

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 105 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 8: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey over the pretrial detention of 13 former HDP MPs, ordering the release of two of them who are still in jail.

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 8: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) 10 people over their attendance in a demonstration.

November 8: The police in Ankara [detained](#) seven people who protested a construction project in front of the municipality.

November 8: An İstanbul court [acquitted](#) two activists who stood trial over their demonstrations for sick prisoners.

November 9: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a labor union demonstration outside the Constitutional Court, detaining five union members and executives.

November 10: An Ankara court [sentenced](#) 13 university students to imprisonment over their protests against a construction project. The students were given prison sentences ranging from 20 days to eight months. The sentences were later converted to monetary fines.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

November 7: An Ankara prosecutor [filed](#) a summary of proceedings for opposition MP Sezgin Tanrikulu, accusing him of disseminating terrorist propaganda in remarks about the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Turkish military in northern Iraq. Tanrikulu may lose his parliamentary immunity.

November 8: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a press conference with Sweden's prime minister [demanded](#) the extradition of exiled journalist Bülent Keneş, referring to him as "terrorist." Turkey has been demanding the extradition of a number of dissidents from Sweden and Finland in exchange for lifting its objection to the Nordic countries' NATO membership.

November 8: An İstanbul court [ordered](#) journalists Serkan Ozan, Olcay Büyüktaş Akça, Ozan Yurtoğlu and Hazal Ocak to pay damages for insult in a news report where they covered nepotism allegations involving the president's son.

November 9: The authorities [detained](#) and arrested Cihan Kolivar, a labor union executive, due to his

remarks on a television program that allegedly denigrated the nation.

November 9: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [launched](#) an investigation into the TV 5 channel for hosting Hakan Şükür, a former footballer who lives in the US and who is sought by Turkish authorities due to his links to the Gülen movement.

November 9: An Aydın court [ruled](#) to block access to the social media platform Tumblr.

November 10: A court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of five months to former HDP MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder for insulting the state, the government and judicial authorities.

November 10: A Diyarbakır prison [blocked](#) several names submitted as visitors by jailed journalists Serdar Altan, Mehmet Ali Ertaş, Ömer Çelik, Zeynel Abidin Bulut and Mazlum Güler on the grounds that they were “undesirable.”

November 10: An Ankara court [ordered](#) opposition MP Engin Özkoç to pay damages to the president due to a speech he made.

November 10: The Expression Interrupted Project [reported](#) that a total of 73 journalists appeared in court in 51 trials in Turkey from July to September, while the number of journalists in jail rose from 67 to 68 in the same period.

November 10: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a column and news reports on allegations that a judge presiding over the trial of İstanbul mayor was told to ban him from politics.

November 11: Prosecutors [demanded](#) a prison sentence of at least 15 months for Ekrem İmamoğlu, the opposition mayor of İstanbul who is on trial for allegedly insulting election officials in remarks he made in 2019. The demanded prison sentence would see İmamoğlu banned from politics.

November 11: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report on allegations of plagiarism and corruption implicating academic Murat Önder.

November 11: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report on allegations of plagiarism implicating academic Gürkan Selçuk Kumbaroğlu.

November 13: The General Directorate of Security (EGM) [announced](#) investigations into 25 people over social media messages about a bomb attack in İstanbul.

November 13: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) a blanket broadcast ban on a bomb attack in İstanbul that claimed the lives of at least six people. The Information and Communication Technologies (BTK), the national telecommunications regulatory and inspection authority, significantly reduced the bandwidth of social media platforms Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook following the deadly incident.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

November 7: A columnist [revealed](#) that Hüseyin Zengin, a judge who previously presided over a trial of İstanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, was advised to imprison him for more than two years and to ban him from politics. İmamoğlu is standing trial for allegedly insulting election officials in 2019. Zengin was reassigned to another court by a presidential decree in June. The columnist claimed that the reassignment came after the judge disclosed to some of his colleagues his intention to give İmamoğlu a more lenient sentence. On November 11, prosecutors in charge of the investigation [demanded](#) a prison sentence of at least 15 months, which would see İmamoğlu banned from politics.

November 11: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) 19 lawyers to 146 years in prison in total on terrorism-related charges.

November 13: A lawyer named Jiyan Tosun was [targeted](#) by some social media users following a deadly explosion in İstanbul. After receiving death threats, Tosun spent the night in a courthouse in İstanbul because she feared for her safety.

KURDISH MINORITY

November 8: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [faulted](#) Turkey over the pretrial detention of 13 former HDP MPs, ordering the release of two of them who are still in jail.

November 10: A court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of five months to former HDP MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder for insulting the state, the government and judicial authorities.

PRISON CONDITIONS

November 7: The guards in an İzmir prison [confiscated](#) personal items of two inmates.

November 9: A Kocaeli prison [denied](#) hospital referrals to inmates who refused to be searched by soldiers in addition to their search by prison guards. Reports indicated that an inmate named Eylem Baş has not been receiving treatment for a month and that she has lost significant weight.

November 11: Inmates in a women's prison in Mersin were reportedly [given](#) insufficient warm water.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

November 7: An Afghan migrant in İstanbul was physically [assaulted](#) by three people.

November 10: Five Afghan nationals were [found](#) stabbed to death in a house in Ankara. Local rights groups suspected the event to be a hate crime.

November 10: Turkish citizens [lodged](#) a total of 4,600 asylum applications in the EU+ in August, the highest monthly number since 2014, according to data by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA).

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

November 7: The guards in an İzmir prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates Tuğçenur Özbay and Güzin Tolga.

November 7: The guards in a Kayseri prison physically and verbally [assaulted](#) inmate Süreyya Erge.

November 7: The guards in an Ankara prison [strip-searched](#) Ferda Öztürk, a relative of a prisoner, along with her two children aged 15 and 10.

November 9: The guards in a Kahramanmaraş prison physically [mistreated](#) inmates Ahmet Bilge, Rahim Durukan and Ahmet İsmail.

November 10: A Diyarbakır prison [blocked](#) several names submitted as visitors by jailed journalists Serdar Altan, Mehmet Ali Ertaş, Ömer Çelik, Zeynel Abidin Bulut and Mazlum Güler on the grounds that they were “undesirable.”

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

November 7: Human Rights Watch (HRW) [accused](#) Turkey of disrupting water supply to Syria and exacerbating an acute water crisis that is believed to have given rise to a deadly cholera outbreak in the region.

November 8: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a press conference with Sweden's prime minister [demanded](#) the extradition of exiled journalist Bülent Keneş, referring to him as “terrorist.” Turkey has been demanding the extradition of a number of dissidents from Sweden and Finland in exchange for lifting its objection to the Nordic countries' NATO membership.

November 10: A German court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of nine months to a taxi driver, identified as Aziz A., for spying on Turkish dissidents in Germany for Turkey's intelligence service.

November 12: A report by Turkey's state-run news agency [confirmed](#) the abduction and rendition of Uğur Demirok, a Turkish businessman who went missing in Azerbaijan on September 6.