

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 76 | November 29-December 5, 2021

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 269 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.

**November 30:** Ömer Faruk Turan, 11, [died](#) of heart failure without being able to say goodbye to his father, who has been in prison over alleged links to the Gülen movement and who was denied a visit in the hospital where his son was undergoing treatment.

**December 4:** Reyhan Yalçındağ, the lawyer for jailed Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk [said](#) in an interview that her client was experiencing memory loss and was unable to handle her daily needs on her own, reiterating the call for her immediate release.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**November 30:** A police officer in İstanbul fatally [shot](#) a person who allegedly did not comply with an order to stop. The officer in question was reportedly suspended from duty and arrested.

## 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

**November 29:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**November 29:** The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**December 2:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration held in support of municipal workers on strike, detaining one person.

**December 3:** The Interior Ministry [launched](#) an investigation into several NGOs for allegedly receiving funds from a Texas-based foundation.

**December 3:** The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**November 29:** Diyarbakır courts [ruled](#) to block access to three web addresses used by pro-Kurdish ETHA, Umut and Kızılbaşrak news websites.

**November 30:** An İzmir court [sentenced](#) documentary filmmaker Oktay İnce to one year, two months, 17 days in prison on charges of insulting the president.

**November 30:** A Hatay court [sentenced](#) lawyer Hakan Mazman to one year, two months, 17 days in prison on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**November 30:** A Kayseri court [sentenced](#) a person to one year, two months in prison on charges of insulting the president.

**November 30:** An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) a prison sentence of up to two years, four months for Deniz Yücel, a Turkish-German journalist who is standing trial in absentia for insulting a public official.

**November 30:** Manisa police [displayed](#) three books authored by jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş among criminal evidence seized in a police raid.

**November 30:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on allegations that a woman who introduced herself as a governor's office executive threatened people in a traffic disagreement.

**December 1:** The police [detained](#) YouTube journalist Hasan Köksoy and a person who gave him a street interview. The two were arrested by a court due to the interviewee's remarks about alleged government corruption.

**December 1:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into seven executives of the main opposition CHP on charges of insulting the president in a flyer printed by the party about alleged government corruption.

**December 2:** A court [sentenced](#) former CHP deputy Zeynep Altıok Akatlı to 11 months in prison on charges of insulting the president.

**December 2:** Media outlets critical of the government were [prevented](#) from taking part in a ministerial commission meeting to set next year's minimum wage.

**December 2:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report on allegations that a foundation close to the president was illegally occupying municipal facilities in İstanbul.

**December 2:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on allegations of nepotism implicating a university rector appointed by the government.

**December 2:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on nepotism allegations involving a foundation set up by the president's son.

**December 2:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to four news reports on allegations of corruption targeting the president.

**December 2:** A Rize court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports on allegations involving a local journalism association.

**December 3:** The police in Hakkari [detained](#) journalist Mimar Kaya for filming an argument between police officers and a shuttle bus driver.

**December 3:** The police [raided](#) the house belonging to the mother of Eren Keskin, the Chair of the Human Rights Association (İHD). The police then called Keskin's lawyer to summon her to testify due to an investigation over a speech she made two-and-a-half years ago.

**December 4:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into Nurullah Anku on charges of insulting the president in an article that he wrote.

**December 4:** The police in Tunceli [prevented](#) reporter Cihan Berk from carrying out a street interview.

**December 5:** The Mardin Governor's Office [banned](#) the planned Kurdish-language staging of theater play "Tartuffe."

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

**December 3:** The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released its annual [report](#), which recommended that the US Department of State include Turkey on its Special Watch List for engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom. The report said that the Turkish government action, deliberate inaction, and rhetoric continued to fuel a political environment hostile to religious minorities.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**December 3:** The Council of Europe [announced](#) that it will launch infringement proceedings against Turkey for failing to implement a European Court of Human Rights order for the release of jailed civil society leader Osman Kavala.

**December 3:** The police [raided](#) the house belonging to the mother of Eren Keskin, the Chair of the Human Rights Association (İHD). The police then called Keskin's

lawyer to summon her to testify due to an investigation over a speech she made two-and-a-half years ago.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**November 30:** HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [announced](#) in a parliamentary meeting that a man who was abducted and tortured by Turkish intelligence in 2019 was forced to testify against him and another opposition politician.

