

THE TEENAGE GIRLS CASE: A CALL FOR JUSTICE



December 2024

1. BACKGROUND OF THE OPERATION



In May 2024, a large-scale anti-terrorism operation took place in Istanbul, where 48 individuals, including high school students and university-aged women, were detained by Turkish authorities. The Turkish government, under the guise of fighting terrorism, arrested these individuals on fabricated charges. Among those arrested were several mothers, taken into custody when authorities could not locate their daughters. The young girls, some of them still minors, were subjected to irrational accusations based on their routine social activities, such as going to the cinema, studying together, and even praying.

This case is part of a broader post-2016 crackdown on individuals associated with the Hizmet movement. The Turkish government has consistently framed normal activities as evidence of terrorist involvement, utilizing politically motivated operations and unlawful surveillance to justify these arrests.

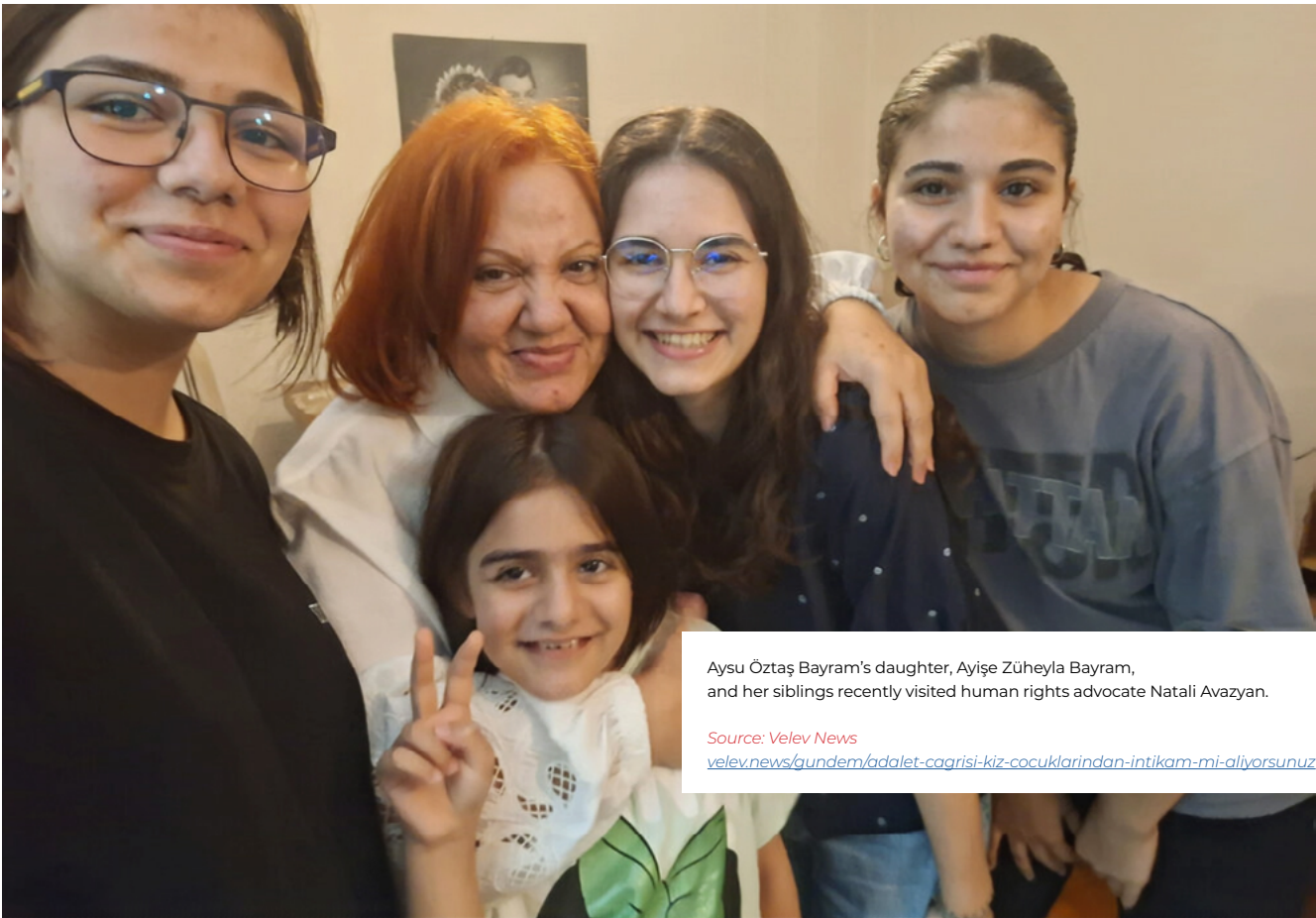
The first hearing of the trial involving 41 defendants took place from September 23 to 27. During this hearing, 11 out of 19 detained defendants were released, while 8 remained in custody.

The second hearing was held on December 12. Following this session, the court ordered the release of 2 out of the 8 detained defendants, continued the detention of 6 others, and scheduled the next hearing for February 18, 2024.

The indictment seeks prison sentences ranging from 7 years and 6 months to 15 years for 37 of the defendants

Aysu Öztaş Bayram, one of the women whose detention was extended, is a liver transplant recipient recovering from cirrhosis cancer and suffers from Parkinson's disease. She has been imprisoned for four months. The charges against her include allegation of encouraging her daughters to study, go bowling, and movies with college students around their neighborhood.

Another detainee, Rabia Battal Genç, who was also ordered to remain in custody, recently suffered a brain hemorrhage. Concerns have been raised about how the harsh prison conditions might impact her fragile health.



Aysu Öztaş Bayram's daughter, Ayişe Züheyla Bayram, and her siblings recently visited human rights advocate Natali Avazyan.

