

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

August 18: [Bazo Yılmaz](#), a 67-year-old bedridden Kurdish politician, lost his life in a Şanlıurfa prison. Yılmaz was a former district mayor in the province before he was arrested and sentenced to prison on terrorism-related charges.

August 19: [Ahmet Zeki Özkan](#), a 65-year-old man who was arrested in February to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement despite suffering from end-stage cancer, was released after spending over six months behind bars.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

August 17: The Constitutional Court [found](#) violation of the right to life in the case of a 14-year-old child who in 2017 died in İzmir due to tear gas used by the police. The court ordered the state to pay damages to the victim's family.

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

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

August 16: The police in Muğla [detained](#) three people protesting the construction of a hotel.

August 16: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

August 16: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

August 20: Gendarmerie in Aydın [intervened](#) in a protest against the construction of a geothermic central in an agricultural area, detaining five people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

August 15: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) Diren Yurtsever, the editor-in-chief of the Mezopotamya news agency. Yurtsever was released the next day.

August 15: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu on allegations of insulting the president in recent public remarks.

August 15: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to an opinion piece and two news reports alleging that an international credit rating agency downgraded Turkey's score due to speculative stock exchange transactions made by ruling party executives and bureaucrats.

August 16: YouTube content producer Yusuf Kayaalp [announced](#) that he was summoned by the police for a questioning over an animated video containing the president.

August 16: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to 48 more online news articles that contain references to bribery allegations implicating Mustafa Doğan İnal, a former lawyer for the president.

August 16: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on corruption allegations implicating the minister of tourism who owns several hotels.

August 16: An İzmir court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on allegations of bribery implicating a pro-government businessman.

August 16: A Samsun court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report alleging that the interior minister was at odds with the parliament speaker over promotion of high-level gendarmerie commanders.

August 16: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in an individual application that a worker's dismissal over his social media posts was in violation of his right to freedom of expression.

August 17: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) monetary fines on pro-opposition TV channels Halk TV, TELE 1 and Habertürk over their content and ordered Netflix and Spotify to remove some of their contents.

August 17: Expression Interrupted, a press freedom monitor, [reported](#) that a total of 168 journalists appeared at hearings in their trials in Turkey from April to June.

August 17: The police in Şırnak [removed](#) a banner hung by the HDP to commemorate the victims of a massacre in 1992. The police also summoned three HDP executives for a questioning about the banner.

August 18: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalists Ersan Atar and Sezgin Kesim over coverage of bribery allegations implicating Mustafa Doğan İnal, a former lawyer for the president. Prosecutors had previously indicted journalist Nazan Özcan for reporting on the allegations.

August 18: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to nine news reports about cartoons of the president drawn by a Brazilian cartoonist.

August 18: An İstanbul court [ordered](#) the removal of three news reports on nepotism allegations implicating the president's son.

August 18: Journalist Fatih Tezcan [announced](#) that he was going to prison to serve a sentence that was handed down to him for insulting the founder of the Turkish republic.

August 19: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) former national swimmer Derya Büyükuncu, seeking up to eight years in prison on charges of insulting the president.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

August 18: The Supreme Court of Appeals (Yargıtay) [said](#) in a ruling that it is lawful for criminal courts to interpret account movements at Bank Asya, a bank that was shut down over its affiliation with the Gülen movement, as evidence of terrorism. The top appeals court delivered the verdict despite acknowledging that the bank was a legally operating financial institution until its closure.

August 21: [Enver Altaylı](#), a former intelligence officer imprisoned over his alleged links to the Gülen movement, fainted during a hearing in an İstanbul court. The presiding judge refused to place Altaylı's health condition on record.

KURDISH MINORITY

August 15: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) Diren Yurtsever, the editor-in-chief of the Mezopotamya news agency. Yurtsever was released the next day.

August 16: The HDP [announced](#) that one of their district offices in Ankara was broken into by assailants.

August 17: Aydın prosecutors [indicted](#) 11 members of the HDP on terrorism-related charges.

August 17: The police in Şırnak [removed](#) a banner hung by the HDP to commemorate the victims of a massacre in 1992. The police also summoned three HDP executives for a questioning about the banner.

August 18: [Bazo Yılmaz](#), a 67-year-old bedridden Kurdish politician, lost his life in a Şanlıurfa prison. Yılmaz was a former district mayor in the province before he was arrested and sentenced to prison on terrorism-related charges.

PRISON CONDITIONS

August 15: Reports revealed that a Yozgat prison has been [denying](#) hospital referrals to inmates with significant health problems.

August 16: A Tekirdağ prison [censored](#) a letter sent by jailed lawyer Engin Gökoğlu. A judge of execution later overturned the censorship.

August 17: An Adana prison [launched](#) a disciplinary investigation into 57 inmates for protesting the scarcity of tap water in the facility.

August 17: An İzmir prison [launched](#) a disciplinary investigation into an inmate named Halil Kasal for telling his family members about an incident of torture in an İstanbul prison where he was previously held. The incident had led six inmates to commit suicide and one had died as a result.

August 17: A Hatay prison arbitrarily [reduced](#) inmates' visitation right to 40 minutes, denied them hospital referrals and refused to deliver their prescribed medication.

August 17: A Kütahya prison [refused](#) to allow Ali Açıkgöz to join the funeral of his father Ramazan Açıkgöz who died of a heart attack in the same prison ward on the grounds that there were not enough gendarmes to accompany him.

August 18: A Bayburt prison [belated](#) inmates' hospital referrals, forced them to undergo treatment in handcuffs and refused treatment to those who refused.

August 19: A Kahramanmaraş prison [denied](#) hospital referrals to inmates who refused treatment in handcuffs.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

August 15: Greek police [confirmed](#) that they located and picked up a group of 38 Syrian migrants who were stranded on the Turkish-Greek border. Last week, Greece claimed that the migrants were outside Greek territory, calling on Turkey to help them.

August 19: The Turkish coast guard [announced](#) that in the first seven months of the year they rescued nearly 10,000 irregular migrants that were pushed back by Greece into Turkey's territorial waters.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

August 17: The guards in a Hatay prison physically and verbally [assaulted](#) inmates.

August 17: The police in İstanbul [strip-searched](#) four leftist activists who were in custody. The detainees were also [subjected](#) to police violence during their physical examination at a hospital on August 21.

August 18: A 17-year-old minor who was detained on August 13 during a demonstration in İstanbul [announced](#) that they were strip-searched in police custody.

August 19: A Kahramanmaraş prison [forced](#) inmates to undergo medical consultation in handcuffs. Those who refused were mistreated by guards and sent to one-person cells.

August 21: Soldiers in Van [mistreated](#) a person named Adem Yiğit during house raids in a village.

August 21: The guards in a Kilis prison verbally [threatened](#) four inmates who resisted a head count in military order.