

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 158 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.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

March 28: The police in İstanbul [opened fire](#) at a vehicle that allegedly failed to comply with a warning to stop, killing a 23-year-old man who was inside.

April 1: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit a police officer who caused the death of a 5-year-old boy with an armored vehicle he was driving.

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

March 28: The police [detained](#) two people over their participation in last week's Newroz celebrations.

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

March 30: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) NGO executive Zahit Çiftkuran to seven years, six months in prison on terrorism charges, over his participation in events and funerals.

March 30: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a leftist group's demonstration, briefly detaining 40 people.

March 30: The police in Ankara intervened in a workers' protest, [detaining](#) five people.

March 30: The police in Antalya [detained](#) 10 people, including two minors, over their participation in Newroz celebrations. The detainees were released the next day.

March 31: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) a person who was demonstrating to call for the release of sick prisoners.

March 31: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, detaining six people.

March 31: The gendarmerie in Mardin [detained](#) six people over their participation in Newroz celebrations. The detainees were released the next day.

March 31: The gendarmerie in Muğla [intervened](#) in a protest against an energy company's plans to uproot olive trees in a rural area, briefly detaining two people.

March 31: A district governor's office in İstanbul [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor demonstrations for a period of 15 days.

April 1: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) one person staging a protest to call for the release of a sick prisoner.

April 2: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

April 3: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a protest against an energy company, briefly detaining eight people.

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

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

March 28: The police in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) journalist Tuba Apaydın who was covering the detention of those celebrating Newroz.

March 28: An Uşak court [sentenced](#) opposition politician Muharrem İnce to 11 months, 20 days in prison on charges of insulting the president in a speech. The court then converted the sentence into a monetary fine.

March 28: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report about bribery and misconduct allegations implicating local governors and bureaucrats in Gaziantep.

March 29: A [report](#) released by the Turkish Journalists Association (TGC) said that 115 Turkish journalists were subjected to physical violence and a total of 241 journalists appeared in court in 2021 in Turkey. The report also found that three out of every five journalists have received threats during their career.

March 29: A group of ultranationalists in Konya physically [assaulted](#) local journalists Umut Yaygır and Özcan Saraç.

March 30: İstanbul prosecutors [issued](#) detention warrants for two journalists as part of an investigation into an outlawed Marxist group.

March 30: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Emre Orman as part of an investigation.

March 31: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) writer Yavuz Ekinci to one year, six months, 22 days in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda, over his social messages and his signature in a declaration.

March 31: A Turkish prosecutor [asked](#) an İstanbul court to dismiss a case into the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and transfer it to Saudi Arabia. Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor known for his

criticism of the Saudi government, was killed inside the Saudi consulate in İstanbul in 2018. Rights groups such as Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) criticized the move.

April 1: Ankara prosecutors [filed](#) a new indictment for jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş, seeking up to 5 years in prison on terrorism charges based on a social media post dating back to 2013.

April 1: An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a monetary fine on journalist Çiğdem Toker over a column that she penned, upon the complaint of a relative of the president.

April 1: Diyarbakır courts [ruled](#) to block access to URLs used by pro-Kurdish news platforms Jinnews, Etkin news agency and Özgür Gelecek.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

March 29: An annual [report](#) released by Amnesty International found, among others, that the Turkish government failed to address "deep flaws in the judicial system" in 2021.

March 31: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no violation of rights in the cases of two former mayors from pro-Kurdish parties in Diyarbakır who were removed from office and replaced by government-appointed trustees in 2015 and 2016.

April 1: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors [disbarred](#) judge Halil Erkeş and prosecutor Osman Görgünoğlu on account of their alleged ties to terrorism.

KURDISH MINORITY

March 29: The police in Van [detained](#) Sinan Kaya, a local HDP executive. Kaya was released on March 31.

March 30: A group of Kurdish students in Muğla were [assaulted](#) by a mob in what appears to be a racist attack.

March 31: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no violation of rights in the cases of two former mayors from pro-Kurdish parties in Diyarbakır who were removed from office and replaced by government-appointed trustees in 2015 and 2016.

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to 5 years in prison on terrorism charges based on a social media post dating back to 2013.

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PRISON CONDITIONS

March 28: A female inmate held in an İzmir prison [announced](#) that women and children in her ward were suffering from overcrowding, sickness and neglect.

March 28: Media reports [said](#) that a Çorum prison was keeping 45 inmates in a quarantine ward designed for 20 and that some inmates had to sleep on the floor.

March 29: [Sebnem Korur Fincancı](#), a prominent human rights advocate and doctor of forensic medicine, said that the Council of Forensic Medicine's (ATK) status as the sole authority to determine whether sick inmates are fit to remain in prison poses a serious problem. ATK is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and the doubts over its independence and credibility has grown in recent years as more and more critically ill prisoners have died behind bars.

March 30: Reports [revealed](#) that a Yozgat prison has been keeping inmate Seyit Mehmet Ünal in solitary confinement for five years.

March 30: An Adana prison [restricted](#) inmates' allotted visitation times and denied hospitalization to those who refused to undergo mouth searches.

March 31: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the right to respect for private life of 14 inmates by uploading their incoming and outgoing correspondence onto a national judicial network server.

April 2: A Şanlıurfa prison [restricted](#) inmates' rights to video call.

April 3: An İstanbul prison [denied](#) treatment to sick and partially handicapped inmate Özgür Sinan Menteş.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

March 30: The Greek coast guard [pushed back](#) 12 Turkish political asylum seekers who had arrived in the islands of Chios and Samos. The asylum seekers were

arrested and sent to prison in Turkey after they were pushed back.

March 31: Opposition MP and prominent human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [announced](#) on social media that a Syrian refugee family was assaulted by a racist mob and that a child was injured as a result of the attack.

March 31: Mehdi Davud, chairman of the Syrian Associations Platform, [announced](#) that thousands of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq were illegally deported from Turkey.

March 31: Media reports [said](#) based on education ministry data that 35 percent of the 1.1 million Syrian refugee children in Turkey are unable to attend school.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

March 28: Diyarbakır prosecutors [ordered](#) collection of blood samples from 42 minors who were detained by the police during Newroz celebrations.

March 28: The police in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) and verbally threatened three leftist activists whom they kept in unofficial detention for four hours.

March 28: The police in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) journalist Tuba Apaydın who was covering the detention of those celebrating Newroz.

March 29: Besna Daşçi, a distributor for the Yeni Yaşam newspaper, was verbally [threatened](#) by individuals who introduced themselves as police officers.

March 30: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates.

March 30: An inmate named Ramazan Turan was [subjected](#) to a strip-search in a Çorum prison during an involuntary transfer from Diyarbakır.

March 31: The gendarmerie in Batman [tortured](#) 15 people who were in custody.

April 1: The guards in an İstanbul women's prison [confiscated](#) inmates' personal belongings during a war search. In the same prison, an inmate named Sibel Gölbaşı was visited by intelligence officers who coerced her into becoming an informant.

April 3: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates.

April 3: [Mehmet Emin Çam](#), a 70-year-old sick inmate in a Batman prison, was held in a one-person cell for 17 days and was forced to stay up during head count.