

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 156 | June 12-18, 2023

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 142 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 Tunc](#), 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.

June 12: Kurdish musician Dildar Didêrî [announced](#) that he was briefly abducted in Diyarbakır by individuals who introduced themselves as police officers and taken to a remote location in a vehicle without a license plate. Didêrî said he was left on the side of a road four hours later.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

June 12: The police in Muş [detained](#) 18 people over their attendance in the funeral of a man who died in an armed attack against a Kurdish cultural center in Paris. On June 15, the police [intervened](#) in a demonstration held to protest the detentions, briefly detaining four others.

June 13: The police in İzmir [intervened](#) in a picnic event organized on the occasion of LGBT pride month, briefly detaining five university students.

June 13: The Siirt Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

June 15: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, detaining six people.

June 15: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) labor union executives Güneş Atalay and Cahit Atalay. The reason for their detention was not disclosed. The police also raided the provincial office of their union, confiscating computers and printed material. The detainees were released under judicial control two days later.

June 15: The governor of İstanbul [announced](#) a ban on all pride activities in the province, citing concerns about the "protection of the family."

June 15: The Eskişehir Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride month activities for a period of 30 days.

June 15: An Eskişehir court [ruled](#) to acquit seven people who stood trial over their attendance in an LGBT pride march in July 2022.

June 16: A district governor's office in İstanbul [banned](#) a cultural event organized by a Kurdish NGO.

June 16: The Aydın Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride events for a period of three days.

June 16: A district governor's office in Muğla [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride month activities for a period of 10 days.

June 17: A district governor's office in İstanbul [banned](#) a stand-up comedy event on the grounds that its poster contained a reference to LGBT people.

June 17: The governor of İzmir [announced](#) a blanket ban on all LGBT pride month events.

June 18: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in an LGBT pride march, briefly detaining 10 people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

June 12: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit Kurdish journalist Ceylan Şahinli who stood trial on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda over her attendance in events.

June 13: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey in the case of former MP Osman Baydemir who was disciplined for referring to “Kurdistan” during a parliamentary session. The ECtHR ruled that the parliament’s disciplinary sanction was in violation of freedom of expression.

June 13: Adana prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into lawyer Tugay Bek over his social media criticism of a high-ranking military officer. Bek was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

June 13: Prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Cüneyt Arat over his social media commentary about an exiled journalist. Arat was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

June 13: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalists Canan Coşkun and Barış Pehlivan who stood trial over their reporting.

June 14: An İstanbul court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of 23 months to journalist Gökay Başcan on insult charges due to his reporting on high judiciary member Yüksel Kocaman’s close ties to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

June 14: A Van court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of more than four months to journalist İdris Yılmaz for “intentional injury” over his attempt to defend himself when he was assaulted by a contractor while reporting on a construction project.

June 14: The police in Antalya [detained](#) a minor for carrying the flag of a socialist militant during May Day demonstrations.

June 15: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit Aslı Saraç, a former executive of the Human Rights Association (İHD) who stood trial on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda due to her social media posts.

June 16: An Adana court [sentenced](#) Kurdish musician İlyas Arzu to six years, three months in prison on terrorism-related charges due to music lessons he gave. Musician Jiyen Savcı who also stood trial in the same case was acquitted.

June 16: Sakarya prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Diren Yurtsever over her reporting on allegations that a military commander sexually abused 15 soldiers. Yurtsever was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

June 16: [Alparslan Kuytul](#), a religious community leader who was imprisoned following his outspoken criticism of the government, was released from pretrial detention on judicial probation.

June 16: [Safiye Alagaş](#), one of the Kurdish journalists who were arrested in June 2022, was released under judicial control after the first hearing of her trial.

June 17: Journalist Sinan Aygül [announced](#) that he was physically assaulted by the security team of Mehmet Emin Geylani, the ruling party mayor of a district in the province of Bitlis. The incident occurred after Aygül reported on alleged municipal irregularities implicating Geylani. Aygül said the attackers also verbally threatened him, saying “If you write about the mayor again, you’ll die.”

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

June 15: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit Aslı Saraç, a former executive of the Human Rights Association (İHD) who stood trial on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda due to her social media posts.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

June 14: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) [launched](#) an investigation into judge Ahmet Çakmak who filed an appeal against the nomination of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a presidential candidate on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

June 14: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) lawyer Süleyman Şahin at the instruction of local prosecutors. Şahin was released under judicial control two days later.

June 15: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit Aslı Saraç, a former executive of the Human Rights Association (İHD)

who stood trial on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda due to her social media posts.

KURDISH MINORITY

June 12: Kurdish musician Dildar Didêrî [announced](#) that he was briefly abducted in Diyarbakır by individuals who introduced themselves as police officers and taken to a remote location in a vehicle without a license plate. Didêrî said he was left on the side of a road four hours later.

