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# University in the News

## V-CRIME AND CRIMINALIZATION

2021

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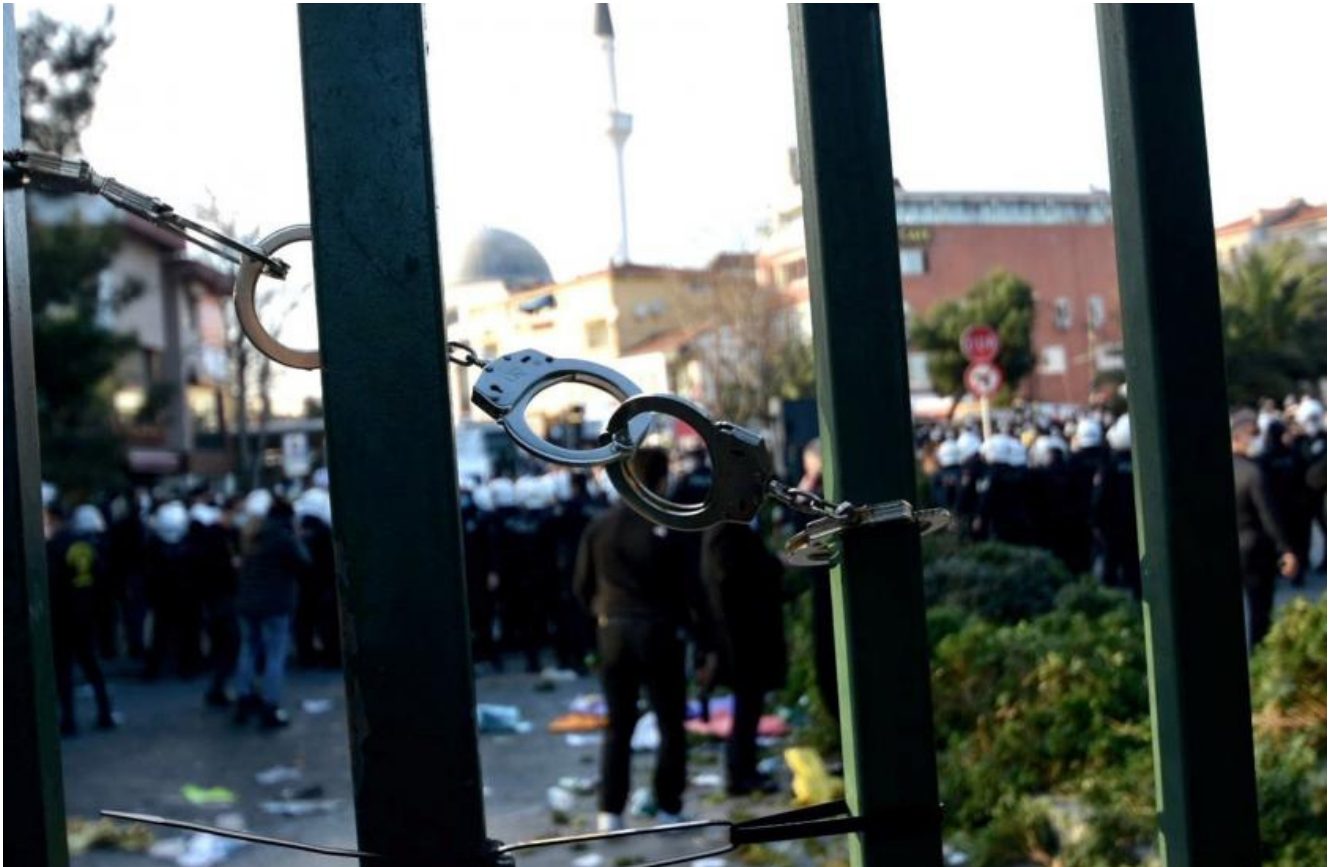


Photo Credit: Behram Evlice

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# 1. Introduction

We present the fifth of the reports we prepared on news about student activism under the title of crime and criminalization. Criminalization is one of the prominent strategies used in the process of labeling and stigmatizing undesirable, discriminated, and assumed troublesome social segments. In the broader and more comprehensive meaning of the word, “power” criminalizes and punishes certain acts and their actors. What is a crime and who is a criminal is determined in proportion to the degree of democracy in the political atmosphere. In Turkey and in similar authoritarian systems, the cluster of crime and criminals is expanding. These systems treat a series of actions that would be otherwise considered as the exercise of the most basic human rights: rights and actions such as expression of thought, assembly and peaceful action as crimes.

