

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 153 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.

December 7: The authorities [arrested](#) and sent to prison Şükrü İpek, a former teacher convicted on terrorism charges for his alleged links to the Gülen movement, leaving his wife, who has ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) without care.

December 8: Mehmet Emin Özkan, an ailing 83-year-old prisoner, has [tested](#) positive for Covid-19. Özkan is suffering from Alzheimer, aneurysm, blood pressure problems and goiter as well as kidney and intestinal disorders. The authorities have previously ignored repeated requests for his release.

December 9: The authorities did not release [Bekir Bayram](#), a 72-year-old man convicted for alleged links to the Gülen movement who suffers from congestive heart failure. The reports said that Bayram was scheduled to undergo heart surgery in a few days.

December 10: Hülya Durmuş, a 41-year-old woman suffering from stage four lymphoma, [said](#) in a letter she posted on social media that she has been left to take care of her disabled son after the jailing of her spouse for alleged links to the Gülen movement.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

December 9: Garibe Gezer, an inmate who previously alleged that she was beaten and sexually harassed by prison guards in Kocaeli, was [found dead](#) in her cell. Media reports [indicated](#) that lawyers were not present at the crime scene investigation conducted in the cell and they were not presented with the report.

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.

December 9: The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) and the Human Rights Association (İHD) [reported](#) that 17 people were abducted in Turkey in the first 11 months of 2021 and that 11 of them were subjected to torture or ill-treatment during their disappearance.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

December 6: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) three waste workers who staged protests after their depots were raided by the police, seeking up to 17 years in prison for each.

December 7: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration to demand the release of a sick prisoner, detaining three people.

December 9: The government-appointed rector of Boğaziçi University [filed](#) criminal complaints against 16 academics who participated in a daily protest held in the campus against his appointment.

December 10: A district governor's office in Antalya [banned](#) a rally organized by labor unions to protest high cost of living.

December 11: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) 14 university students who staged demonstrations against the government-appointed rector of Boğaziçi University, seeking jail terms on four different charges.

December 11: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) Serhat Küçük, an executive for an association established for solidarity with people who have lost family members in the armed conflict in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast.

December 12: A demonstration to be held in Ankara by a youth movement to protest high costs of living was [met](#) with police brutality. The police prevented buses carrying protesters from İzmir and İstanbul from entering Ankara, injuring at least 10 people. The police also intervened in the protest in the city, briefly detaining at least 90 people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 6: An Ankara prosecutor [indicted](#) 103 retired admirals, seeking prison sentences of up to 12 years for each. The admirals are charged with attempting to overthrow the constitutional order, due to a joint declaration in which they criticized government plans to review an international treaty about the use of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits.

December 7: The European Court of Human Rights [faulted](#) Turkey for violating the right to freedom of expression of a former teacher, stating that public comments in favor of the Gülen movement before a coup attempt in July 2016 do not constitute a crime.

December 7: A member of the far-right MHP in Konya physically [assaulted](#) and threatened with death local journalist Özcan Saraç. The incident took place after Saraç published an exposé about a MHP executive.

December 7: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalists Doğan Ergün and İzel Sezer, seeking up to 11 years, four months in prison on a number of charges for reporting on bribery allegations implicating the president.

December 7: An Aydın court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on alleged corruption involving an online portfolio app.

December 8: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Gülşen Koçuk to one year, 10 months, 15 days in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

December 8: The police in Antalya briefly [detained](#) journalist Hazar Dost who was in the province to follow up on news.

December 9: Reports [revealed](#) that Hüseyin Gökoğlu, a Kurdish politician whose house was violently raided by the police without a warrant last week, was detained for a questioning on accusations of insulting the president.

December 9: The police in Malatya [detained](#) two people on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

December 9: The authorities [blocked](#) access to three news reports on bribery allegations implicating several high-ranking police chiefs.

December 10: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Hasan Cemal, seeking up to eight years in prison on charges of insulting the president on social media.

December 10: The police in Van briefly [detained](#) newspaper distributor Özgür Ali Ağaoğlu without a detention warrant, confiscating some 200 copies of Yeni Yaşam and Xwebûn newspapers.

December 10: The police in Mersin [detained](#) 11 people for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda during Newroz celebrations.

December 10: A Kayseri court [ruled](#) to block access to an online article published by a press freedom monitor to report on a previous access ban on news reports about a local civil servant allegedly beaten up for not standing up in front of a district governor.

December 11: The police in Zonguldak [detained](#) a person for throwing a photo of the president to the ground. Later in the same day, the detainee was arrested by a court on charges of insulting the president.

