

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 28 | December 28, 2020-January 4, 2021

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

December 29: Family members of former public sector worker Hüseyin Galip Küçüközyiğit [announced](#) on social media that Küçüközyiğit went missing under suspicious circumstances. Küçüközyiğit was dismissed from a high-ranking bureaucratic post as part of a widespread purge of civil servants following a failed military coup in July 2016. Several other purge victims were abducted in broad daylight, some of which have turned up in police custody and later revealed their illegal detention and brutal interrogation at the hands of the intelligence. Some, like former public sector worker Yusuf Bilge Tunç who was reported missing in August 2019, still remain unaccounted for. [Solidarity with OTHERS](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Turkey Tribunal](#) and [Avocates of Silenced Turkey](#) have published extensive reports on Turkey's enforced disappearances since 2016.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

December 30: The police in Ankara [blocked](#) two protests against domestic violence, detaining 12 people.

December 31: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a demonstration by workers protesting their unpaid wages and severance, detaining six people.

December 31: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

January 1: The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 28: An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a gag order on news reports suggesting that presidential aide Hamza

Yerlikaya used a fake high school diploma to get into university, citing violation of his personal rights.

December 29: Darmstadt prosecutors in Germany [rejected](#) Turkey's request to take exiled musician Ferhat Tunç's statement for an ongoing trial in an İstanbul court where Tunç is charged with spreading terrorist propaganda over his social media commentary.

December 29: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Mazlum Dolan to seven years, six months in prison on terrorism-related charges.

December 30: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories and tweets about the fees allegedly received by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's lawyer.

December 30: A Gümüşhane court [ruled](#) to block access to blog entries about a local lake which was destroyed as a result of legally permitted treasure hunting.

December 31: A yearly press freedom [report](#) found that 361 cases were launched against journalists, 86 journalists were detained and 306 were fired from their jobs in 2020, while 97 journalists had to resign due to pressure and censorship efforts from their superiors. Courts censored independent media outlets 368 times and broadcasting watchdog RTÜK imposed 67 fines on media organizations, ruled for the closure of a TV station, ordered 49 blackouts throughout the year. Another [report](#) published by main opposition CHP said that RTÜK's fines on government-critical TV stations totaled 25 times the amount it imposed on pro-government TV stations in 2020.

December 31: [Bold Medya](#), a government-critical YouTube channel based in Germany, was shut down by the platform after Turkey's state-run TRT broadcaster

sent fraudulent copyright claims, according to the claims of the channel's executives.

December 31: Prosecutors [indicted](#) journalists Barış Terkoğlu and Barış Pehlivan over a book they co-authored which investigated alleged obstruction of justice by the president. Terkoğlu and Pehlivan face 95 and 63 years in prison, respectively.

December 31: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories about a previous access block imposed on news stories about the public tenders won by a friend of Bilal Erdoğan, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's son.

January 2: Balıkesir prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Cem Bahtiyar, charging him with insulting the president in a social media post.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

December 29: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that imprisoned businessman and civil society leader Osman Kavala's detention did not violate his right to liberty and security.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 29: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that imprisoned businessman and civil society leader Osman Kavala's detention did not violate his right to liberty and security, a decision that came after Kavala spent more than three years behind bars without a conviction.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 31: Ankara prosecutors drafted a new [indictment](#) about street protests in the predominantly Kurdish Southeast in 2014 that claimed the lives of 37 people. The indictment seeks punishment for 108 suspects, including politician Selahattin Demirtaş who is already imprisoned on terrorism-related charges.

January 1: Renowned Kurdish poet, writer and journalist [Yılmaz Odabaşı](#) was briefly detained on charges related to a dispute he had with a government supporter who harassed him in front of his house. Odabaşı was released on Jan. 2. The detention came immediately after he criticized the ongoing government crackdown on the faith-based Gülen movement.

PRISON CONDITIONS

December 28: A prison administration in Kocaeli reportedly denied medical treatment to inmate [Sümeyya Aksoy](#) who is suffering from extreme pain due to a previous surgery. Aksoy is the wife of a former police chief jailed for taking part in a 2013 corruption investigation that implicated high-ranking government officials.

December 30: An opposition MP [reported](#) that a prison administration in İzmir denied medical treatment to cancer patient inmate Mehmet Salih Filiz.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

December 29: Social media posts of a [bill](#) proposed by the ruling AKP to ratify an extradition treaty with China led fears among the sizeable Uighur diaspora in Turkey.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 29: Chronically sick inmate [Lütfi Koç](#) was allegedly severely beaten in an Afyon prison.

December 30: Military conscript Hasan Düdük [filed](#) criminal complaints against his commander, alleging that he was physically battered by him.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

December 29: Three women were [murdered](#) in a single day, highlighting Turkey's domestic violence problem.

January 1: According to [yearly statistics](#) released by women's organizations, 269 women were killed by men and 152 women died under suspicious circumstances in Turkey in 2020.