The issue of crime and criminalization, which we have occasionally covered in previous reports, deserves to be the subject of a separate report due to its prevalence and impact. Because the media and news again play an important role in drawing the discursive distinction between the “normal” and the “abnormal”, and the “legal” and the “illegal”.

In the analyzes we made for this part of our report, we observed that almost all the elements that students use to express themselves in news about student activism, especially in protests, are reflected in the news as criminal elements. These are accompanied by crimes that are invented or, in other words, fabricated.

The news reports associate student protest anthems with all sorts of terrorist organizations, and referred to as “terrorism”. This term is also often used together with political discourses that have not been fact-checked. While slogans are defined as a “crime”, rainbow flags are criminalized, amounting to hate speech against the LGBTI+s.

In our fifth report on student activism, we closely examined the patterns of crime and criminalization in the news.

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## 2. The Scope and the Methodology of the Research

We prepare “University in the News” reports by scanning for news about student activism in *A Haber*, *Akşam*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Takvim*, *Sabah*, *Akit Tv* and *Yeni Akit* between January 4 and March 31.

In our first report, in which we examined Boğaziçi protests, we analyzed 353 news stories and *observed examples of systematic criminalization* of students in the news. The definition of the students through the words “found to have committed the crimes” and “suspect” and a reflection of the protests and the anthems played during the demonstrations as “criminal elements” are examples of this criminalization.

Of 86 news pieces we analyzed in our report on LGBTI+ students, 65 include hate speech, and most of these articles criminalize LGBTI+s and the LGBTI+ flag.

Crime and criminalization are involved in our third report on “Imprisoned Students”, with the emphasis that the detainees are not actually students and that the students “are affiliated with terrorism”.

Our fourth report, in which we focus on the discourses of politicians in the news, draws attention to the fact that the direct quotation of politicians’ words constitutes a basis for criminalization.

When it comes to student activism, it is revealed in our previous reports that crime and criminalization are a predominant element in the news. In this report, we applied discourse analysis to the news that we think represents the general pattern, including examples of crime and criminalization.

We observed that along with the anthems sung, slogans chanted, banners carried during the protests, rainbow flags are also included in the news as a “criminal element”.

## 3. Analyses of the News

### 3.1. “Criminal Elements” and invented “crimes”

#### 3.1.1. Anthems



- *“‘Bella Ciao’ anthem at the rector’s protest at Boğaziçi University. The students protesting the appointment of Melih Bulu as the rector to Boğaziçi University by the presidential decree, including many terrorist organization militants, chanted “killer police” slogans in their protest in Kadıköy and sang the Italian communist anthem “Bella Ciao”. (Yeni Akit, 6.1.2021)*

The reporting on anthems and songs sung in demonstrations are frequent examples of criminalizing students. In the news titled *“‘Bella Ciao’ anthem at the rector’s protest at Boğaziçi University”*, many elements from anthems to slogans are linked to crime.

The first thing that draws the reader’s attention is *“Bella Ciao”*, which is also included in the title. The Italian protest anthem *Bella Ciao* is sang with Turkish lyrics in many protests in Turkey. Perhaps the only occasion where the anthem was the subject of direct accusation was in the demonstration in 2020, when it was played over a mosque loudspeaker. The charges of *“publicly insulting religious values”* were brought to those detained in connection with the protest. It is portrayed as part of the criminal element in the protests of Boğaziçi University.

The anthem in the title of the news is also emphasized in the spotlight and content. The phrase *“Bella Ciao sang”*, repeated five times throughout the news story, gives the impression that singing this anthem is a crime.

In addition to this anthem, the work titled “Banners in Hands” by Ruhi Su is also criminalized in this news piece. The work dated 1977 is attributed to the terrorist organization founded in 1994, under the subheading “They danced a halay with DHKP-C anthems” in the news involves these expressions: “Students attacking the police in front of the school, throwing what they find, danced a halay with terrorist organization DHKP-C anthems, singing the lyrics ‘the slingshots in their hands, children shooting’”

The sentence “Students danced to Metallica waving LGBT flags in the university today” in an article with the same title also demonstrates that the type of music and lyrics do not make much difference in terms of criminalization. This sentence alone creates the perception that dancing with rainbow flags listening to Metallica would be a “crime.”

