

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 8 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.

November 9: İsmet Özçelik, incarcerated on conviction of links to the faith-based Gülen movement, was [sentenced](#) to 10 months extra imprisonment for making prayer beads out of olive pits.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#), 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

November 9: Private security units and the police [intervened](#) the protest organized by the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF) at Diyarbakır Dicle University campus and detained 2 people using physical violence.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

November 6: Cumhuriyet writer Barış Pehlivan's article, in which he raised the issue that former prosecutor Ömer Fatih Taze's petition against İsmail Çataklı, the deputy of then Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu, was ignored, was [blocked](#) from access by the decision of Kahramanmaraş 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

November 7: A total of 479 news reports and posts on various websites and social media platforms mentioning the name of MIT Director were [banned](#) to access on the grounds of violation of personal rights by Istanbul Penal Court of Peace No 4 on November 6, 2023 and the content was ordered to be deleted.

November 7: Article 19, a London-based international organization defending free expression worldwide, [called](#) for the dismissal of criminal charges against a journalist, Baransel Ağca, who is standing trial due to a tweet about the ban on alcoholic beverages in Islam.

November 8: Bircan Yıldırım, editor-in-chief of BircanTVHaber, was [detained](#) on November 7, 2023 on charges of 'publicly disseminating misleading information' based on a social media post she made.

November 8: Turkey's top court [refused](#) to annul a controversial media law that press groups say is used to silence journalists on the pretext of halting the spread of disinformation.

November 9: Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) [asked](#) German broadcaster Deutsche Welle's (DW) Turkish edition to secure broadcasting licenses for its alternative websites that were launched to

circumvent an access ban on the news outlet's Turkish edition.

November 9: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) a temporary broadcast ban as well as a fine on the Flash Haber TV station over the remarks of a journalist who criticized the voter base of the ruling party.

November 10: Journalist Mehmet Kızmaz was [detained](#) over tweets regarding the presidential and parliamentary elections in May and two devastating earthquakes that struck Turkey on Feb. 6.

November 10: At least 3 news articles about the explosion at the Tosyalı Iron and Steel Plant of Tosyalı Holding in İskenderun on November 8, 2023, in which 13 workers were injured and 1 worker lost his life, were [banned](#) from access by the İskenderun 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

November 9: An unidentified group of vandals [threw](#) rocks and spray painted hate messages on the walls of the Church of Panagia Muhliotissa and the Fener Greek High School in İstanbul.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

November 8: A chamber of Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals [said](#) the continued incarceration of an opposition lawmaker is legally appropriate, deciding not to comply with the Constitutional Court's recent decision that the MP's rights have been violated, and filed criminal complaints against the high court judges who voted in favor of the lawmaker.

November 9: A comprehensive report [exposed](#) the vast scale of property confiscations in Turkey targeting the Gülen movement, a faith-based group outlawed by Ankara, with an estimated value of \$50 billion and affecting over 1.5 million individuals in what the authors call systematic and widespread violations of domestic and international law that amount to "crimes against humanity."

November 10: An international delegation comprising 27 bar associations, human rights organizations and legal groups from eight countries [reported](#) severe mistreatment of lawyers in Turkey, pointing out the harassment,

arbitrary detention, unfair trials and torture they face over their work.

November 11: A judicial crisis in Turkey involving two high courts due to conflicting rulings on a jailed lawmaker continued as the pro-government Yeni Şafak daily [targeted](#) the top judges who ruled to release the imprisoned MP, while Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals issued a statement on Friday evening accusing the Constitutional Court (AYM) of dragging the judiciary into chaos with its rulings on individual applications.

KURDISH MINORITY

November 6: Fatma Aydın, the mother of Kurdish professional soccer player Oktay Aydın, was briefly [detained](#) on Sunday for failing to stand during the national anthem at a stadium in Diyarbakır.

November 6: The indictment prepared against 11 people detained in May [accused](#) them of "membership in a terrorist organization" because they were HDP members and listened to Kurdish songs.

November 8: The response to a written parliamentary question [revealed](#) that the district governorship had not issued a ban on the play "Haylo Dîsa Tevlihev bû", which was banned in June on the grounds of a decision by the Tatvan District Governorate.

November 8: A Kurdish politician, Aysel Tuğluk, who was [released](#) from prison last year following a long-awaited medical report stating that her dementia did not allow her to remain behind bars has been detained in İstanbul.

November 11: Mizgin Yalçın, a teacher of the Kurdish language based in Diyarbakır, [received](#) numerous insulting and threatening messages on social media after she shared a video in which she mentioned the Kurdish names of provinces.

PRISON CONDITIONS

November 6: Prisoners in Çorum Open Prison who enrolled in Çorum Hitit University were not [allowed](#) to attend the classes on "security grounds" by the decision of the University Senate.

November 7: Ekrem Gün, a prisoner in Balıkesir Bandırma T Type Prison No 2, was [kept](#) in a single room and letters and books sent to him are not given to him.

November 7: Felek Gün, an ill prisoner in Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison [was](#) not treated.

November 10: Sick prisoners in Adana Kürkcüler T Type Prison No 1 and Ağrı Patnos L Type Prison were not [referred](#) to infirmary and hospital.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

November 8: A 91-year-old Syriac man was [killed](#) in an armed attack by unknown assailants in the southeastern Turkish province of Mardin in a development that raised concerns further about Turkey's already declining Syriac community.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

November 7: Some personal belongings of prisoners were [seized](#) during ward searches in Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison and prisoners were subjected to verbal violence.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

November 8: Turkey's justice ministry [asked](#) prosecutors to prepare INTERPOL Red Notice request documentation for a former public school teacher sought over a social media post and conviction of links to the faith-based Gülen movement.