and other issues of the system. He stressed that the second contract is still on the table.

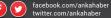
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### A BILLIONAIRE AND PARTNER OF ERDOGAN'S FAMILY IS ARRESTED

Mubariz Mansimov Gurbanoglu, an Azeri billionaire who holds Turkish citizenship, is arrested for being a member of FETO. The columnist stresses that Gurbanoglu is an oligarch and has 270 ships in Palmali. Besides, he owns half of TEKFEN, one of the biggest Construction Company in Turkey. The writer stresses that Gurbanoglu's company was renting tankers to Erdogan's son Bilal Erdogan, his uncle Mehmet Erdogan, and his brother in law Ziya Ilgen. Then he reminds that CHP Chair Kilicdaroglu was addressing this relationship when he shared the Panama corruption files. Then the writer reminds the relationship between Gurbanoglu and Mehmet Agar, former Interior Minister before the AKP ruling. Agar is known as 'a man of deep state' and has close ties with AKP. Besides, his son is a lawmaker in AKP.

### **DOGAN HOLDING RETURNS BANKING SECTOR**

Dogan Holding, a former media conglomerate forced to sell the media companies including Hurriyet and CNN Turk, is returning to the banking sector. Dogan Holding sold Disbank in 2005 but its recent application to the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK) for the establishment of 'D Investment Bank,' approved and aforementioned approval published in the Official Gazette. The company will have a share of 99.99% in the initial capital of 200,000,000 Turkish liras.







### PART OF THE MEDIA STARTED WORKING FROM HOME

Turkey launched a campaign to stay at home. Most of the media companies started working from home. Demiroren, Turkuaz, and Fox TV asked the journalists to work from home instead of office if they don't have any duty in the company. Turk Medya and Dogus group, on the other hand, continue working from home. Segregation is imposed on cameramen and correspondents in CNN Turk. They are forbidden to enter the

### HAJJIS ESCAPE FROM QUARANTINE

A group of hajjis who just returned from Umrah tried to escape from quarantine. While the opposition criticizes the government for giving permission to Umrah despite the threats of coronavirus, the ones who just returned are quarantined in a dormitory. A group of hajjis from Erzurum tried to escape from quaran-tine by renting a bus but caught by the police on their way in Corum. Other hajjis quarantined in the dormi-tories also protested the conditions and tried to

### A BOOK IS DECLARED HARMFUL AFTER 24 YEARS

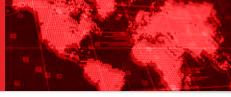
A council responsible for protecting the kids against harmful issues declared the book "The most naked of the month" harmful after 24 years. The book written by Buket Uzener declared harmful upon the application of Gebze Chief Prosecutor, according to the decision published in the official gazette. From now on, the book can only be sold in a bag or envelope.





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### THE UNWELCOMED IN THE COORDINATION MEETING

The writer questions the invitees and uninvited to the coordination meeting on the fight against the novel coronavirus chaired by Erdogan. First, he reminds the readers that the Turkish Medical Association (TTB, which is known to be critical about Afrin Operation, is not invited to the meeting. Besides, Erdogan didn't invite the opposition parties to the coordination meeting, although AKP officials were invited. The meeting took place in Cankaya Palace rather than Bestepe. The columnist questions the attitude since it is against the aim of creating national solidarity while fighting with coronavirus.

### DOES BAHCELI ADDRESSES A NEW TERM BY STATING 'NOT THE TIME TO TURN ONE'S BACK'

Reminding the words of MHP Chair Bahceli on the global fight against Covid 19, the writer stresses that it is not common for a nationalist party leader to give unity messages. Since Bahceli mentioned that the world was entering a different political climate and called for embracing one another, the columnist claims that his words are not merely for giving support to AKP but should be read as a message for all the society. Then he asks if Bahceli will give support to the opposition for the release of political prisoners during the amendment of the law to enable the release of more than 1thousand inmates or will he shake the hands of CHP Chair Kilicdaroglu which he refused a week ago.









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