### DHKP-C marşlarıyla halay çektiler

Okul önünde polislere saldıran, eline geçirdiklerini fırlatan öğrenciler 'ellerinde sapanlar, vuruyor çocuklar' sözlerinin yer aldığı terör örgütü 'DHKP-C marşlarıyla halay çekti.



Öğrenciler bugün de okul içerisinde LGBT bayrakları ile metallica eşliğinde dans etti.

- [\(Yeni Akit, 6.1.2021\)](#)

### 3.1.2. "Terrorism"

Another criminalizing title mentioned together with anthems in the news analyzed is "terrorism". The definition of "terrorist" referring to students appears in 29 of 75 news stories we examined about the protests. While this definition is intended to be supported with anthems and slogans, in fact, the statements of official sources and politicians often provide a basis for this criminalization. The language blaming the students is repeated, especially the statements of Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu as "the detainees are members of the terrorist organization" is contained in the news article without being fact-checked.



- **Newsflash: Bogaziçi University statement from Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu: Detainees are members of a terrorist organization. According to the breaking news, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu said, "(Detentions at Boğaziçi University) 79 of those detained are members of terrorist organizations, including DHKP/C, TKP-ML. Now they say, 'You have appointed a trustee rector.' For one thing, this is a fascist approach. It is not the right approach. They would occupy the rector's room. I would not allow this while I am the Minister of Interior. Moreover, Soylu said, "I will not engage in politics from the moment Tayyip Erdogan quits." (Takvim, 2.2.2021)**

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As seen in our previous news analysis, the protesters are clearly charged with terrorism through ambiguous expressions such as “students, including many terrorist organization militants”. However, it was also observed that there is no additional information in the news articles about what these terrorist organizations are, how many students are members of which terrorist organization, and what kind of measures are taken against the members of this terrorist organization. Labels such as “militant”, “terrorist” and other unsubstantiated accusations are used throughout the news.

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### 3.1.3. Slogans

Another example of criminalization strategies in the news is coverage of the slogans chanted at the protests. In particular, some slogans provide a basis for the identification of students as “provocateurs”. The slogan “killer police” is one of them. The slogan, emphasized as from the spotlight in the first news we examined, appears in many other news as well.



- *“Killer Police” slogan from some cruel terrorists who look like students at Boğaziçi University! A group gathered to protest Melih Bulu, who was appointed as the rector of Boğaziçi University, sang the DHKP-C anthem, and chanted “Killer Police” slogans. (Akit Tv, 5.1.2021)*



In another news article with the headline “killer police,” included the striking expression “cruel terrorists who look like students”. In this news story, where the news language and the language of insult is intermingled even the most basic principles of journalism and reporting is abandoned. It is observed that the students are defined as “terrorists”, the anthems sung are associated with various terrorist organizations and the slogans chanted are conveyed as “criminal elements”. This theme appears in more than one news article.

**Son dakika: İçişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsü Çataklı'dan 'Katil polis' sloganları atan Boğaziçi'ndeki provokatörlere sert tepki**

GÜNDEM  
AA  
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**PROVOKATÖRLERE SERT TEPKİ**

Son dakika haberine göre; İçişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsü **İsmail Çataklı**, "Boğaziçi Üniversitesinde gerçekleşen bir protesto gösterisi sırasında Türk polisine yönelik atılan hadsiz slogan, bizleri son derece üzdü." dedi. İsmail Çataklı, "Polislerimize katil denmesini bizim kabul edebilmemiz ve buna sessiz kalmamız mümkün değildir." ifadelerini kullandı. Çataklı, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde gözaltına alınan 17 kişiden yalnızca ikisinin üniversitenin kayıtlı öğrencisi olduğunu söyledi. Çataklı, 15 kişinin içinde **MLKP**'den diğer örgütlere kadar birçok terör kaydı olduğunu duyurdu.

