

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 211 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.

March 3: [Kazım Avcı](#), a 67-year-old inmate held in an Ankara prison, told his family during a visit that his health had deteriorated considerably after a heart attack in early February and that he had difficulty sleeping.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

March 4: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no violation of the right to life in the fatal police shooting of Ethem Sarısülük during the Gezi Park protests in 2013.

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

February 28: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) 26 people protesting the high costs of living.

March 1: The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) one person protesting his layoff from a district municipality.

March 3: An İzmir court [sentenced](#) six people to five months in prison over a demonstration they staged in 2019 against the ousting of elected mayors in three predominantly Kurdish provinces.

March 3: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) three people protesting to demand the release of a sick prisoner.

March 3: İstanbul prosecutors [drafted](#) an indictment seeking the closure of a pro-Kurdish association.

March 4: The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) two people demonstrating in front of the Ministry of Justice to demand the release of a sick prisoner.

March 4: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) one person over a demonstration about sick and hunger striking prisoners.

March 4: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) 10 members and executives of the Republican People's Party (CHP) over the distribution of a brochure on money laundering allegations implicating the government.

March 4: A district governor's office in Kocaeli [rejected](#) a request for permission to organize a demonstration about the economic situation.

March 6: The police in Ankara [detained](#) five people holding a demonstration on the occasion of the upcoming International Women's Day.

March 6: The authorities [announced](#) investigations into 12 people over events organized on the occasion of the International Women's Day.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

March 1: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [ruled](#) in the case of former judge İbrahim Kozan that sharing an article criticizing the government actions perceived to be violating judicial independence is not plausible grounds for disciplinary sanctions. The court ruled that Turkey violated the former judge's right to freedom of expression as well as his right to an effective remedy.

March 2: A monthly report [released](#) by the Turkish Journalists' Association (TGC) indicated that a total of 108 journalists appeared at court hearings in February.

March 2: Hakkari prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into Journalist Rabia Öner on account of her social media posts.

March 2: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency.

March 3: An Aydın court [sentenced](#) journalist Ahmet Kanbal to one year, three months in prison over a social media post where he shared a news report about alleged war crimes committed by a high-rankin gendarmerie officer in Diyarbakır.

March 3: An Adana court [sentenced](#) a person named Kader Duman to eight months, 10 days in prison on charges of "praising crime and criminals" on social media.

March 4: An İstanbul court [handed down](#) prison sentences to journalists Ahmet Altan, Yasemin Çongar, Yıldırım Oğur and Mehmet Baransu on charges of publishing state secrets in a news report.

March 4: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Kemal Özkiraz, the head of a prominent polling company, on charges of insulting a cleric.

March 4: In a monthly [report](#) released by the Coalition for Women in Journalism (CFWIJ), Turkey ranked first in terms of violations of rights against women journalists in February.

March 4: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into local opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu over a social media post.

March 6: Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu [announced](#) that the government was prepared to take action against those involved in "fear-mongering" over food stocks on social media.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

March 4: The authorities [prevented](#) opposition MP and human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu from leaving Turkey due to a travel ban in place despite his parliamentary immunity. He was scheduled to attend a conference in Berlin.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

March 4: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) civil society leader Osman Kavala, demanding aggravated life sentence on charges connected to the Gezi Park protests of 2013.

March 4: The authorities [prevented](#) opposition MP and human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu from leaving Turkey due to a travel ban in place despite his parliamentary immunity. He was scheduled to attend a conference in Berlin.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

February 28: İstanbul prosecutors [declined](#) to pursue a case against police officers accused of mistreatment and torture, despite a Constitutional Court ruling requesting a thorough investigation into the accusations.

March 1: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [ruled](#) in the case of former judge İbrahim Kozan that sharing an article criticizing the government actions perceived to be violating judicial independence is not plausible grounds for disciplinary sanctions. The court ruled that Turkey violated the former judge's right to freedom of expression as well as his right to an effective remedy.

March 2: An İstanbul court [handed down](#) life sentences to 37 former air force cadets in a retrial, despite the fact that the Supreme Court of Appeals which ordered the retrial had overturned their previous life sentences.

March 4: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no violation of the right to life in the fatal police shooting of Ethem Sarısülük during the Gezi Park protests in 2013.

KURDISH MINORITY

March 1: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) former district mayor Selim Kurbanoğlu to 10 years, six months in prison on terrorism-related charges.

March 1: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) lawyer Ruşen Seydaoğlu to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into pro-Kurdish political networks.

March 2: The parliament [lifted](#) the parliamentary immunity of HDP MP Semra Güzel who is facing terrorism charges.

March 3: An Aydın court [sentenced](#) journalist Ahmet Kanbal to one year, three months in prison over a social media post where he shared a news report about alleged war crimes committed by a high-rankin gendarmerie officer in Diyarbakır.

March 3: An İzmir court [sentenced](#) six people to five months in prison over a demonstration they staged in 2019 against the ousting of elected mayors in three predominantly Kurdish provinces.

March 3: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) local HDP executives Songül Küçük, Naim İnedi and three others. The detainees were released the next day.

March 3: İstanbul prosecutors [drafted](#) an indictment seeking the closure of a pro-Kurdish association.

March 6: A district governor's office in Şırnak [banned](#) the staging of a Kurdish-language theater play without citing a reason.

OTHER MINORITIES

March 2: Alevi organizations [staged](#) demonstrations in several provinces, demanding that compulsory religion classes in schools be abolished and that Alevi houses of worship be officially recognized by the state.

PRISON CONDITIONS

February 28: Reports revealed that a Diyarbakır prison was [denying](#) needed medication to a child who was staying behind bars with her mother and that lesions have appeared on the child's body as a result.

February 28: Reports revealed that a Düzce prison was [holding](#) 25 people in wards designed for eight people.

March 2: Reports revealed that an İzmir prison has been [denying](#) treatment to sick inmate Abbas Özdemir for three months.

March 3: Reports [revealed](#) that heating in a Yozgat prison has not been working for two weeks.

March 4: Seyit Mehmet Ünal, a former teacher arrested for links to the Gülen movement, [told](#) his family during a phone call that the heating in his one-person cell was cut off despite the cold weather.

March 4: A Mardin prison [denied](#) hospitalization to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

March 6: Ercan Eke, a 32-year-old inmate, was [found](#) dead in an İzmir prison under suspicious circumstances.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

February 28: İstanbul prosecutors [declined](#) to pursue a case against police officers accused of mistreatment and torture, despite a Constitutional Court ruling requesting a thorough investigation into the accusations.

March 1: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison physically [assaulted](#) seven inmates.

March 2: The guards in an Ankara prison [strip-searched](#) a relative of an inmate who was visiting.

March 4: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison [threatened](#) to kill an inmate named Kurbanî Özcan.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

March 3: The chief prosecutor at the Council of State [called for](#) the cancellation of a presidential decree that required the withdrawal of Turkey from the İstanbul Convention on combating violence against women.

March 4: A Gaziantep court [ruled](#) to acquit a man who was accused of sexual abuse and murder charges after a 17-year-old girl fell off the balcony of his house under suspicious circumstances.

March 4: Men killed 22 women and inflicted violence on at least 78 women in February, according to a monthly gender-based violence [report](#) published by Bianet.

March 6: The police in Ankara [detained](#) five people holding a demonstration on the occasion of the upcoming International Women's Day.

March 6: The authorities [announced](#) investigations into 12 people over events organized on the occasion of the International Women's Day.