

## Amir Aman Kiyaro

Investigative journalist from Ethiopia



As a freelancer, Amir Aman Kiyaro reported for the Associated Press (AP) and other international media on the conflicts in the Ethiopian administrative zones of Tigray and Oromia and the consequences of climate change in the region.

After returning from Oromia in November 2021, he and his cameraman Thomas Engida were taken into custody. The charges: "terrorism", "collaboration with Ethiopia's enemies" and video footage of the suffering of the affected civilian population. All attempts to explain the basic rules of journalism did not help: "Anyone who talks to the rebels is an enemy of our people!"

The young man describes his pre-trial detention as a constant succession of long night-time interrogations and abuse, and the conditions in prison as catastrophic. His family would be physically assaulted or held for hours on end during their limited "five-minute prison visits".

After four months in custody, the team was released on bail and the charges were dropped shortly afterwards. Instead, Amir was slandered on state television as a "collaborator of Ethiopia's enemies" and subjected to hate comments and death threats on social media.

In Hamburg, Amir and his family live a bit of a normal life. They even brought the ingredients for Ethiopian cuisine with them. Their two-year-old daughter opens their heart to new contacts, she goes to kindergarten and happily speaks to her parents in German.



Always Ethiopian cuisine – happiness is in the pantry!

### Editorial



What a story! Yavuz Ekinçi invites people to a reading in Istanbul on September 18, 2024. He has a program booklet distributed, posters printed and hung up. The hall is filled to capacity. Many visitors have to crowd into the entrance and listen standing up. It sounds like a great success – but it is actually a court hearing for the Kurdish writer!

The hearing concerns his 2014 book "Shattered Dreams", which was banned in Turkey and is charged with "terrorism and propaganda" (Art. 7 of the Anti-Terror Law). He faces a prison sentence of up to seven and a half years. According to Yavuz, the judges cannot recognize a fictional story in the character of his novel; they consider the book's protagonist to be the author himself.

The "terrorism law" is a popular way of silencing writers, says the International PEN. But this time the censorship doesn't work. Yavuz comes up with the creative idea of inviting his readers to the 23rd Supreme Criminal Court. He answers the judge's questions as if he were the moderator of a reading. The court is so surprised that it does not impose a sentence that day and sets a new date for December 9, 2024.

A successful campaign with a lot of humor, despite the serious situation.

Yours Martina Bäurle

# Hazal Ocak from Turkey

The journalist describes environmental and urban planning scandals, as well as corruption and human rights violations in Turkey. She published her research – which does not even stop at President Erdoğan's inner circle – in her book "Ihanet", but also on the news website "Halk TV", in "Gazete Duvar" and "Le Monde Diplomatique Türkçe".

Thus, Erdoğan's son-in-law and former minister Berat Albayrak would read in the press how he had acquired a plot of land for a ridiculously low price as part of the "Istanbul Canal Project" and built residential buildings and a business center there. According to experts, the 45 km long canal between the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara would destroy Istanbul's natural green spaces. The city of millions would be more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. The Turkish Journalists' Association awarded Hazal the important "Sedat



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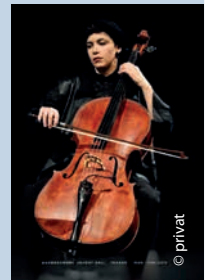
Simavi Prize". She has received several awards as the best young journalist. The price for all the praise: the Turkish judiciary sued her for defamation, "naming public officials" and "violation of privacy", among other things.

The 33-year-old journalist is now working on a new book about her life of constant uncertainty – she could be sentenced to a long prison term at any time: "I don't know what will happen if I publish it." Nevertheless, Hazal Ocak has remained a cheerful person: she dances the tango with her husband, is enthusiastic about learning German and enjoys receiving guests in her apartment.

## What the former foundation guests are up to...

In August 2024, Iranian musician Atena Eshthiagi wowed audiences at the Bürgerhaus Wilhelmsburg with the Persian festival "Hastam – Just because I am".

For the realization of the theme "Art in Resistance", the jury of the HELGA! Festival Awards honored "Hastam" for the "most fearless attitude".



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No one had expected this: In September 2024, Aleksei Bobrovnikov was accepted into Ukraine's diplomatic corps. He is now monitoring the situation in East Africa for Kyiv.

Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof is entering the Oscar race for Germany with his latest film "The Seeds of the Sacred Fig".



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## Kumanan Kanapathipillai and Dilani – happily reunited!

After a year apart, things had to happen very quickly following Kumanan's return home from Hamburg. With all the colorful – and expensive! – wedding rituals that Sri Lanka's Tamil Buddhists have to follow.



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