December 11: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) former Kars mayor Ayhan Bilgen on charges of insulting the president.

December 11: An Antalya court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on a murder that took place in a student dormitory run by a religious group.

December 12: The police [detained](#) three popular YouTubers known for their political street interviews.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

December 10: An İstanbul court [rejected](#) an appeal for the release of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been held behind bars on a series of shifting charges since 2017 despite a European Court of Human Rights order. The decision came two days after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [told](#) the media that Turkey will continue to ignore European decisions on Kavala, possibly referring to a recent interim resolution by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to bring infringement proceedings against Ankara.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 10: An İstanbul court [rejected](#) an appeal for the release of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been held behind bars on a series of shifting charges since 2017 despite a European Court of Human Rights order. The decision came two days after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [told](#) the media that Turkey will continue to ignore European decisions on Kavala, possibly referring to a recent interim resolution by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to bring infringement proceedings against Ankara.

December 10: A new [report](#) released by the Arrested Lawyers Initiative found that Turkish authorities have prosecuted more than 1,600 attorneys and arrested 615 of them on terrorism charges since a failed coup in 2016.

December 11: Lawyer Sümeyra Bulduk [announced](#) that she was subjected to mistreatment during a visit to her clients in a Tekirdağ prison. Bulduk represents two former police chiefs who have been imprisoned since 2014 due to their role in graft probes in 2013 that implicated high-level government officials.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 7: Prosecutors [indicted](#) Osman Şiban on terrorism-related charges. Last year, Şiban was allegedly thrown from a military helicopter after being detained by gendarmes and was severely injured.

December 7: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit former HDP deputy Levent Tüzel who has stood trial as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), the umbrella organization of the Kurdish political movement.

December 8: The police in Adana briefly [detained](#) former HDP deputy Mehmet Ali Aslan.

December 8: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) local HDP members and executives Abdullah Kaçmaz, Mehmet Miraç Dinç and Sümeyye Gök.

December 8: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Gülşen Koçuk to one year, 10 months, 15 days in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media. Koçuk is a reporter for the pro-Kurdish Jinnews website.

December 9: Reports [revealed](#) that Hüseyin Gökoğlu, a Kurdish politician whose house was violently raided by the police without a warrant last week, was detained for a questioning on accusations of insulting the president.

December 10: The police in Van briefly [detained](#) newspaper distributor Özgür Ali Ağaoğlu without a detention warrant, confiscating some 200 copies of Yeni Yaşam and Xwebûn newspapers.

December 10: The police in Mersin [detained](#) 11 people for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda during Newroz celebrations.

December 11: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) former Kars mayor Ayhan Bilgen on charges of insulting the president.

December 11: The police in Şırnak [raided](#) a district headquarters of the HDP, detaining 26 people including the party's district executive Naim İned.

PRISON CONDITIONS

December 7: [Nusret Muğla](#), an ailing 84-year-old man serving a prison sentence on conviction of links to the Gülen movement, said his prison cell did not have proper heating or basic necessities in a telephone call to his family.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 6: Media reports [revealed](#) that a Diyarbakır prison has been keeping an inmate named Aziz Tufan in a one-person cell for more than two months.

December 9: A police officer and a neighborhood watchman in Aydın were [seen](#) beating up a young man and threatening to kill him in a video that circulated on Turkish social media.

December 9: Garibe Gezer, an inmate who previously alleged that she was beaten and sexually harassed by prison guards in Kocaeli, was [found dead](#) in her cell.

December 9: Media reports [indicated](#) that a prisoner named Kadri Katar was mistreated during an involuntary prison transfer from Şırnak to Erzurum. The reports also said that the prison authorities launched a disciplinary investigation into Katar and imposed a one-month ban on visitation rights.

December 9: The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) and the Human Rights Association (İHD) [reported](#) that 415 people were tortured in prisons and detention centers in the first 11 months of 2021.

December 10: The police in Şırnak physically [assaulted](#) a person who reacted to an armored police vehicle being parked in front of his shop.

December 11: Lawyer Sümeyra Bulduk [announced](#) that she was subjected to mistreatment during a visit to her clients in a Tekirdağ prison. Bulduk represents two former police chiefs who have been imprisoned since 2014 due to their role in graft probes in 2013 that implicated high-level government officials.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

December 9: An Ankara prosecutor [requested](#) a reduced sentence for Fedai Varan, a man who slit his ex-wife's throat in broad daylight in 2019, citing "good behavior" and "provocation."