

UNIVERSITY IN THE NEWS

2022

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT



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TARGETING IN THE NEWS “TERRORISTS”

We had started questioning how opposition students and academics were targeted, how they were defined, and how they were addressed within discriminatory and exclusionary frameworks in the reports named University in the News. In our first report, we problematized the labeling of students and academics as “enemies of religion.” In this report, we will delve into “terror” and “terrorist” frameworks frequently encountered in pro-government media.

Students were once again the most targeted group in the news. Activist students were almost never identified as students in the news. When university protests were covered, the main dichotomy was established between “terrorist” activists and “nationalist” students.

Not only students, but also individuals and institutions showing solidarity with students, fell victim to the label of terrorism. The ease with which students and academics were labelled with the terms “terror” and “terrorist” aligns with the government’s tendency to associate any form of opposition and criticism directed towards itself with terrorist activities and view them as criminal acts.

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1. WHO WERE TARGETED?

Students and academics were the most targeted individuals in the news related to universities. Representatives of civil society organizations, politicians, and political parties were also targeted at the points where they interacted with students.

In 16 out of 18 news articles, students were targeted with explicit references to “terrorism,” while in the remaining 2 articles, academics were also targeted using similar descriptions.

1.1. STUDENTS



Turkish youth did not allow the scandal at METU to go unnoticed! Instead of a slanderous tablecloth, a Turkish flag was raised. a haber, 11.11.22

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In the news related to students, student clubs were frequently targeted, and we observed that social media posts, in particular, were used as a means to target students. On the other hand, antagonisms were built between the students that issued statements in support of the targeted students and the student groups that made counter statements.

Among our media scans, we encountered a news article about a lawyer discussing chemical weapon allegations. The article included information about that lawyer's participation in a press statement and signature campaign during their student years. This news serves as an example of how past student activities and persecutions can later be used as a justification for targeting individuals.

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1.2. ACADEMICIANS

ABD'den Boğaziçi provokatörü akademisyenlere tokat gibi belgeler: Komiksiniz

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde rektör atamalarına karşı başlattıkları eylemlerle karmaşa ve kaos girişiminde bulunan isimler destek de alamadıkları bu protestolarını halen belli çapta sürdürse de kamuoyunun desteğini alamadı. Söz konusu eylemlerin faili akademisyenlerin sözde dünyayı örnek göstererek sundukları verilerin de yalan olduğu ortaya çıkmıştı. Bu durum bir kez daha tescillendi.

“Documents from the USA regarding the Boğaziçi provocateur academics: You are a joke” Sabah, 30.12.22

In the year 2022, academics at Boğaziçi University, who have been in resistance lasting up to 900 days and their ongoing vigils extending to the 600th day continued to be targeted.

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1.3. PEOPLE WHOM STUDENTS SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH

In news articles where students were targeted, individuals who received support from these students were also subjected to targeting. Professor Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, who faced detention and prosecution for a period of time following her statement regarding the investigation of allegations of chemical weapon use in military operations, and Sezgin Tanrıkulu, a member of the Republican People's Party (CHP) who made similar statements on the issue were also mentioned in the news articles where students were targeted due to the banners they hung addressing the subject. The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) became the targeted political party, often being used as a “pretext” for the targeting. HDP member of parliament Meral Daniş Beştaş was also targeted in the news article where her statement on the attack against Kurdish students was labeled as “provocation.”

The news regarding the scholarship provided by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, led by Ekrem İmamoğlu from the Republican People's Party (CHP), also served as an example of politicians being targeted alongside students.

2.HOW WERE THEY DEFINED?

ODTÜ'de PKK paçavralı gösteri



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Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nde Devrim Yürüyüşü gerçekleştirildi. PKK sempatanları, yürüyüşü PKK propagandasına çevirdi.

"A demonstration with PKK rags at METU", Akşam, 28.5.2022

Even though academics were called as academics in the news articles, albeit with accusatory adjectives, these articles still refrained from calling students as students.

