

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 238 | Date 6-12 January

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 110 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.

10 January: Despite ECHR rulings and UN recommendations, Turkish authorities [detained](#) 85 people in nationwide operations targeting alleged links to the Gülen movement, as announced by the Minister of Interior on social media.

11 January: Mervane Albayrak, sentenced to 6 years and 3 months for alleged Gülen movement ties, including ByLock usage, was [imprisoned](#) in Edirne despite having a 3.5-year-old son with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), a condition requiring constant care.

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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

7 January: Journalist Ahmet Erkan Yiğitsözlü was briefly [detained](#) on Sunday for the 14th time over a social media post criticizing President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in which he accused members of the ruling AKP of prioritizing “corruption and profiting” over personal sacrifice.

9 January: Turkey has [blocked](#) access to seven news websites critical of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, including Yeni Demokrasi, Mesopotamia News Agency (MA), Umut Gazetesi, Özgür Gelecek, Alinteri, Halkın Günlüğü, and Kızıl Bayrak, citing national security and public order concerns.

10 January: Kocaeli Gazetesi journalist Cihan Polat was [detained](#) by the gendarmerie due to his article titled 'Shocking Allegations About AKP's Katırcıoğlu's Advisor and Brother.' CHP City Council Member from İzmit, Nazım Gençtürk, who was quoted in the same report, was also detained as part of the same investigation.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

10 January: The indictment prepared by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office against human rights defender Nimet Tanrıku was [accepted](#) by the Ankara 17th High Criminal Court requesting her punishment for 'membership in a terrorist organization.'

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

11 January: A total of 17 summaries of proceedings seeking the removal of parliamentary immunity were [submitted](#) to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), targeting 14 opposition MPs, including the President of the CHP.

13 January: The Ministry of Interior [appointed](#) the District Governor of Akdeniz as a trustee to replace the DEM Party's co-mayors of Mersin's Akdeniz district, following their arrests while three detained city council members were also dismissed from their positions.

KURDISH MINORITY

9 January: Members of the People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) Van Provincial Youth Council, Lorin Aryen Turğut and Kenan İldeniz, were [detained](#) by police in front of the party's provincial building in Van.

10 January: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) Hoşyar Sarıyıldız and Nuriye Aslan, co-mayors from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) in Akdeniz district, Mersin province, during early-morning raids.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

6 January: Controversial Turkish Mayor Tanju Özcan [admitted](#) to imposing illegal measures against Syrian refugees, including restricting their access to water, halting social aid, and closing businesses owned by Syrians in Bolu, as part of efforts to force them to leave the city.

8 January: Turkish authorities last week [deported](#) Syrian mother Fatim el Musa to Syria, leaving her five children, including a 4-year-old, behind in Turkey despite her temporary protection status, ongoing legal case, and coercion into signing a voluntary return form, a move condemned by her lawyer as a violation of Turkish and international law.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

6 January: Mehmet Parlak, an inmate suffering from severe kidney disease, has been urgently [called](#) to be released by his wife due to his deteriorating health.

9 January: Female prisoners at Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison were [subjected](#) to strip searches and forced shoe removal before open visits, with those refusing these practices unable to attend their visits.

10 January: Hüseyin Ermiş was reportedly [subjected](#) to torture and other ill-treatment, resulting in injuries, after

being detained on December 25, 2024, in Istanbul's Fatih district and taken to the Balat Police Station.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

7 January: Turkey has arbitrarily [frozen](#) the assets of nine US-based organizations, including the Niagara Foundation and the Midwest Association of Turkish-Americans, over alleged ties to the Gülen movement, even though none of these organizations have assets in Turkey