

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 169 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.

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.

January 19: Media reports [indicated](#) that a 17-year-old minor in Diyarbakır was briefly forced into a vehicle by a group of unidentified individuals who introduced themselves as police officers and who coerced the minor to become an informant for the authorities.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

January 17: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) pro-Kurdish NGO activist Yıldız Damla to six years, three months on terrorism charges.

January 17: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a women's protest to demand free feminine hygiene products, detaining nine of them.

January 17: The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) 11 people protesting the suicide of a university student staying at a religious dorm.

January 17: A district governor's office in Diyarbakır [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

January 18: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Mehmet Şerif Çamçı, an NGO executive, to six years, three months on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement.

January 18: The Constitutional Court [concluded](#) the complaint of an applicant who was wounded due to police intervention during Gezi Park protests in 2013, ruling that the prohibition ill-treatment was not violated as the use of pressurized water by the riot police was proportionate and justified.

January 21: A Tunceli court [sentenced](#) local civil society activist Özkan Arslan to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges, over his participation in environmental protests as well as his social media commentary.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

January 17: A Şanlıurfa court [sentenced](#) a Kurdish minor to eight months in prison for allegedly denigrating the national flag in a social media message.

January 17: The authorities in Eskişehir [imposed](#) monetary fines on civil society activists for hanging a

banner on their office complaining about economic hardship.

January 17: A court [ruled](#) to acquit German-Turkish journalist Meşale Tolu of terrorism-charges. Tolu stood trial for nearly five years and faced up to 25 years.

January 18: Van prosecutors [indicted](#) a man who was detained for listening to a Kurdish song on his phone in a park, seeking up to 5 years in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda.

January 18: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) journalist Can Uğur on charges of insulting the president.

January 19: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports bribery allegations implicating a businessman with ties to the government.

January 20: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Abdurrahman Gök on terrorism charges. The journalist faces the charges for photographing the moment when a police officer shot a young Kurdish man during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

January 21: A Tunceli court [sentenced](#) local civil society activist Özkan Arslan to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges, over his participation in environmental protests as well as his social media commentary.

January 22: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Sedef Kabaş on charges of insulting the president on a television program. Kabaş was arrested after appearing in court later in the same day.

January 22: Reports said that the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting watchdog, [made](#) phone calls to television stations, pressuring them not to televise a song by famous singer Sezen Aksu, the lyrics of which are claimed to denigrate religious values.

January 22: A report [released](#) by a press freedom monitor found that an average of 70 journalists appeared in court in over 30 cases every month in 2021.

January 23: The police in Zonguldak briefly [detained](#) local journalist Aytaç Öztürk over a social message in which he had shared a report alleging that a local prosecutor had had a traffic accident.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

January 17: An İstanbul court [extended](#) the detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala. The judgment ignored a European Court of Human Rights order for Kavala's release and a recent Council of Europe deadline for potential infringement proceedings against Ankara. Kavala has been imprisoned since October 2017.

January 20: The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) [reported](#) that in the last quarter of 2021, at least 1,220 rights advocates faced obstruction in pursuing their activities including judicial prosecution, administrative hindrances, threats and retaliation.

January 22: Prosecutors [indicted](#) Öztürk Türkdoğan, the chairman of the Human Rights Association (İHD), on charges of having links to terrorism and insulting the interior minister, due to an article published on the association's website.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

January 17: An İstanbul court [extended](#) the detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala. The judgment ignored a European Court of Human Rights order for Kavala's release and a recent Council of Europe deadline for potential infringement proceedings against Ankara. Kavala has been imprisoned without conviction since October 2017.

January 18: Constitutional Court [statistics](#) showed that the court announced at least one rights violation in 11,830 of the individual applications that were concluded in 2021, the highest yearly number since the introduction of the right to individual application in 2012.

KURDISH MINORITY

January 17: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) pro-Kurdish NGO activist Yıldız Damla to six years, three months on terrorism charges.

January 17: A Şanlıurfa court [sentenced](#) a Kurdish minor to eight months in prison for allegedly denigrating the national flag in a social media message.

January 17: Reports [revealed](#) that jailed Kurdish politician Seyit Narin suffered a heart attack in a Rize

prison. Narin is the former mayor of a district in Diyarbakır.

January 18: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Mehmet Şerif Çamçı, an NGO executive, to six years, three months on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement.

January 18: A Van court [ruled](#) to restrict jailed Kurdish journalist Nedim Türfent's meetings with his lawyers for three months.

January 18: Van prosecutors [indicted](#) a man who was detained for listening to a Kurdish song on his phone in a park, seeking up to 5 years in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda.

PRISON CONDITIONS

January 17: Reports [revealed](#) that jailed Kurdish politician Seyit Narin suffered a heart attack in a Rize prison. Narin is the former mayor of a district in Diyarbakır.

January 18: A parliamentary human rights commission [released](#) reports on their visit to prisons in Kayseri and Mersin, which detailed significantly bad conditions that prevail in quarantine wards.

January 18: A Van court [ruled](#) to restrict jailed Kurdish journalist Nedim Türfent's meetings with his lawyers for three months.

January 19: The Human Rights Association (İHD) [announced](#) that an inmate suffering from Buerger's disease in Hatay risks losing his foot unless he receives immediate treatment.

January 19: Media reports said that a women's prison in Diyarbakır has been refusing to respond to petitions written in Kurdish and to deliver Kurdish-language publications that were sent to inmates. The prison administration has also been delaying the delivery of Kurdish-language letters sent to prisoners.

January 20: Zabit Kişi, a former teacher jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement, [announced](#) in a letter to an MP that a prison authority was denying him access to proper healthcare despite a lesion on his liver. He also said that the prison administration made him sign a petition saying that it was his decision not to go to

the hospital. Kişi was abducted by Turkish intelligence from Kazakhstan in 2017.

January 21: Ramazan Turan, a 70-year-old inmate incarcerated in a Van prison, [lost](#) his life in a one-person quarantine cell. While the official announcement said that Turan died of a heart attack, rights groups reported that his autopsy was conducted without the presence of lawyers.

January 22: An Adana prison [prevented](#) the hospitalization of inmate Fatih Özgür Aydın who refused to undergo a mouth search.

January 23: An Edirne prison [denied](#) medical treatment to four elderly sick inmates and deprived them of necessary medication.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

January 20: Ahmet Güngör, a former police officer fired from his job after a coup attempt in 2016, was [reported](#) missing after fleeing to Greece.

January 22: An unidentified individual [attacked](#) two Syrian migrants in Bursa, killing one of them and injuring the other.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

January 18: The guards in a Van prison physically [assaulted](#) inmate Fikret Diyar Orhan.

January 19: The guards in an Ağrı prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates during a ward search and confiscated items that they had purchased from the prison cafeteria.

January 19: Police officers in İstanbul reportedly [threatened](#) a female detainee with rape.

January 19: A prison authority in Tekirdağ [interrupted](#) inmate Tufan İlbaş's phone call with his family when İlbaş began to mention that he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

January 20: The guards in an Edirne prison [threatened](#) inmate Hüseyin Aydın.

January 20: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of a woman who was subjected to a strip-search in prison in 2013.

January 23: The police in Ankara [used](#) excessive force against a person who was involved in an argument with a driver.

January 23: A person who was detained by the police after a HDP rally in Kocaeli [announced](#) having been subjected to torture and ill-treatment while in custody.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

January 21: Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama [rejected](#) a request made by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for measures against followers of the Gülen movement in Albania. In the past, the Turkish government successfully used its political and economic influence in the Balkans to secure the extradition or extrajudicial deportation of the members of the group.