

TO THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**We reject your futile efforts to smear Gezi!
Gezi is this land's hope for equality, freedom and justice.**

The Gezi Resistance is one of the brightest and most honourable pages in our country's social, urban or democratic history, and its legitimacy on a constitutional basis has been placed on record with previous court rulings. Now, with an unlawful and untruthful bill of indictment, an attempt is being made to smear the Gezi Resistance, to depict its basic demands for rights as elements of crime, to distort the historical and legitimate truth of peaceful resistance, and once more, to put Gezi on trial.

An irrational bill of indictment, inspired entirely by conspiracy theories and with no basis in factual evidence has been prepared by the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, and was accepted in the past week by the Istanbul 30th Heavy Penal Court: This is an attempt to rewrite the history of Gezi.

We reject your futile efforts to smear Gezi! It was we who lived Gezi, and we know this well: Gezi is this land's hope for equality, freedom and justice.

So let us repeat: Gezi constitutes one of the most brilliant and most honourable pages in our country's social history. In contrast to your desperate claims, it had neither an internal or external chief, leader, instructor, top organization or bankroller! It was the absence of all such things that made Gezi what it is. We will not allow you to recast the Gezi Resistance as an action associated with crime, terror, coups or insurrections.

Society and public opinion have paid no heed to such impositions on perception that have continued systematically since June 2013. Besides, the fact that the Gezi Resistance took place on a perfectly legitimate and constitutional basis and within the framework of democratic rights and freedom of expression has been placed on record with previous court rulings.

Despite all these clear facts, 16 people are being tried - facing aggravated life imprisonment and a series of additional sentences -, forming the final example showing that the judiciary in our country has become a mere agency charged with serving the government's survival.

Academics who have demanded peace are being tried and sentenced for carrying out propaganda of a terror organization; lawyers who perform their professional and constitutional duty are being jailed under unimaginable accusations to silence them; journalist seeking the truth are declared terrorists under baseless accusations and no evidence, and we know very well why: This government is an enemy of critical views and voices, and is aware of the deep disquiet its failing policies have created across society.

It is precisely for this reason that those who should actually be held accountable for what happened during the Gezi Resistance are listed as Claimants and Complainants in this bill of indictment. Those who ordered the extraordinary police violence that led to the death of tens of our friends, tens of our friends

losing their eyes, and thousands of them being injured; and also those who protected the forces that implemented this violence should be the real defendants in the Gezi case.

Those who, rather than lending an ear to the rightful and legitimate demands of citizens expressed in all corners of the country at peaceful actions; chose to use the state's judiciary to suppress democratic demands and to create an enemy out of a certain section of society should be the real defendants in the Gezi case.

Below is our own assessment of this bill of indictment, which completely reverses universal legal norms, does not even respect the most basic legal norms, and in the absence of concrete evidence, uses a set of expressions like "it has been understood that", "it has been assessed that", and "it has been evaluated that" to make its claims.

"It has been understood that" those who have counted, down to the last splinter, the number of broken car windshields, have overlooked the lives we lost due to disproportionate police violence.

"It has been understood that" the number of damaged rubbish containers have been thoroughly recorded, yet our tens of friends who lost their eyes because of tear gas canisters directly targeted at them have been overlooked.

"It has been understood" from the manner in which the authors of this bill of indictment have listed, page after page, tapped telephone conversation transcripts that form the basis to nothing other than the revelation of private lives, that their aim is to serve certain unlawful purposes.

"It has been understood that" the authors of this bill of indictment aim not only to smear the past, but also to cast a shadow on our shared future.

The saddest aspect of it all is that, this entirely baseless bill of indictment, which makes a mockery of justice with its completely imagined accusations, will once again ruin the reputation of a judiciary that has already lost its credibility in the eyes of society.

This bill of indictment, which extracts, from a bee-culture-map, 'a plan to divide the country'; perceives the purchase of pastries and sandwiches for people in the park as 'bankrolling the resistance'; creates 'external powers' from tourists visiting Antalya for holidays; and interprets the act of giving flowers to police officers on duty at Gezi Park as 'an attempt to overthrow the government', could have been described as comical, if it had not taken hostage the freedom of the people it targets as suspects, and threatened them with aggravated life imprisonment. However, it is a historical responsibility to provide all these accusations with the most serious response.

Let us not forget that, in this court case, in the image of 16 people, it is in fact millions of citizens who are being placed on trial: The millions who took part in Gezi in 80 cities across our country, and strengthened democracy by using their constitutional rights.

So, against those who have come up with all types of irrational news reports, slander and defamation in that world of lies they created to support the government, we invite every single one of our citizens to read the 657-page-bill-of-indictment in full.

The Istanbul 30th Heavy Penal Court accepted this bill of indictment on 4 March 2019, and declared 24-25 June 2019 as the date for the first hearing. This irrational and unlawful bill of indictment must immediately be withdrawn, and Mehmet Osman Kavala and Yiğit Aksakođlu, who have been held pending trial on the basis of these fictionalized accusations, must be released immediately.

We, Taksim Solidarity, will continue to resolutely stand behind our demands set during our first meeting held in February 2012, our reaction displayed when the trees were cut down and our tents were burned down in Gezi Park, our stance calling to account the police violence that took the lives of our young friends, and the demands for freedom, democracy and a humane life of millions of people who took to parks, squares and streets during the resistance.

In the face of those who seek to suppress the truth and to distort history using the police, judiciary and the media, we will continue to shout out the facts. We know that if democracy is to come to this country one day, it will draw power from Gezi's egalitarian, libertarian and peaceful togetherness. You may put millions of people on trial, but you will never destroy the truth.

We will never allow you to recast the Gezi Resistance as an action associated with crime, terror, coups or insurrections.

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