

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 48 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.

**December 5:** Prominent Turkish journalist Nazlı Ilcak, 79, was [sent](#) to prison to serve a sentence handed down on conviction of libeling a public prosecutor.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**December 4:** Cemal Tanhan, a 68-year-old man who was incarcerated in northwestern Turkey despite severe health problems, [died](#) 29 days after his release.

## 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

**December 8:** The police [intervened](#) the demonstration organized by Anatolian Association for Assistance and Solidarity with Families who Lost Their Relatives

(ANYAKAYDER) in Bahçelievler district of Istanbul on December 7, 2023 to protest in the delivery of PKK militants' bodies to their families in cardboard boxes. 46 people including Istanbul Co-Chair of Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP) were detained by the police using physical violence and handcuffing them behind their backs.

**December 10:** The gendarmerie [intervened](#) with batons and pepper spray against those who were protesting the dismissal of a worker in front of his workplace in Urfa, detaining 92 people, including BİRTEK-SEN Executive Çayan Dursun and BİRTEK-SEN Organizing Specialist Deniz Kar, using physical violence.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**December 4:** Istanbul 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) the deletion of at least 3 news articles about Istanbul Anatolian Chief Public Prosecutor İsmail Uçar's report to the General Secretariat of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors about the bribery scheme in the courthouse, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

**December 5:** Turkish authorities [arrested](#) 14 TikTok users for making sexually explicit livestreams in exchange for money and abusing minors over the past six months.

**December 5:** The Istanbul 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ruled](#) that at least 6 news articles mentioning Murat Çetiner, former Istanbul Deputy Police Chief and Bakırköy Police Chief, be blocked from access, deleted and not to be associated with the name of the requestor in search engines on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

**December 5:** The Istanbul Anatolian 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) the deletion of the name of the requestor on the grounds of violation of personal rights

from at least 2 news reports that the trustee administration of Boğaziçi University appointed 65 other members to the board of trustees of the Boğaziçi University Foundation (BÜVAK), including the wife of President Erdoğan's nephew, AKP politicians, presidential advisors and other members close to the 'trustee administration'.

**December 5:** With the decision of Samsun 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace, it was [ruled](#) to delete the name of the requestor from at least 3 news articles about tobacco smugglers who filed a complaint against the police officer who conducted an operation against them and caused the police officer to be suspended from duty, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 6: Vercel.app, the domain name of Vercel, a front-end web application hosting platform, was [blocked](#) by the National Cyber Incident Response Center (USOM) on December 6, 2023 on phishing grounds.

**December 8:** Filmmaker Özay Şahin was detained in 2012 while working as the cinematographer of the documentary "Ben Uçtum Sen Kaldın" (I Flew, You Stayed), along with the director, and was tried without arrest. The trial lasted nearly nine years and he was sentenced to 1 year and 13 months in prison for "aiding a terrorist organization". According to the verdict reached in December 2023, the Court of Appeal [upheld](#) Şahin's 25-month prison sentence.

**December 8:** The domain name readthedocs.io of the Read the Docs platform, which offers online documentation creation and hosting services for software projects, was [blocked](#) by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority on the grounds of illegal betting.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**December 7:** Eleven foreign inmates who were convicted of committing various crimes in Turkey and allowed to leave prison temporarily [failed](#) to return on the appointed day and are considered to be at large.

**December 7:** A report released on Thursday by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Council of Europe's anti-corruption organization, [showed](#) once again Turkey's failure to fully implement a majority of the group's anti-corruption recommendations, with its level of compliance remaining "globally unsatisfactory," the same as in the previous report.

**December 8:** Mohamed Hassan Sheik Mohamud, a son of the president of Somalia who was involved in a traffic accident resulting in the death of a motorcycle courier in İstanbul, [fled](#) Turkey days after the incident.

**December 8:** The Council of Europe's (CoE) Committee of Ministers, in its quarterly meeting December 5-7, [addressed](#) Turkey's non-compliance with European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings in the cases of jailed Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtaş and Osman Kavala.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**December 5:** A court in central Turkey [ruled](#) to conclude the trial in absentia of a gendarme charged with the mass murder a Kurdish family in a deliberately lit fire in October 1993 due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

**December 8:** Lawyer Ahmet Atış, who went to Urfa Organized Industrial Zone Gendarmerie Station to meet his client who was detained during a protest in Urfa Organized Industrial Zone, was subjected to physical and verbal violence of soldiers, including a person reported to be the station commander, for speaking Kurdish with his client.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**December 5:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey for the poor prison conditions suffered by eight people who were given less than three square meters of living space in overcrowded prisons in the aftermath of a failed coup in July 2016.

**December 8:** An advocacy group, The Arrested Lawyers Initiative, that defends the rights of lawyers [stated](#) that overcrowding persists in prisons in Turkey despite several recent attempts at legal reforms and amnesty laws, with the prison population exceeding the figure from before the enactment of a law in July aimed at reducing the number within five months.

**December 8:** Imprisoned writer, activist and journalist Celalettin Can [sent](#) an open letter addressed to members of parliament in which he detailed the mistreatment of political prisoners and the denial of probation.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**December 7:** The wife of Ahmed Katie, a Syrian human rights activist who went missing in İstanbul in late

November, [announced](#) that she and her children have been living in fear.

## **TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

**December 7:** A court in eastern Turkey [sentenced](#) to prison two women from a family that suffered mistreatment at the hands of police officers in 2018 for resisting and insulting the officers.

**December 8:** Edanur İbrahimoğlu, a youth spokesperson for the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (HEDEP), was physically [assaulted](#) by police who intervened in a press conference organized by the party.

## **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

**December 6:** A recent report by Freedom House [identified](#) Turkey as one of 26 countries engaging in transnational repression targeting journalists since 2014.