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** Photograph: Hüseyin Aldemir*

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After President and ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) Chair Recep Tayyip Erdoğan alleged that the women who attended the 17th Feminist Night March in Taksim "behaved rudely towards the call to prayer by whistling", criticisms and statements of apology have been made by people from the AKP as well as the ones close to the party.

Some of these people are **Süleyman Özışık**, a columnist for the Türkiye newspaper; **Nihal Bengisu Karaca**, a columnist for the daily Habertürk; **Fatma Barbarosoğlu**, a columnist for the Yeni Şafak; and AKP MP and Central Decision Executive Board member **Mustafa Yeneroğlu**.

[CLICK - Police Attack Feminist Night March With Pepper Gas](#)

Özışık said 'I am removing article' and apologized

In his column on Türkiye newspaper, Süleyman Özışık penned an article entitled "The Country of the Dictator" and wrote the following about the feminist night march in Taksim:

"...At that point, the call to prayer was being recited and these freaks started whistling in order to silence the call to prayer. The ones who were booing, swearing, screaming and blowing whistles had almost a temper tantrum as the call to prayer continued. All these happened in the country of the man, whom some call a vicious dictator..."

[CLICK - 'Call to Prayer' Allegations of Erdoğan on Headlines of Newspapers Close to AKP](#)

After this article was published on the newspaper and on its website, Özışık has posted a message on his Twitter account and apologized to his readers, stating that the women were, in fact, protesting the police who closed the streets. "I am removing the related part from my article and apologize to my readers, whom I misled", Özışık has further stated.

'It is wrong to continue making these accusations'

Nihal Bengisu-Karaca from the pro-government Habertürk newspaper has also shared the [statement](#) released by the Initiative for the 17th Feminist Night March in response to Erdoğan's allegations and said:

"Some banners carried and some attitudes displayed during these marches cannot be approved. But, that is not the point. The point is the following: The released statement has put forward that it was not the call to prayer that was protested, but the police barricade. It is wrong to continue making these accusations if there was not specific intention to target the call to prayer."

'Continuing to protest during the call to prayer not same as protesting it'

Fatma Barbarosoğlu, a columnist for Yeni Şafak, has also written on Twitter:

"Please do not label the women's day march as they protested the call to prayer. Continuing to protest is not the same as protesting the call to prayer. We must manage to live together in this country by keeping the distance of respect. Let's approach incidents with compassion and caution."

'Those using language of violence far more terrifying'

AKP İstanbul MP and Central Decision Executive Board member Mustafa Yeneroğlu has also posted the following message on Twitter:

"Just as the possibility that the call to prayer was whistled is disturbing, the ones using a language of violence with the slogan 'May the hands reaching out for call to prayer be broken' are equally terrifying. The call to prayer does not need to be protected in this way, especially by hurting and intimidating people with brute force. Some tranquility and common sense, please."

[CLICK - Erdoğan Said 'They Whistled Call to Prayer', Marches of Call to Prayer Held in Taksim](#)

(EKN/SD)

'They Whistled Call to Prayer' Statement Criticized by AKP MP, Columnists Close to AKP

President and AKP Chair Erdoğan's allegation that the women attending the March 8 feminist night march in Taksim "whistled the call to prayer" has also been criticized by columnists close to the AKP as well as its İstanbul MP Mustafa Yeneroğlu.

İstanbul - BIA News Desk 11 March 2019, Monday 16:34

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