

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

January 8: [Nusret Muğla](#), an 84-year-old man who suffers from heart disease, high blood pressure, prostate cancer and renal and balance problems, was arrested after the Supreme Court of Appeals (Yargıtay) upheld his previous conviction on account of his alleged links to the Gülen movement.

January 8: [Hadi Yalçın](#), a sick inmate suffering from cancer, lost his life at an Edirne prison after authorities rejected repeated requests for his release.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

January 4: The police in Ankara [detained](#) Mahmut Konuk while protesting his summary dismissal from public service.

January 5: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) 17 people, including students, in connections with demonstrations to protest the recent appointment of a ruling party member as the rector of the Boğaziçi University. Some of the detainees were later [referred](#) to a court for arrest. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan verbally [targeted](#) the protesters, calling them “terrorists.” On Jan. 6, the Governor’s Office [imposed](#) a ban on outdoor gatherings in the Beşiktaş and Sarıyer districts. The police also blocked a related protest in Ankara, briefly detaining 28.

January 5: The police in Ankara [blocked](#) a protest organized by a women’s group on the occasion of the first anniversary of the suspicious disappearance of Gülistan Doku, briefly detaining 18 people.

January 8: The police intervened in at least 549 peaceful demonstrations in 49 provinces across Turkey,

resulting in the detention of 1,816 people, according to a yearly [report](#) published by an İstanbul-based rights group.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

January 4: Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation against former opposition politician Fikri Sağlar “for provoking hatred and enmity among public,” over his remarks on a television program.

January 4: A yearly [report](#) by a journalists’ association found that at least 79 journalists were detained, 24 were arrested and 43 were sentenced to a total of 150 years, 15 days in prison in 2020.

January 4: The Ministry of Trade [imposed](#) a monetary fine against the Evrensel newspaper over its 25th anniversary video on TELE1 channel that featured a girl holding a scarf in yellow, green and red which the decision described as “symbolizing a terrorist organization.”

January 5: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Mehmet Aslan in a house raid. Aslan was arrested on terrorism-related charges on Jan. 8.

January 5: The police in Sivas briefly detained local journalist [Mehmet Bakır](#) over his social media posts. Bakır was released the same day after being questioned by a prosecutor.

January 5: Prosecutors launched an investigation against journalist [Can Ataklı](#) for allegedly “provoking hatred and enmity among public,” over his remarks on a television program suggesting that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would not leave with an election.

January 5: An İstanbul court accepted an indictment against opposition politician [Canan Kaftancıoğlu](#) seeking up to 10 years, six months in prison over her social media posts.

January 6: İstanbul prosecutors launched an investigation into journalist [Pelin Ünker](#), over her report on Deutsche Welle Turkish service about leaked US Treasury Department documents involving suspicious transactions by Turkish banks.

January 6: An İstanbul court [blocked](#) access to news reports about the contents of a book alleging judicial plot by members of the ruling AKP against the opposition mayor of İstanbul.

January 6: An İstanbul court [blocked](#) access to news reports about a judge who ruled to acquit a social media user put on trial for allegedly insulting a ruling AKP MP.

January 7: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Ayten Akgün to a suspended sentence of 11 months, 20 days for insulting the president on social media.

January 7: An Ankara court [accepted](#) a second indictment against journalists Müyesser Yıldız and İsmail Dükel who are already on trial on espionage charges over a news report about a Turkish intelligence officers slain in Libya. The second indictment was merged with the case file of the ongoing main trial.

January 9: Opposition MP Sezgin Tanrıkulu released a monthly [report](#) which found that Turkish authorities in December 2020 blocked access to a total of 1,342 URLs, including links to government-critical media outlets. The report also said that 13 people were detained, two were arrested and five were either given prison sentences or levied fines for expressing views critical of the president or the government. The authorities launched investigations into 35 social media users, including those who raised allegations of undue strip-searches against detainees and prisoners.

January 9: Video-hosting website Dailymotion and video-sharing social network TikTok [announced](#) that they will appoint local representatives to Turkey to comply with a new and controversial social media law bringing implying heavy government censorship on online commentary.

January 9: Authorities are reportedly [investigating](#) several Turkish citizens for calling Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu bald on social media.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

January 4: A prison administration in Kırıkkale reportedly put imprisoned lawyer and rights advocate [Metin Can Yılmaz](#) in a solitary cell after he filed complaints about numerous torture incidents in jail.

KURDISH MINORITY

January 5: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Mehmet Aslan in a house raid. Aslan, a reporter for the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya Agency, was arrested on terrorism-related charges on Jan. 8.

January 5: Kars prosecutors issued an indictment against [Sevin Alaca](#), former co-mayor of Kars who was previously removed from office by the Interior Ministry, seeking up to 15 years in prison on terrorism-related charges.

January 7: An Ankara court [accepted](#) an indictment naming 108 people including jailed Kurdish politicians Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ in connection to street protests in the country's Southeast in 2014.

January 7: The Interior Ministry [removed](#) from office two district council members in Gaziantep, Hurşit Besle and Adnan Erol, citing ongoing terrorism-related investigations into them.

MISTREATMENT OF CITIZENS ABROAD

January 6: Ukrainian authorities [deported](#) Turkish citizens Salih Fidan and Samet Güre to Turkey despite their asylum applications at the Ukrainian office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to avoid political persecution in Turkey.

OTHER MINORITIES

January 7: An NGO [report](#) found that in 2020 a total of 1,476 hate speech items and discriminatory remarks targeting LGBTI people were published in Turkey's newspapers.

PRISON CONDITIONS

January 6: A [report](#) by a Turkey-based NGO recorded widespread complaints from prisoners with regard to hygiene, cleanliness and nutrition.

January 8: A total of nine inmates reportedly [attempted](#) suicide in two weeks at a prison in Antalya.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

January 6: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the deportation of a Tajikistani man in 2017 was unlawful as it was carried out without examining whether the applicant would be exposed to persecution.

January 7: Human traffickers [abandoned](#) 84 migrants in the western province of Aydın. The group had reportedly taken off to reach Italy.

January 7: A labor union [report](#) said that an Uzbek domestic worker was locked up in her room by her employers out of Covid-19 fears.

January 8: Security officers in İstanbul physically [attacked](#) a group of migrant children for allegedly getting into a subway car illegally.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

January 4: A prison administration in Kırıkkale reportedly put imprisoned lawyer and rights advocate [Metin Can Yılmaz](#) in a solitary cell after he filed complaints about numerous torture incidents in jail.

January 7: Some students who were detained during demonstrations in protest of the appointment of a pro-government rector to the Boğaziçi University were subjected to [strip-searches](#), an opposition MP claimed.

January 9: Security forces in Hakkari reportedly [raided](#) a house to detain Ekber Hudai and İbrahim Fırat for alleged cross-border cigarette smuggling, physically abusing the two in order to coerce them to admit to the accusations.

January 9: Opposition MP Sezgin Tanrıkulu published a monthly [report](#) which found that 240 incidents of torture and ill-treatment occurred in December, 143 of them in prisons.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

January 6: A monthly male violence [report](#) found that in December 2020 men killed 24 women, inflicted violence on at least 61 and raped four. Yearly gender-based violence [statistics](#) released by a women's group said 300 women were killed throughout the year while 171 were found dead in suspicious circumstances.