



Protestors walk on the streets of the Alsancak district of İzmir. The retail sector and restaurants have suffered losses in Alsancak, sector players say. DHA photo

Protests affect İzmir restaurants' revenue

İZMİR - Anatolia News Agency

The retail sector and restaurants have suffered losses of more than 50 percent in Alsancak, the center of attraction in İzmir, just like on İstiklal Avenue in Istanbul, due to anti-government demonstrations and a brutal police response, the İzmir Chamber of Commerce (İZTO) said.

"We can say that the restaurants and the retail stores in Alsancak have lost half of their revenues due to the latest protests and police reaction to these protests for the last week," said Cüneyt Altınkayı, board member of the İzmir Chamber of Commerce.

He added that tradesmen and shopkeepers in Alsancak normally enjoy earn more money during social meetings and demonstrations, but the latest protests, which drew a harsh response from police, had caused panic and fear among local people. "Most of them therefore have preferred not to visit Alsancak," he said.

But other sector representatives also said they were quite happy as the city had seen much less police violence.

"The protests have been more peaceful in İzmir than they have been in other cities, which is very fortunate for us. The common fear

and panic among local people in İzmir, however, have caused up to 60-70 percent loss in the revenues of cafes and restaurants in Alsancak, the center of the city of İzmir," said Adnan Koç, a member of the Food and Drink Services and Entertainment and Accommodation group of İZTO.

'Alsancak getting used to living with protests'

He said families had started to visit Alsancak after the violent acts ended. "The demonstrations continue until midnight, then the protesters enjoy their night at cafes and restaurants. Alsancak is getting used to living with protests," Koç said.

In demonstration centers, like Beyoğlu, Istanbul, losses have reached 80 to 90 percent, daily Hürriyet reported last week. "There is no spirit, how can there be shopping?" said Tahsin Özlenir, chairman of Turkey's Registered Brands Association (TMD). "The latest information we have received shows that revenues across Turkey have plummeted by around 30 percent."

However, 30 percent is the most optimistic of countrywide falls, Özlenir added. "In big city centers, like Beyoğlu, Istanbul, losses have reached 80 to 90 percent."