

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 58 people over alleged links to the Gülen movement. In October 2020, a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [opinion](#) said that widespread or systematic imprisonment of individuals with alleged links to the group may amount to crimes against humanity. Solidarity with OTHERS has compiled a detailed [database](#) to monitor the Gülen-linked mass detentions since a failed coup in July 2016.

**September 21:** The Supreme Court of Appeals (Yargıtay) [delivered](#) a landmark decision that found unlawful a prison board's refusal to grant parole on the basis of the charges faced by the prisoner at trial.

**September 22:** A prison administration in İstanbul [refused](#) to release activist Celalettin Can from pretrial detention, citing "lack of good conduct."

## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunc](#), a former public sector worker who was sacked from his job by a decree-law during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who was reported missing as of August 6, 2019, in what appears to be one of the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

**September 18:** The police in İzmir [intervened](#) in a demonstration against military clashes in northern Iraq, briefly detaining 12 people.

**September 18:** A Van court [ruled](#) to acquit human rights defenders Hüseyin Yaviç and Sevim Çiçek who stood trial over their attendance at a demonstration in 2021.

**September 19:** Ankara prosecutors [indicted](#) five labor union leaders, seeking up to four and a half years in prison due to their attendance at a demonstration in 2022.

**September 20:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, detaining 16 people.

**September 21:** The police [detained](#) 24 people for attending a leftist commemoration ceremony in May.

**September 22:** A Şanlıurfa court [ruled](#) to acquit lawyers Hidayet Enmek, Eyüp Sabri Tinaş, and Mehmet Emin Uyguner who stood trial over their detention during a Newroz celebration in 2012.

**September 22:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for two days.

**September 23:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration about enforced disappearances, detaining 28 activists.

**September 24:** The Adana Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert scheduled as part of a youth festival.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**September 18:** Prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Fatih Altaylı on charges of insulting a public official due to his remarks targeting the executives of Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate, also known as the Diyanet.

**September 20:** A Bitlis court [sentenced](#) journalist Sinan Aygül to six months in prison on trespassing charges due

to a 2020 report about misused charity donations implicating a ruling party lawmaker.

**September 20:** The police in 14 provinces [detained](#) 27 people on charges of fomenting enmity and hatred and spreading disinformation on social media.

**September 20:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a 17-year-old high school student following the circulation of a video on social media showing him performing a lewd act with a picture of the founder of the republic.

**September 20:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to 26 news reports covering bribery allegations implicating a public prosecutor.

**September 21:** A Tunceli court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Ruken Tuncel who stood trial for sharing a video of an academic.

**September 21:** An İzmir court [ruled](#) to acquit a person named Mehmet Oğuz Kakıcı who stood trial on charges of insulting a former interior minister.

**September 22:** A court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of 20 months to journalist Miyase İlknur on charges of defaming members of the high judiciary due to her article on offshore bank accounts linked to senior government officials.

**September 22:** The police in Şanlıurfa briefly [detained](#) Kurdish politician Kamil Gökteş on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda in a speech.

**September 22:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) journalist Hasan Polat.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**September 18:** Reports [revealed](#) that a fugitive Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) suspect who was released from pretrial detention in Turkey in 2014 has been found to have trained potential suicide bombers.

**September 19:** Nacho Sánchez Amor, the European Parliament's Turkey Rapporteur, [said](#) the EU will not ease travel restrictions for Turkish citizens unless Turkey softens its counterterrorism laws. The Turkish anti-terror legislation is frequently criticized by international observers for being overly broad and vague, allowing arbitrary interpretation and politically motivated pursuits.

**September 22:** The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [failed](#) to announce sanctions over Turkey's refusal to comply with a European Court of Human Rights order for the release of philanthropist Osman Kavala. Imprisoned in 2017, Kavala was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment in 2022 on charges of instigating nationwide anti-government protests in 2013.

**September 22:** A columnist [claimed](#) that Yüksel Kocaman, a high-ranking judiciary member, swept a murder case under the rug when he was the chief prosecutor of Ankara.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**September 19:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) local politician Seyit Narin to one year in prison.

**September 22:** The police in Şanlıurfa briefly [detained](#) Kurdish politician Kamil Gökteş on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda in a speech.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**September 21:** The Ministry of Interior [announced](#) that sanctions will be imposed on Syrians who fail to leave İstanbul by Sept. 24 despite being registered in other cities.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**September 18:** An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) six police officers to four years in prison for their involvement in the death of a detainee named Birol Yıldırım at an İstanbul police station in 2021.

**September 18:** An Ankara prison [refused](#) to deliver a musical instrument sent to jailed journalist Fırat Arslan.

**September 22:** Prison guards in Ağrı physically [assaulted](#) and hogtied two female inmates for four hours.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**September 19:** An Iraqi military official [announced](#) that a drone that killed three Kurdish counterterrorism officers had originated in Turkey.

**September 21:** Judicial documents obtained by a news website [confirmed](#) that Koray Vural, a Turkish businessman believed to have been rendered by Turkey's intelligence from Tajikistan, had been profiled by Turkish diplomats in the country in 2017 and reported to the

foreign ministry in Ankara. Vural was reported missing on September 16. Opposition MP and leading human rights advocate Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [raised](#) concern on Sept. 21 that Vural might be facing mistreatment during informal detention.