

THE CASE OF FILM EDITOR ERHAN ÖRS

Film editor arrested in Istanbul. Film Editors' Society of Turkey appeal for international support for their member.

On June 3, 2022, **film editor Erhan Örs was detained** in a house raid in Istanbul. After eight days of detention, he was arrested along with 17 others linked to the Migration Monitoring Association (GÖÇİZDER). Before the investigation in June 2022, GÖÇİZDER was operating in Turkey as a legal NGO working on human rights for Arab, Kurdish, Yazidi, and Christian refugees and victims of forced migration. **Örs has been in pre-trial detention since June 2022** and the first hearing date of the case is December 13, 2022. If Örs continues to be tried in pre-trial detention, he will be imprisoned for approximately six and a half months just for editing films and practicing filmmaking, his profession.

Örs' connection to the association is based on his involvement in the association's film work. Erhan Örs is not a member of this association. **Erhan Örs is an editor, a member of Turkey's Cinema and Television Union and the Film Editors' Society of Turkey.** His only contact with GÖÇİZDER is that he was employed to edit a documentary produced by the association in 2017. Money transfers made in 2019 by Örs and his film crew have also been added to the case as criminal elements, even though this film project has nothing to do with the association GÖÇİZDER.

As the **Film Editors' Society of Turkey**, we have stated publicly that the practice of editing cannot be criminalized in any way, and we have condemned the arrest of our member Erhan Örs, demanding his release. **The Cinema and Television Union** also made statements in this direction. **Filmmaking cannot be considered a crime, just as editing a film cannot be considered a crime.** We will be following Örs' trial, which will take place on December 13th, 14th, and 15th.

As Erhan Örs expressed in his letter to the Film Editors' Society of Turkey, there is no other case in the history of Turkey where an editor has been imprisoned for the film projects he edited. The way Erhan Örs is being treated is **a serious threat to freedom of artistic expression and the profession of editing**, and we believe that the **international film community should not remain silent on this issue.** We appeal to the international editor-filmmaker associations to support us in publicizing the injustice done to Erhan Örs.

Film Editors' Society of Turkey, 12.10.2022

About Erhan Örs

Erhan Örs has worked as an editor on many film projects, mostly short fiction. Amongst the projects he has been involved with, *Binbir Gece* (Alf Leila wa Leila, 2018), written and directed by Mahsum Taşkın, won many awards, including the Best Film Award in the National Short Film Competition of the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival and the Special Jury Award in the Fiction Category of the IFSAK Short Film Competition. Among the films he edited, Kasım Ördök's *Yağmur Olup Şehre Düşüyorum* (I'm Raining Down into the City, 2019) won Örs the Best Editing Award in the National Fiction Category of SETEM İpekyolu Short Film Awards. The feature-length documentary *Kaf Kaf*, edited by Örs, competed in the National Documentary Film Competition of the 59th Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival in October 2022, while Örs was in prison.