- **Newsflash: A harsh reaction from the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior, Çataklı, to the provocateurs in Boğaziçi, who chanted 'killer police' slogans. According to the breaking news, Ministry of Interior Spokesperson İsmail Çataklı said, “The tactless slogan against the Turkish police during a protest at Boğaziçi University made us extremely sad.” İsmail Çataklı stated, “It is not possible for us to accept that our police officers are called killers and remain silent about it.” Çataklı expressed that only two of 17 people detained at Boğaziçi University are registered students at the university. Çataklı announced that 15 people had terrorist criminal records, from MLKP to other terrorist organizations.” (A haber, 6.1.2021)**

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In our news analysis, we observed that the statements of politicians also provide a basis for the slogans to be included in the news as a criminal element. Ministry of Interior Spokesperson İsmail Çataklı's words "It is not possible for us to accept that our police officers are called killers" is found sufficient to demonstrate the slogan as "underpinning crime". In fact, the students who chanted this slogan, which were put in quotes in the news story, are directly defined as "provocateurs".

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### 3.1.4. Rainbow Flags

As we mentioned in our report on LGBTI+ students, LGBTI+ flags are also featured in the news as a criminal element. It is observed in the news that not only flags but also everything with rainbow colors is depicted as a criminal element, being LGBTI+ is also portrayed as a crime, and hate speech is generated in this way.

Symbols of the LGBTI+ movement, rainbow and trans flags appearing in the protests are reflected in the news as if they are criminal elements. Eight of 86 news stories we analyzed in our report on LGBTI+ students include the expression "LGBT/LGBT-İ flag", while 16 news reports describe rainbow and trans flags as "rags". Only eight news stories include the expression "LGBT flags" or "LGBT-İ flags", other expressions used for flags are as follows: "So called flag", "So called flag of the perverted people of lot (LGBT)", "Flags of gay perverts (LGBT)", "The cloth with the LGBT symbol", "The rag of the LGBTist perverts".

In the first news article of the report, we can give an example of criminalizing flags, along with the dance that manifests itself in the sentence "Students danced with LGBT flags listening to Metallica in the university":

**açıklamasıyla sahip çıktı. Öte yandan üniversite içerisinde bir grup sapkın LGBT bayraklarıyla dans ederek eylem yaptı.**

- *"Moreover, a group of perverts made a protests by dancing and waving LGBT flags" (Takvim, 6.1.2021)*

The appearance of the rainbow flag is reflected in the news with an emphasis on the headline as “flags unfurled”, “flags furled drew attention”, as if a prohibited and/or criminal element is demonstrated. With the emphasis on the phrase “this time in Germany” it is observed that the fact that the protests manifest themselves in different environments and places is implied as a continuity and part of organized crime.

AVRUPA

## LGBT bayraklı Boğaziçi protestosu: Bu sefer Almanya'da

Almanya'da Prof. Melih Bulu'ya yönelik protesto gerçekleştirildi. Berlin'de toplanan kalabalığın LGBT bayrakları açması dikkat çekti.

Haber Merkezi - 10 Ocak 2021, 12:07 - Son Güncelleme: 10 Ocak 2021, 12:17 - Diğer



Almanya'da LGBT bayraklı Boğaziçi protestosu.

ÖNERİLEN VIDEO



Rusya'da yolcu otobüsünde patlama kamerada  
Rusya'da Voronej kentinde dün akşam saatlerinde

- “Boğaziçi protest with LGBT flags: This time in Germany. A protest was held in Germany against Prof.Melih Bulu. The fact that the crowd gathered in Berlin unfurled LGBT flags drew public attention.” ([Yeni Şafak, 10.1.2021](#))

## Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde LGBT bayrakları açıldı

Cumhurbaşkanlığı kararnamesi ile Prof Dr. Melih Bulu'nun rektör olarak atanmasını protesto eden ve aralarında birçok terör örgütü üyesinin de bulunduğu öğrenciler 'katil polis' sloganı ve terör marşı halayların ardından metallica müziği eşliğinde LGBT bayraklarıyla dans etti.

- *“LGBT flags were unfurled at Boğaziçi University. Students protesting the appointment of Prof. Melih Bulu as rector by presidential decree including many members of terrorist organizations dancing waving LGBT flags listening to Metallica music, after they chanted the ‘killer police’ slogans and danced halays with a terrorist anthem.” (Yeni Akit, 6.1.2021)*

In the news titled “LGBT flags were unfurled at Boğaziçi University”, we encounter all of the “criminal elements” we have listed so far: “members of a terrorist organization” among the students, the “killer police” slogan together with the anthem of “terrorists”, music ranging from halay to Metallica and dancing waving LGBTI+ flags.

