

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 84 | January 24-30, 2022

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 79 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.

January 25: Prominent MP and human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [called](#) for the immediate release of Yusuf Bekmezci, a 82-year-old businessman jailed for links to the Gülen movement. An İzmir court had denied Bekmezci release despite a forensic medicine report that found him unfit to stay in prison.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

January 28: An armored police vehicle in Şırnak hit and [killed](#) Abdulgaffar Dayan, a 23-year-old Kurdish man.

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

January 25: The police in Antalya [detained](#) local labor union executive İlhan Karakurt due to a speech he made at a protest calling for a secular education.

January 25: The authorities [suspended](#) the monthly loans of students who participated in nationwide demonstrations against student housing shortages.

January 27: The authorities [launched](#) an investigation into 33 people who were briefly detained by the police in İzmir while protesting unaffordable living costs for university students.

January 28: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) without a detention warrant three women who allegedly participated in women's rights protest in November 2021.

January 28: The Batman Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize the opening of a stand to call for the official recognition of the Kurdish language.

January 28: The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

January 29: The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) three people holding a protest in front of the Justice Ministry.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

January 24: A court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş to 11 months, 20 days in prison on charges of insulting a former prime minister.

January 24: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting watchdog, [imposed](#) a

temporary broadcast ban on TELE1 TV over the remarks of journalist Sedef Kabaş who was later detained and arrested for insulting the president.

January 24: Throughout the week, courts and other authorities [blocked](#) access to at least eight websites used by pro-Kurdish or leftist news agencies, newspapers or platforms to publish news.

January 24: A report released by an opposition MP [found](#) that journalists in Turkey made 475 court appearances in 2021, with the courts handing down a total of 80 years in prison to 36 of them.

January 25: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) exiled journalist Abdullah Bozkurt on charges of insulting the president, over an article he wrote about a convicted jihadist.

January 25: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) local HDP executive Abdurrahim Şahin to two years, one month in prison on terrorism-related charges, over a speech he made in 2014.

January 25: The European Court of Human Rights [ordered](#) Turkey to pay €12,300 in damages to German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yücel, ruling that his detention in Turkey violated his rights.

January 26: The authorities [pressed](#) charges against lawyer Efkân Bolaç for insulting the president on social media.

January 26: European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) President Róbert Ragnar Spanó [claimed](#) during a conference that the court's insufficient resources were the reason that the applications from two journalists in Turkey who have been behind bars for seven years are still pending.

January 26: Twitter's [Transparency Report](#) for the first half of 2021 revealed that Turkey ranked third after Japan and Russia in the number of requests for content removal.

January 27: A Samsun court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on a judge who was seen taking family pictures of a mob boss.

January 27: Turkey [ranked](#) first in terms of European Court of Human Rights judgments regarding violations of freedom of expression in 2021, according to the court's annual activity report.

January 28: The Constitutional Court [rejected](#) journalist Mehmet Güleş's individual application, saying that his prison sentence of nine years, four months over his social media posts did not violate his freedom of expression.

January 28: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on an opposition politician's remarks concerning the president's son.

January 28: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on an opposition politician's remarks targeting the president.

January 29: A HDP official [announced](#) that plainclothes police officers detained four people who were singing Kurdish-language music on a historic street in İstanbul.

January 30: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [issued](#) a presidential decree threatening to punish media outlets over content "incompatible with national and moral values."

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

January 27: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the cancelation of passports of people expelled from public service by decree-laws was unconstitutional.

KURDISH MINORITY

January 24: A court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş to 11 months, 20 days in prison on charges of insulting a former prime minister.

January 25: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) local HDP executive Abdurrahim Şahin to two years, one month in prison on terrorism-related charges, over a speech he made in 2014.

January 26: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) Seval Gülmez, an executive of the Democratic Regions' Party (DBP), on terrorism-related charges.

January 28: An armored police vehicle in Şırnak hit and [killed](#) Abdulgaffar Dayan, a 23-year-old Kurdish man.

January 28: The police in four provinces [detained](#) 15 people including HDP members.

January 28: The Constitutional Court [rejected](#) journalist Mehmet Güleş's individual application, saying that his

prison sentence of nine years, four months over his social media posts did not violate his freedom of expression. Güleş was a reporter for the pro-Kurdish Dicle news agency (DİHA).

January 28: The Batman Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize the opening of a stand to call for the official recognition of the Kurdish language.

January 29: A HDP official [announced](#) that plainclothes police officers detained four people who were singing Kurdish-language music on a historic street in İstanbul.

OTHER MINORITIES

January 29: A group of transexual women [revealed](#) that the police in İzmir refused to help them after an assault by four men earlier in January.

PRISON CONDITIONS

January 26: Gürbüz Dönmez, an 80-year-old inmate suffering from prostate cancer, [announced](#) that he has no access to proper healthcare in prison despite being critically ill.

January 27: Çetin Çiftçi, a former inmate who as released earlier in January, [said](#) in an interview that inmates in a Van prison were deprived of proper healthcare and were left to die.

January 27: An NGO report on prisons in the Marmara region [found](#) that 3,118 violations of rights took place in the last quarter of 2021, including eight losses of life.

January 30: An inmate named Mehmet Hanefi Bilgin [lost](#) his life in a Bolu prison five months prior to the end of his sentence. The authorities claimed that the cause of death was a heart attack.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

January 24: Murat Duran, an inmate held in an İzmir prison, was physically [assaulted](#) by soldiers who were accompanying him during his hospitalization and suffered an injury on his face.

January 26: Reports [indicated](#) that a group of people detained due to alleged links to the Gülen movement were subjected to torture at a police detention center in Ankara.

January 26: The guards in a Kayseri prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates during a ward control.

January 26: Muhlise Karagüzel, an inmate held in a Kayseri prison, [refused](#) to go to the hospital due to the torture and ill-treatment she suffered during the transfer to the hospital.

January 28: Hacer Karaşal, the wife of a jailed former military officer [announced](#) in an interview that she suffered a miscarriage after being beaten by police officers at the Ankara Courthouse in January 2019.

January 28: Opposition MP Sezgin Tanrikulu [announced](#) that a total of 3,145 people were subjected to torture and ill-treatment in 2021.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

January 28: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) without a detention warrant three women who allegedly participated in women's rights protest in November 2021.