**November 30:** The Arrested Lawyers Initiative [released](#) a report which said that data acquired from a smartphone application that Turkish courts accept as evidence of terrorist affiliation are not legal or admissible pieces of evidence but are used by the judiciary as a tool of malicious prosecution.

**December 3:** The Council of Europe [announced](#) that it will launch infringement proceedings against Turkey for failing to implement a European Court of Human Rights order for the release of jailed civil society leader Osman Kavala.

**December 4:** The Inquiry Commission on State of Emergency Measures [refused](#) to reinstate academic Cenk Yiğiter in spite of a Constitutional Court ruling. Yiğiter was dismissed from his job at Ankara University in January 2017.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**November 29:** A Manisa court [ruled](#) to arrest two HDP members who were detained on November 26 while releasing seven others.

**November 29:** The top prosecutor at the Supreme Court Appeals [submitted](#) an opinion to the Constitutional Court, reiterating his demand for the HDP's closure as well as bans on several politicians.

**November 29:** Diyarbakır courts [ruled](#) to block access to three web addresses used by pro-Kurdish ETHA, Umut and Kızılbaş news websites.

**November 30:** A Mersin court ruled to [arrest](#) Düzgün Okutan, an advisor to HDP deputy Fatma Kurtulan.

**November 30:** Manisa police [displayed](#) three books authored by jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş among criminal evidence seized in a police raid.

**December 1:** The Ministry of National Education [fired](#) 21 teachers on account of alleged links to terrorism. The teachers were previously detained as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) the umbrella group of the Kurdish political movement.

**December 2:** A Muş court [sentenced](#) former HDP executive Muhlis Karagüzel to 10 months in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda.

**December 2:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) activist Makbule Özbek to seven years, six months on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), the umbrella organization of the Kurdish political movement. Özbek is a peace activist known for her engagement in a popular movement to demand accountability for enforced disappearances in Kurdish provinces in the 1990s.

**December 3:** A Şırnak court [sentenced](#) local Kurdish politician Halil İrmez to nine years in prison on terrorism charges.

**December 4:** A prison administration in Şanlıurfa [launched](#) a disciplinary investigation into an inmate named Mehmet Binici for singing in Kurdish.

**December 5:** The Mardin Governor's Office [banned](#) the planned Kurdish-language staging of theater play "Tartuffe."

**December 5:** The police in Ankara rear-handcuffed and physically [assaulted](#) provincial HDP executive Hüseyin Gökoğlu without a detention order.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**November 30:** A law firm [announced](#) that a Bursa court has prolonged the visitation ban imposed on jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan whose lawyers have been prevented from visiting their client for months.

**December 3:** A Kocaeli prison [denied](#) treatment to inmate Aslı Calihan for refusing to undergo treatment in handcuffs.

**December 4:** A prison administration in Şanlıurfa [launched](#) disciplinary investigations into 20 inmates who previously reported that they were physically assaulted by guards during a ward search. The same prison administration also launched a disciplinary investigation

into an inmate named Mehmet Binici for singing in Kurdish.

**November 4:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the authorities had not taken the necessary precautions to protect a woman who was killed by her husband in 2013.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**December 1:** A group of Turkish political asylum seekers were briefly [stranded](#) at the land border with Greece while fleeing Turkey. They were rescued by Greek border forces after widespread calls on social media.

**December 1:** An interpreter who is a European Union resident employed by EU border agency Frontex [announced](#) that Greece expelled him to Turkey in a migrant roundup in September.

**December 2:** Refugees in the northwestern province of Bolu [told](#) the media that they have been confronted with an increase in hate crimes since the municipal council approved a discriminatory proposal imposing exorbitant fees on foreigners to access public services in the city.

**December 3:** A former public prosecutor and his wife, a former court clerk, [died](#) after a speedboat carrying them overturned in the Aegean Sea as they were trying to flee to Greece to avoid persecution.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**November 30:** The guards in a Trabzon prison physically [assaulted](#) an inmate who protested the prison administration's refusal to deliver winter clothes sent by the inmate's family.

**November 30:** HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [announced](#) in a parliamentary meeting that a man who was abducted and tortured by Turkish intelligence in 2019 was forced to testify against him and another opposition politician.

**December 5:** The police in Ankara rear-handcuffed and physically [assaulted](#) provincial HDP executive Hüseyin Gökoğlu without a detention order.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**November 2:** Bianet news website's monthly male violence monitoring [report](#) found that men killed 34 women and inflicted violence on at least 62 women in November.