

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 50 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.

## 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

January 23: The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has [filed](#) a criminal complaint against Armenian writer and linguist Sevan Nişanyan for his remarks about the Islamic call to prayer (adhan).

January 24: Gendarmes in southeastern Turkey have [detained](#) three school principals over their WhatsApp stories commemorating the victims of the 2011 Roboski massacre.

January 24: A local journalist, Sinan Aygül, in eastern Turkey who was attacked by two people connected to the mayor of a Justice and Development Party (AKP)-run

municipality last year has been handed down a prison sentence for insulting one of the attackers.

January 26: A Turkish journalist, Ahmet Ayva, was [sent](#) to prison in İstanbul after his conviction on terrorism-related charges was upheld by the Supreme Court of Appeals.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

January 28: Masked assailants [carried](#) out an attack on an Italian church in İstanbul during a service on Sunday, killing one person, Turkey's interior minister said.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

January 22: An international platform established by four judges associations in Europe to promote the rule of law in Turkey has [called](#) on the country to take the necessary steps for the restoration of the rule of law and to comply with rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

January 25: Approximately 23,400 applications from Turkey [are](#) pending before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), making it the highest case-count country in 2023, according to statistics from the court.

## OTHER MINORITIES

January 26: Yeniden Refah Partisi (YRP) [used](#) discriminatory and LGBTI+phobic expressions such as "If there is no morality, there is LGBT!" and "We will drive perverted organizations out of our city" in the videos it published on social media within the scope of local election campaigns for March 31, 2024.

## **PRISON CONDITIONS**

January 23: Family members of female inmates in central Turkey's Çorum prison have [complained](#) of poor conditions and overcrowding.

## **TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

January 22: Prison guards in Diyarbakır allegedly [beat](#) six inmates for greeting a fellow inmate on his way back to his cell from seeing visitors.

January 25: The wards of prisoners in Ankara Sincan High Security Prison No 2 were [changed](#) without any justification and some prisoners were subjected to physical and verbal violence of wardens.

January 26: The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on Wednesday [adopted](#) a resolution on torture and ill-treatment in places of detention across Europe, addressing the increase in alleged incidents reported from Turkey in past years.

## **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

January 25: According to a Freedom House report on global transnational repression cited by the Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF), Ankara's campaign primarily [targets](#) people affiliated with the Gülen movement, but the efforts of the government have expanded to include Kurds and leftists as well. Turkish authorities have committed 132 incidents, or 15 percent of the total, of direct, physical transnational repression since 2014.