

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

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

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**February 7:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey over the death of teenager Berkin Elvan after being hit by a tear gas canister fired by the police during the Gezi Park protests of 2013. The ECtHR ruled that Elvan's right to life was violated.

## 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

**February 12:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a press conference held by a left-wing party about the earthquakes in southern Turkey, briefly detaining 40 people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**February 6:** The police in İzmir [detained](#) reporter Nazlıcan Yıldız.

**February 6:** An Antalya court [ruled](#) to acquit a man named Engin Korkmaz who stood trial on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**February 7:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) academic Özgün Emre Koç on allegations of fomenting enmity and hatred among the people due to his social media posts criticizing the government's handling of the earthquakes. Koç was released the next day.

**February 7:** The police in Adana [detained](#) journalist Volkan Pekal for taking pictures in front of a local city hospital for news coverage after the earthquakes of February 6.

**February 7:** Prosecutors [launched](#) investigations into journalists Merdan Yanardağ and Enver Aysever on charges of fomenting enmity and hatred among the people due to their critical coverage of the government's response to the earthquakes on February 6.

**February 7:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu who stood trial on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda and fomenting enmity and hatred among the public due to her social media posts.

**February 7:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Mustafa Sönmez who stood trial on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**February 8:** The authorities briefly [restricted](#) access to Twitter in the aftermath of the earthquakes. The move drew widespread criticism as the social media platform

was used by numerous victims trapped under the rubble to report their location and ask for help.

**February 8:** The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) journalists Mahmut Altıntaş and Sema Çağlak for taking pictures of a collapsed building in the aftermath of the earthquake.

**February 8:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) reporter Mehmet Güleş along with a person that he was interviewing. Güleş was released on probation the next day. He faces charges of disseminating misleading information.

**February 8:** The police in Van [summoned](#) journalist Oktay Candemir for a questioning after local prosecutors launched an investigation into him for allegedly insulting a local government agency on social media.

**February 9:** The authorities obstructed several members of the press who were reporting from areas hit by the earthquakes. Gendarmes in Hatay prevented reporter Fırat Fıstık from shooting videos. The police in Malatya physically [assaulted](#) reporter Ferit Demir who was covering news.

**February 11:** Customs police [prevented](#) French journalist Guillaume Perrier from entering the country, citing an administrative measure against him. Perrier has previously worked as the Le Monde correspondent in İstanbul and is known for his political coverage on Turkey's ruling party.

**February 11:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) one person who protested the justice minister's visit to the province.

**February 11:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) opposition politician Süleyman Dağ due to his social media posts about the earthquakes.

**February 12:** The authorities [announced](#) that a total of 56 people were detained due to "provocative" social media posts about the earthquakes. Courts ruled to arrest 14 of the detainees. The government [introduced](#) a smartphone application allowing users to report people who are believed to have produced or disseminated fake news and disinformation online.

**February 12:** Media reports [indicated](#) that at least 17 journalists were among the victims of the earthquakes on February 6.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**February 11:** Customs police [prevented](#) French journalist Guillaume Perrier from entering the country, citing an administrative measure against him. Perrier has previously worked as the Le Monde correspondent in İstanbul and is known for his political coverage on Turkey's ruling party.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**February 12:** Several videos circulating on social media throughout the week [showed](#) scenes of alleged looters being beaten by law enforcement officers. Reports [claimed](#) that three people were lynched to death in Hatay.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**February 6:** The police in İzmir [detained](#) five people, including HDP executives and Jinnews reporter Nazlıcan Yıldız.

**February 7:** Local governors in several predominantly Kurdish provinces [obstructed](#) disaster relief efforts initiated by the HDP and confiscated vehicles carrying humanitarian aid.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**February 9:** Riots [broke out](#) in prisons in Hatay and Kahramanmaraş following the earthquakes. The authorities announced the death of three inmates in the suppression of the riots.

**February 10:** Reports [indicated](#) that 12 inmates who were transferred from a Kahramanmaraş prison due to the earthquakes were not allowed to take with them their personal belongings.

**February 11:** A Şanlıurfa prison [restricted](#) visitations due to the earthquakes.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**February 7:** The authorities [decided](#) to deport Iranian refugee Arezup Yaghoubi, citing national security reasons.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**February 9:** The police in Malatya physically [assaulted](#) reporter Ferit Demir who was covering news.

**February 12:** Several videos circulating on social media throughout the week [showed](#) scenes of alleged looters being beaten by law enforcement officers.

**February 12:** [Ahmet Güreşçi](#), a man who was detained by gendarmes in Hatay on February 11 on charges of robbery in earthquake-hit areas, reportedly lost his life in custody after being subjected to torture.

**February 12:** The police in Adiyaman physically [assaulted](#) five people who were assigned by a district governor's office in Diyarbakır to assist in disaster relief efforts in the province and who were detained by gendarmes on suspicion.