

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 45 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 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.

**March 8:** [Azad Aktas](#), a man living in Diyarbakır, was briefly abducted by plainclothes police officers and coerced into becoming an informant for the authorities.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

**March 7:** The police in Şanlıurfa briefly [detained](#) eight people protesting an incident of anti-Kurdish racism in a football game.

**March 8:** A district governor's office in İstanbul [banned](#) demonstrations in an around the famous Taksim Square ahead of the International Women's Day. The police violently [intervened](#) in a women's rights march that was held despite the ban, detaining at least 22 activists.

**March 11:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) socialist activists Adnan Özcan and Kalender Polat who were promoting a commemoration event.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**March 6:** A Mersin court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering allegations that secondhand clothes donated to earthquake victims were sold to a private company by the Red Crescent.

**March 6:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least six news reports about a company that built highways that were heavily destroyed during the earthquakes of February.

**March 6:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report covering mismanagement allegations in earthquake-hit areas.

**March 6:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to the website of Martı, a scooter sharing company.

**March 7:** A Rize court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of two years to journalist Genççağa Karafazlı on charges of violating the right to private life, for reporting on sexual harassment allegations implicating an academic.

**March 7:** Konya prosecutors [indicted](#) Kurdish journalists Dilan Babat and Fırat Can Arslan on terrorism-related charges for covering the funeral of a colleague who was killed in Iraq.

**March 7:** A Bursa court [imposed](#) a monetary fine on lawyer Umut Beyaz on charges of insulting the justice minister on social media.

**March 8:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalists Gaye Şeyma Can and Buse Söğütlü who were covering a

women's rights march on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

**March 9:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) journalist Firat Bulut on charges of spreading false information, due to his coverage of the earthquakes.

**March 9:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Germany-based Kurdish musician Ali Baran on terrorism-charges upon his arrival at the airport. Baran was released with a travel ban.

**March 9:** An İstanbul court [handed down](#) two separate prison sentences of 11 months, 20 days to musician Kutsal Evcimen on charges of insulting the president and the interior minister on social media. The court later turned the sentences into monetary fines.

**March 9:** The police in İzmir briefly [detained](#) activist Sevde Ünal on charges of insulting the president, for carrying a banner criticizing the president during a women's rights march.

**March 9:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) monetary fines and a broadcasting ban on Habertürk TV and Flash Haber stations due to their coverage of the earthquakes of February.

**March 9:** A Tekirdağ court [ruled](#) to block access to at least seven news reports covering allegations of corruption implicating a district mayor.

**March 11:** The police in Hatay briefly [detained](#) film director Orhan Eskiköy while filming in earthquake-hit areas.

**March 12:** The Security Directorate General (EGM) [announced](#) that a total of 179 people were detained due to their "provocative" social media posts about the earthquakes, up from 152 last week.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**March 8:** An İstanbul court [began](#) the retrial of 11 human rights defenders, including refugee rights lawyer and honorary chair of Amnesty International's Turkey section Taner Kılıç, whose terrorism-related convictions were overturned by the Supreme Court of Appeals.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**March 7:** The European Court of Human Rights [faulted](#) Turkey due to its refusal to consider domestic legal complaints of actress Berrak Tüzünataç, who was secretly filmed at her home by a television station. The court said Turkey failed to protect Tüzünataç's right to private life.

**March 8:** Earthquake victims who were previously fired from public sector jobs by decree-laws were reportedly [discriminated](#) against at temporary shelters provided by the authorities.

**March 11:** A Turkish bank [froze](#) a retainer paid to lawyer Levent Mazılıgüney on the grounds of terrorism financing because the client is on the Interior Ministry's "terrorist wanted list."

## KURDISH MINORITY

**March 7:** Konya prosecutors [indicted](#) Kurdish journalists Dilan Babat and Firat Can Arslan on terrorism-related charges for covering the funeral of a colleague who was killed in Iraq.

**March 9:** The Constitutional Court [removed](#) a freeze on state funds allocated to the pro-Kurdish HDP. The court had imposed the freeze in January on the grounds that the party has links to terrorism.

**March 11:** Former HDP MP İbrahim Binici was [detained](#) and arrested in Ankara after his terrorism-related prison sentence of two years, six months was upheld by appeals courts.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**March 12:** Trans woman [Selin Çiğerci](#) was the target of an attempted attack in Konya.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**March 7:** A women's prison in Ankara [refused](#) to dispatch humanitarian aid collected by inmates for earthquake victims.

**March 8:** The authorities [charged](#) inmate Ahmet Kaya an exorbitant amount of money for a needed surgery. Kaya's ribs were broken as a result of an incident of mistreatment in a Van prison.

**March 8:** A Balıkesir prison [obstructed](#) the hospitalization of inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

**March 11:** Rights groups [reported](#) overcrowding in a Manisa prison.

**March 12:** A Kütahya prison [restricted](#) inmates' daily water supply.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**March 8:** Security officers in Kahramanmaraş forcibly [displaced](#) nine Syrian earthquake victims who were staying in tents.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**March 7:** The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) [reported](#) that at least 17 people were mistreated by security officers in earthquake-hit provinces.

**March 7:** The guards in an İstanbul prison [damaged](#) personal items of prisoners during a ward search.

**March 9:** The guards in a Şanlıurfa prison [strip-searched](#) two elderly people (Mehmet Samur and Adle Samur) who were arrested.

**March 9:** The guards in a Kocaeli prison physically and verbally [mistreated](#) inmates Hasbi Aydemir and Ramazan Benice.

**March 9:** The guards in a Gaziantep prison [strip-searched](#) Umut Polat, a socialist activist who was detained and arrested while assisting in disaster relief efforts after the earthquakes.

**March 10:** An Erzincan prison arbitrarily [restricted](#) the rights of political prisoners and refused to dispatch their letters to an MP complaining of the mistreatment they suffered.

**March 11:** The guards in a Kayseri prison [mistreated](#) disabled inmate Şaban Kaygusuz and obstructed his hospitalization.

**March 11:** The guards in an Erzincan prison [strip-searched](#) inmates transferred from other facilities.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**March 7:** The National Intelligence Organization (MİT) [confirmed](#) in its yearly report that it conducted operations abroad for the forcible return of more than 100 people with alleged links to the Gülen movement.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**March 6:** Rights groups [reported](#) on the occasion of the International Women's Day that at least 327 women were victims of femicide in Turkey in 2022. An opposition MP [announced](#) that at least 603 women were killed by men since Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention on combating domestic violence.