June 12: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) 12 people, including local HDP executives.

June 12: The police in Muş [detained](#) 18 people over their attendance in the funeral of a man who died in an armed attack against a Kurdish cultural center in Paris.

June 12: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit Kurdish journalist Ceylan Şahinli who stood trial on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda over her attendance in events.

June 13: The police in Bitlis [detained](#) local Kurdish politicians Berivan Birlik and Mahmut Arıkbağ.

June 13: The police in Ankara [detained](#) HDP executive Doğan Erbaş on account of an upheld prison sentence of 14 years, nine months and 22 days handed down to him on terrorism-related charges.

June 13: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey in the case of former MP Osman Baydemir who was disciplined for referring to “Kurdistan” during a parliamentary session. The ECtHR ruled that the parliament’s disciplinary sanction was in violation of freedom of expression.

June 14: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) five people, including local Kurdish politicians, on terrorism-related charges. The detainees were arrested by a court two days later.

June 15: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit Kurdish politician Mehmet Şirin Tunç who stood trial as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), an umbrella organization for several pro-Kurdish political networks.

June 16: An Adana court [sentenced](#) Kurdish musician İlyas Arzu to six years, three months in prison on terrorism-related charges due to music lessons he gave. Musician

Jiyan Savcı who also stood trial in the same case was acquitted.

June 16: The police in Tunceli [detained](#) former HDP executive Hıdır Çiçek.

June 16: The police in İstanbul [raided](#) a district office of the HDP, confiscating printed materials.

June 16: A district governor’s office in İstanbul [banned](#) a cultural event organized by a Kurdish NGO.

June 16: [Safiye Alagaş](#), one of the Kurdish journalists who were arrested in June 2022, was released under judicial control after the first hearing of her trial.

OTHER MINORITIES

June 13: The police in İzmir [intervened](#) in a picnic event organized on the occasion of LGBT pride month, briefly detaining five university students.

June 15: The governor of İstanbul [announced](#) a ban on all pride activities in the province, citing concerns about the “protection of the family.”

June 15: The Eskişehir Governor’s Office [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride month activities for a period of 30 days.

June 16: The Aydın Governor’s Office [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride events for a period of three days.

June 16: A district governor’s office in Muğla [issued](#) a ban on all LGBT pride month activities for a period of 10 days.

June 17: A district governor’s office in İstanbul [banned](#) a stand-up comedy event on the grounds that its poster contained a reference to LGBT people.

June 17: The governor of İzmir [announced](#) a blanket ban on all LGBT pride month events.

June 18: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in an LGBT pride march, briefly detaining 10 people.

PRISON CONDITIONS

June 14: A prison administration in Kırşehir [rejected](#) sick inmate Süleyman Ayaz’s request for a medical test. Ayaz suffers from osteoporosis.

June 16: The Human Rights Association (İHD) [reported](#) an increase in rights violations in prisons such as arbitrary

suspension of social activities as well as phone communications, unjust solitary confinement and lack of access to healthcare.

İnanđı himself confirmed the suspicions and said he was interrogated under torture for 37 days.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

June 13: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [released](#) an interim measure ordering Greek authorities not to remove 56 Turkish asylum seekers who crossed from Turkey into Greece.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

June 12: The guards in an Iğdır prison [mistreated](#) inmates and threatened lawyers who visited to meet with their clients.

June 14: An Erzurum prison [restricted](#) the communication privileges of sick inmate Sinan Karaer for 16 months on account of disciplinary investigations against him.

June 14: The guards in a Kırşehir prison [strip-searched](#) a baby who was among the visitors of an inmate.

June 15: The guards in a Kırşehir prison [damaged](#) and confiscated inmates' personal items during a ward search.

June 16: An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Turkish-Kyrgyz educator Orhan İnanđı to 21 years in prison on terrorism-related charges due to his links to the Gülen movement. In 2021, İnanđı was abducted from Kyrgyzstan by Turkish intelligence and rendered to Turkey. His first public images after his rendition to Turkey showed marks of torture on his body. At the first hearing of his trial in November 2021, İnanđı himself confirmed the suspicions and said he was interrogated under torture for 37 days.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

June 15: Reports [claimed](#) that a civilian was among 16 people who were killed in Turkey's drone strike in northeast Syria.

June 16: An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Turkish-Kyrgyz educator Orhan İnanđı to 21 years in prison on terrorism-related charges due to his links to the Gülen movement. In 2021, İnanđı was abducted from Kyrgyzstan by Turkish intelligence and rendered to Turkey. His first public images after his rendition to Turkey showed marks of torture on his body. At the first hearing of his trial in November 2021,