

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 28 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.

August 3: Revealed court documents [showed](#) that Şükrü Tuğrul Özşengül, a jailed academic who died of a heart attack on July 30, had repeatedly mentioned his heart condition in court and told the judge he would die if he had another cardiac arrest in prison. The court had told Özşengül that there was no health problem that prevented his incarceration. Özşengül was imprisoned due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement.

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

August 1: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

August 2: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest against the planned demolition of a park, detaining nine people.

August 4: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a monetary fine imposed on 10 people in Van for handing out flyers about a HDP meeting was in violation of the right to assembly.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

August 1: The police in Tunceli [detained](#) a newspaper distributor working for a left-wing opposition daily, confiscating his newspapers.

August 2: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about allegations that a foundation close to the government was granted a tax exemption.

August 3: [Arif Kocabıyık](#), a YouTube journalist known for his government-critical street interviews, announced that he and his crew were attacked by three assailants in Kırıkkale.

August 3: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to websites used by the Etkin news agency (ETHA) and the Yeni Demokrasi newspaper, two pro-Kurdish media outlets.

August 3: A Mersin court [ruled](#) to block access to a website used by the leftist Kızılbaş newspaper.

August 4: A Mersin court [ruled](#) to block access to at least 10 online news articles about a local ruling party executive who was allegedly fined for using city water illegally.

August 4: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that universities that imposed disciplinary penalties on

several academics for signing a joint petition in 2016 violated the academics' right to freedom of speech and expression. The group of academics had released a joint petition that criticized the government's handling of the armed conflict in the predominantly Kurdish southeast.

August 4: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports about a bribery and smuggling investigation in which two customs officials were allegedly implicated.

August 5: The police in Mardin [detained](#) three people for wearing scarves of jailed anti-government cleric Alpaslan Kuytul.

August 5: Local authorities in the Turkish-controlled northern Cyprus [launched](#) an investigation into Cypriot academic Hasan Ulaş Altıok on allegations of insulting Turkey's president in an article that he authored.

August 5: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a university in Mersin violated a student's right to freedom of expression by imposing on her a one-month suspension from the university over her critical remarks about a government-appointed rector during a protest.

August 6: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) nine people over slogans chanted at a rally organized by the HDP.

August 7: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into audio streaming platform Spotify over complaints that some playlist names were disrespectful of some government officials and the religious values of the public.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

August 1: Jailed Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk was [forced](#) to present her defense in a court hearing despite suffering from dementia. Tuğluk was arrested in December 2016 as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement and despite her health problems, the authorities have ignored repeated calls for her release.

KURDISH MINORITY

August 1: Jailed Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk was [forced](#) to present her defense in a court hearing despite suffering from dementia. Tuğluk was arrested in December 2016 as part of an investigation into the

Kurdish political movement and despite her health problems, the authorities have ignored repeated calls for her release.

August 3: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to websites used by the Etkin news agency (ETHA) and the Yeni Demokrasi newspaper, two pro-Kurdish media outlets.

August 4: [Ömer Çelik](#), one of the 16 Kurdish journalists arrested in June on terrorism-related charges, announced to his family during a visit that they were not allowed to buy refrigerators to use in their cells and that the prison administration did not deliver the books sent for them.

August 4: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a monetary fine imposed on 10 people in Van for handing out flyers about a HDP meeting was in violation of the right to assembly.

August 6: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) nine people over slogans chanted at a rally organized by the HDP.

August 6: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) HDP district executive Berat Can.

OTHER MINORITIES

August 6: Two unidentified assailants physically [assaulted](#) Selami Sarıtaş, an Alevi community leader, in front of his house in İstanbul in an apparent hate crime.

PRISON CONDITIONS

August 1: A Şanlıurfa prison [confiscated](#) inmates' personal belongings during ward searches, restricted their video calls and denied medical care to four inmates suffering from health problems.

August 3: Media reports [said](#) that an Ankara prison was holding inmates in overcrowded wards and that the prison administration was not regularly supplying hygiene products.

August 4: [Ömer Çelik](#), one of the 16 Kurdish journalists arrested in June on terrorism-related charges, announced to his family during a visit that they were not allowed to buy refrigerators to use in their cells and that the prison administration did not deliver the books sent for them.

August 4: A Samsun prison [confiscated](#) inmates' radios and books.

August 4: A Muğla prison arbitrarily [reduced](#) the duration of inmates' visitation rights.

August 4: A women's prison in İzmir [denied](#) hospital visit to inmate Fatma Özbay who is a cancer patient.

August 5: An Ankara prison [restricted](#) inmates' food supply and refused to deliver books sent by their family members.

August 5: A Diyarbakır prison arbitrarily [reduced](#) the duration of inmates' visitation rights, restricted their access to social and cultural activities.

August 5: An Adana prison arbitrarily [refused](#) to deliver a report that was sent to jailed journalist Fatih Özgür Aydın.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

August 3: Media reports [revealed](#) video footage showing guards in a Samsun prison mistreating inmate Emir Karakurum.

August 4: Soldiers in Hakkari physically [mistreated](#) a shepherd who was in a plateau to graze his animals.

August 5: The police in Mardin physically [assaulted](#) a group of people for wearing scarves of jailed anti-government cleric Alpaslan Kuytul.

August 5: A law firm [announced](#) that two of their clients were mistreated at a police station in İstanbul after being taken into custody.

August 5: The guards in an Elazığ prison [mistreated](#) sick inmate Fevzi Fidan.

August 5: Reports revealed that the guards in a prison in Muğla [assaulted](#) sick inmate Mehmet Salih Filiz on July 2 when he wanted to talk to the prison administration for his medical treatment.

August 6: The guards in a women's prison in Diyarbakır verbally [assaulted](#) inmates.

August 6: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in favor of Mehmet Ali Çintan who in August 2016 was mistreated in police custody in Mersin.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

August 3: Men killed 28 women and inflicted violence on at least 64 others in July, according to the monthly gender-based violence [report](#) published by Bianet.