Source: [VeleV News](https://velev.news/gundem/adalet-cagrisi-kiz-cocuklarindan-intikam-mi-aliyorsunuz)
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2. ILLEGAL METHODS USED BY THE POLICE

The police employed several illegal methods to gather information, fabricating evidence to support baseless charges. Some of the key methods used include:

Wiretapping personal conversations and tracking the minor girls' communications.

Surveillance of daily activities of minors, such as attending school, social events, and interacting with peers.

Monitoring phone records and social media interactions of minors on platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram.

Fabricating evidence, with everyday activities being framed as suspicious.

Arresting family members, including mothers, in place of the accused minors.

These methods, common in politically motivated operations in Turkey, highlight a gross abuse of power by law enforcement and the judicial system.

3. ABSURD ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST THE MINOR GIRLS

The indictment against these young girls is built on charges that are not only baseless but absurd. Here are eight of the most irrational allegations presented in the case:



Going to the cinema

Framed as a coordinated group activity to support terrorism.



Sharing monthly rent

Sharing rent payments among students was labeled as financing terrorism.



Living in a student-shared house

Misrepresented as being part of a secretive organizational plot.



Participating in social activities like bowling

Ordinary social gatherings were classified as part of a larger conspiracy.



Ordering food via "Yemek Sepeti"

A common food delivery service was treated as evidence of suspicious activity.



Planning personal trips abroad

Travel plans were linked to international terrorist networks without evidence.



Reading the Qur'an and praying at home

Routine religious practices were framed as subversive activities.



Buying furniture for the student house

Furnishing their living space was presented as evidence of a criminal plot.

4. FAMOUS PEOPLE AND PROMINENT ORGANIZATIONS’ RESPONSES

The injustice faced by these young women has drawn widespread condemnation from human rights defenders, legal experts, public figures, and prominent organizations:



Enes Kanter Freedom, in his Newsweek article, criticized the Turkish government’s persecution of these girls, calling the allegations absurd and urging international attention and justice.



Garry Kasparov, the renowned chess grandmaster and human rights activist, supported Enes Kanter Freedom’s stance and condemned the Turkish government’s actions, urging the global community to act.



Human Rights Foundation (HRF) shared a detailed statement on Twitter, standing with Enes Kanter Freedom and the persecuted teenage girls, urging international action against this violation of human rights.



Antonio Stango, President of the Italian Federation for Human Rights (FIDU), attended the court hearing in Istanbul on **September 23, 2024**, expressing deep concern over the trial’s lack of evidence and the clear political bias in the proceedings



Omer Faruk Gergerlioglu, a Turkish MP and prominent human rights advocate, raised awareness about the case, emphasizing the illegality of the charges and the misuse of power by Turkish authorities



Natalia Avazian, a human rights activist, expressed her solidarity with the detained girls, noting that their persecution represents a larger issue of systematic repression in Turkey.



Lale Demirkazan, a lawyer defending the girls, highlighted the absurdity of the court's questioning, including why the girls prayed or ordered food, describing the process as a violation of human rights.



Isa Mesih Sahin, a vocal activist, condemned the political pressure on Turkey's judicial system and the weaponization of the courts against innocent people.



Suna Yıldızoğlu, a human rights advocate, criticized Turkish authorities for their targeted oppression of these young women, emphasizing the need for international oversight.



Suavi, a popular Turkish artist and activist, expressed his outrage at the unjust treatment of the girls, calling for their immediate release and for justice to be served.



Hilal Nesin, a writer and activist, voiced her support for the girls on social media, highlighting the absurdity of the charges and the larger pattern of political repression.



Cemre Birand, a journalist, questioned how ordinary activities like going to the cinema or praying could ever be seen as terrorist acts, raising awareness of the case through her platform.



International Religious Freedom Forum (IRF) shared their concern on their website and X (formerly Twitter), issuing a public call for action to address the unjust treatment of these girls. They urged international observers and the public to raise awareness and demand justice.



5. CALL TO ACTION FOR FEBRUARY 18, 2025



We urgently call upon human rights defenders, international organizations, and concerned individuals to take the following actions:

1. Attend and Observe the Court Hearing on February 18, 2025:

It is critical that international observers be present to monitor the proceedings and provide pressure on the court to ensure a fair trial.

2. Write to the Turkish Ministry of Justice:

Demand that the Ministry drop all charges and release the detainees.

Letters can be sent to:

Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Kızılay/Ankara, Turkey
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr

3. Contact the Istanbul Bar Association:

Urge them to stand up for the legal rights of these girls and their families. Letters can be sent to:

Istanbul Bar Association

Orhan Adli Apaydın Sokak No:2 Beyoğlu, 34421, Istanbul, Turkey

Tel: +90 212 251 63 00

Email: istanbulbarosu@istanbulbarosu.org.tr

4. Reach out to the Human Rights Department of the Turkish Parliament:

Express your concern over the treatment of these young girls and the broader issue of political repression. Letters can be sent to:

Human Rights Inquiry Committee (TBMM)

Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, 06543, Kızılay/Ankara, Turkey

Tel: +90 312 420 61 31

Email: insanhaklarikom@tbmm.gov.tr

5. Raise Awareness on Social Media:

Use your platform to highlight this case and call for justice. Share the details of this unlawful detention and tag organizations like [@Amnesty](#), [@HRW](#), and [@UNHumanRights](#) to bring further attention to this case .

CONCLUSION

The Teenage Girls Case represents a clear abuse of power and a failure of the rule of law in Turkey. The charges are baseless, the evidence fabricated, and the proceedings driven by political motives. It is our duty to stand up for these innocent girls and their families and demand justice. The international community must act now to hold Turkish authorities accountable and ensure the protection of fundamental human rights.

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