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2.1. STUDENTS

Apart from the news article targeting a student for their political activities during their time as a student, there were 15 other news articles related to students. Only three of these articles included statements indicating that the individuals being targeted were students. However, these mentions did not present their student identities in a positive manner. The news articles referred to them as “university girl,” “university student” in quotation marks, and “students who love PKK.”

But how were students portrayed? Students were mostly described as “PKK lovers/sympathizers,” “PKK advocates,” and “terror sympathizers.”

Student clubs were also referred to in a context that detached them from their student identities. Examples include “An organization named METU Forum” and “A Twitter account named Ankara Free Student Initiative.”

In two news articles related to the trials in which students were being prosecuted, they were described as “provocateurs” and “defendant-suspects.”

On the other hand, there were also mentions of other students in the news articles. The students who were reported to have taken down the banner hung by the targeted students were referred to as “Turkish youth,” “patriotic students,” and “students affiliated with the Turkish Youth Union (TGB).”

2.2. ACADEMICIANS

In news articles about academics, their academic status was mentioned, but the adjectives and subsequent sentences did not emphasize this aspect. Expressions such as “activist,” “Provocative academics from Boğaziçi,” and “Academics responsible for the protests” were used in the news articles.

3. EXEMPLARY NEWS

In our research, we observed that the news articles with a predominant emphasis on terrorism and nationalism targeted which individuals and how they were described. These articles covered a wide range of topics, from the banners hung by students on campus to their participation in the Boğaziçi protests, as well as campus marches and social media posts.

We are concluding our report with exemplary news articles.



"We hauled it down since the university did not do it"

"At Middle East Technical University, a group called 'METU Forum' hung a banner in support of HDP and TTB Chairperson Şebnem Korur Fincancı's false claims about chemical weapons. However, students affiliated with the Turkish Youth Union (TGB) hauled down the banner and replaced it with the Turkish flag." (Yeni Şafak, 13.11.2022)

The news article titled "We hauled it down since the university did not do it" presents a visual contrast by displaying a photo of the banner hanging on a wall alongside a photo of the same wall with the Turkish flag and three men standing on it. This juxtaposition helps emphasize the antagonism highlighted in the article. The description of "An Organization Named METU Forum" as a group distances the student club from legitimacy and student identity. On the other hand, the description of "students affiliated with the Turkish Youth Union (TGB)" carries a connotation of being "real students." The article seeks to criminalize the HDP (People's Democratic Party) through Korur-Fincancı, who is associated with the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) as its chairperson, even though she is not actually the chairperson of the HDP.

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The sentence “...stated that outsiders came to the university to conduct propaganda activities” in the news content also reinforces the implication that the person who hung the banner cannot be a student, as indicated by the term “outsiders.”

GÜNDEM

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'nde eylemciye ders yok!

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi'ndeki eylemlere öncülük eden ve kadroları başka üniversitelerde olan 12 akademisyene bu yıl ders verilmedi. Üniversiteden yapılan açıklamada, “Bir grubun tahakkümünü devam ettirmek amacını taşıyan her türlü tutum ve davranış üniversite yönetimi tarafından engellenecektir” denildi.

Haber Merkezi — 00:00 . 7/09/2022 Çarşamba — Yeni Şafak



Depremzede kız çocuğunu 'başörtülü' olduğu için okula almayan İsmail Samur hakkında mahkemeden skandal karar: Hakim kendisiyle çelişerek beraat verdi

Eskişehir'de başörtülü olduğu gerekçesiyle depremzede kız çocuğun...

“No classes for the activist at Boğaziçi University!”

“This year, 12 academics who led the protests at Boğaziçi University and had positions at other universities were not assigned any classes. In a statement issued by the university, it was stated that “any attitude or behavior aiming to maintain the domination of a particular group will be prevented by the university administration.” [Yeni Şafak, 7.9.22](#)

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AThe negatively toned news article titled “No classes for the activist at Boğaziçi University!” that describes academics as “activists” is one of the news articles targeting academics. The article includes a photograph of academics participating in a vigil protest at the university.

The news article focuses solely on the university’s statement and provides limited information beyond that. Academics are described based on the statements made in that announcement. While the names of the academics are listed in a sequential manner, there is no mention of any individual's specific statement.