

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 151 | May 8-14, 2023

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

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

**May 8:** A spokesperson for the HDP [announced](#) that 295 people were detained and 61 were arrested as part of several investigations launched into Kurdish political networks over the course of a month.

**May 10:** The authorities [imprisoned](#) Hilal Keser, the mother of a two-and-a-half-month-old infant in violation of a law that requires the postponement of the execution of prison sentences for women who are pregnant or have given birth within the last year and a half. Prosecuted for providing financial support to the families of inmates who were jailed over alleged links to the Gülen movement, Keser was released on May 11 following public outcry.

**May 14:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) and deported Spanish MPs Jon Iñarritu García, Isabel Chacon and Tino Brugos who were in the province to observe elections.

## 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.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

**May 8:** The Rize Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert that was planned to be given by musicians Selçuk Balcı and Korhan Özyıldız.

**May 9:** The police in Bursa briefly [detained](#) three people who were distributing a book authored by Sinan Ateş, a politician who was murdered under suspicious circumstances.

**May 11:** The authorities in Ankara [banned](#) an election event planned by the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP).

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**May 8:** A Karaman court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering allegations that a local ruling party member physically assaulted a police chief. The same court later [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering the previous access ban.

**May 8:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least 26 news reports covering a prison sentence handed down to journalist Bülent Mumay because of his reporting.

**May 8:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Gökhan Yavuzel who stood trial on charges of inciting hatred and enmity among the public due to an opinion piece he wrote.

**May 8:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit a person who stood trial on insult charges due to a social media post criticizing the president's communications director.

**May 9:** The authorities [issued](#) an arrest warrant for journalist Şule Aydın on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**May 10:** [Muhammed Yavaş](#), a local journalist based in Çanakkale, was physically assaulted by a nationalist politician.

**May 10:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist İsmail Arı on charges of spreading misleading or false information, due to his coverage about the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay). Arı was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

**May 10:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports covering an opposition leader's statements on an alleged stock exchange manipulation.

**May 10:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports and an opinion column about previous censorship imposed a book that contained allegations of sexual assault implicating a businessman close to the government. The same court later [ruled](#) to block access to a online censorship monitoring website's report on the censorship.

**May 12:** Within days of Turkey's presidential and legislative elections, media reports [revealed](#) that prosecutors were investigating several social media users on charges of spreading disinformation, based on a criminal complaint filed by the president's communications director.

**May 12:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Merdan Yanardağ on charges of publicly disseminating false or misleading information, for alleging that there was a plan to assassinate the opposition's presidential nominee.

**May 13:** Twitter [complied with](#) Turkish authorities' request to restrict four accounts in Turkey. The accounts belonged to an exiled journalist living in Germany and a businessman who had been making corruption allegations about high-ranking government officials.

**May 13:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to Ekşi Sözlük, a popular message board known for its political content, citing national security and public order reasons.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**May 9:** Turkey [denied](#) accreditation and entry to Danish MP Soren Sondergaard and Swedish MP Kadir Kasırğa who were tasked by the OECD to observe the presidential and legislative elections on May 14.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**May 9:** The European Court of Human Rights [faulted](#) Turkey in the case of Levent Korkut, a former executive of the Amnesty International in Turkey who was ordered to pay an administrative fine for alleged irregularities related to receiving funds from abroad in 2008. The court said Turkey violated Korkut's rights to a fair trial and to association.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**May 8:** A spokesperson for the HDP [announced](#) that 295 people were detained and 61 were arrested as part of several investigations launched into Kurdish political networks over the course of a month.

**May 9:** Imprisoned Kurdish politician Ayşe Gökkan [filed](#) a criminal complaint against law enforcement officials involved in her transfer from a Diyarbakır prison to Ankara prison in March, alleging mistreatment.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**May 10:** LGBT+ advocacy groups [criticized](#) the president and government officials' hateful remarks targeting them during election campaign speeches.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**May 9:** Media reports indicated that inmates in a newly built Edirne prison [denied](#) drinking water to inmates for a week.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**May 10:** [Khaled Hayanked](#), a 12-year-old Syrian refugee child living in Mersin, was abducted for ransom by a man named Hasan Cingöz who later brutally murdered the child after the family notified the police.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**May 9:** Imprisoned Kurdish politician Ayşe Gökkan [filed](#) a criminal complaint against law enforcement officials involved in her transfer from a Diyarbakır prison to Ankara prison in March, alleging mistreatment.

**May 11:** The police in Diyarbakır physically [assaulted](#) a man named Şeyhmus Eşen who they intercepted in traffic.

**May 12:** The Ankara bar association published a report which [found](#) that Nuri Gökhan Bozkır, a man who was extradited from Ukraine as part of an investigation into an assassination, was severely tortured upon his arrival in Turkey.

**May 14:** The police in Mardin physically [assaulted](#) two people on the street.