

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 76 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.

August 24: A prison administration in İzmir conducting interviews with inmates to assess their eligibility for parole is reportedly [asking](#) them personal questions such as whether they “liked” the jailed leader of the outlawed PKK or which prophet they followed.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#) and [Hüseyin Galip Küçüközyiğit](#), former public sector workers who were sacked from their jobs by decree-laws during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who were reported missing respectively as of August 6, 2019 and December 29, 2020, in what appear to be the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

August 25: [Celalettin Yalçın](#), a member of the HDP, was abducted and subjected to torture by individuals who introduced themselves as “the police” in İstanbul. He was left on a roadside in İstanbul the next day.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

August 23: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) eight Boğaziçi University students and a journalist for protesting the president’s appointment of a new rector to the university.

August 23: The Mardin Governor’s Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

August 23: A district governor in Mardin [banned](#) a campaign organized by a local medical chamber to promote vaccination against Covid-19, citing a 15-day ban on outdoor gatherings issued by the provincial governor’s office.

August 24: An İstanbul court [accepted](#) an indictment that seeks prison sentences for 17 women’s rights activists on charges of insulting the president at an International Women’s Day gathering in March 2021.

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

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

August 23: The Supreme Court of Appeals [ruled](#) that retweeting a social media post that had “insulted” a public officer constituted a crime as it “amplified the impact of the insult.”

August 24: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) 83-year-old actor Genco Erkal, seeking up to four years, eight months in prison for insulting the president on Twitter.

August 24: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) writer Yavuz Ekinci due to his social media messages in 2013 and 2014 about the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır and

the ongoing clashes around the predominantly Kurdish Syrian town of Kobane.

August 24: An İstanbul court [accepted](#) an indictment that seeks prison sentences for 17 women's rights activists on charges of insulting the president at an International Women's Day gathering in March 2021.

August 25: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about an alleged corruption involving a state-owned bank and a major football club.

August 25: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to web addresses used by pro-Kurdish JinNews and Etkin news agency.

August 25: Netflix [recast](#) a Turkish drama series in a Spanish setting after Turkey's Ministry of Culture asked the streaming platform to erase a gay character from the storyline.

August 26: An Artvin court [sentenced](#) conscientious objector Şendoğan Yazıcı to 42 months, six days in prison on charges of turning people against military service, insulting the state and the judiciary, and spreading terrorist propaganda, due to his social media messages calling for a resistance against compulsory military service.

August 26: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a prison sentence handed down to journalist Halit Basık over a column that he penned in 2013 violated his rights.

August 27: An opposition MP [announced](#) that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has brought legal action on insult charges against 38,581 people during his time in office as president, compared to a total of 1,716 insult cases launched by five presidents before him.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

August 24: A columnist [revealed](#) that Mesut Güler, a prosecutor who came to public prominence in 2019 for releasing an assailant who had physically assaulted main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, was appointed to the Supreme Court of Appeals.

August 24: A prison administration in İzmir conducting interviews with inmates to assess their eligibility for parole is reportedly [asking](#) them personal questions pertaining to their ideologies or religious beliefs.

KURDISH MINORITY

August 23: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to arrest seven people out of the 25 who were detained on August 20 for allegedly sending money to imprisoned relatives, while releasing 18 others. The detainees had included members and executives of the HDP.

August 23: A court [ruled](#) to arrest Serhat Kadirhan, the former co-mayor of Şırnak who was detained on August 20.

August 25: [Celalettin Yalçın](#), a member of the HDP, was abducted and subjected to torture by individuals who introduced themselves as "the police" in İstanbul. He was left on a roadside in İstanbul the next day.

August 27: An Elazığ prison decided to [deprive](#) nine inmates, including former pro-Kurdish lawmaker Leyla Güven, of visitation rights for a month for singing in Kurdish.

August 27: A Şırnak court [accepted](#) an indictment prepared against local HDP executive Sabuha Akdağ on the charge of provoking hatred and enmity among public, due to a press statement she released on violence against women.

OTHER MINORITIES

August 26: Houses belonging to Alevi families in Adana were [marked](#) with a cross and a hateful slur targeting the group.

PRISON CONDITIONS

August 23: MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [announced](#) that Ahmet Dizlek, an inmate with stage four cancer who is incarcerated in a Kocaeli prison, cannot access proper healthcare and has not been taken to a hospital for the past eight months.

August 27: An Elazığ prison decided to [deprive](#) nine inmates, including former pro-Kurdish lawmaker Leyla Güven, of visitation rights for a month for singing in Kurdish.

August 27: A Samsun prison [denied](#) hospitalization to inmates who refused strip-searches during transfers.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

August 23: Ümit Özdağ, a far-right politician, [targeted](#) a shop owned by an Afghan migrant by releasing a photo of the shop on Twitter. The Afghan owner was reportedly [forced](#) to change his shop's name because of the tweet, which came amid heightened anti-migrant sentiment in the country and on the heels of a recent wave of racist attacks in Ankara against Syrian-owned homes and businesses.

August 24: A Syrian war monitor [claimed](#) that Turkish gendarmes tortured two young Syrians who were attempting to cross into Turkish territory.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

August 24: A Syrian war monitor [claimed](#) that Turkish gendarmes tortured two young Syrians who were attempting to cross into Turkish territory.

August 24: The guards in an Adana prison physically [assaulted](#) inmate Mehmet Emin Ado for resisting a strip-search.

August 25: [Celalettin Yalçın](#), a member of the HDP, was abducted and subjected to torture by individuals who introduced themselves as “the police” in İstanbul. He was left on a roadside in İstanbul the next day.

August 25: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a forcible body search conducted by the police on a man in January 2017 violated his right to protection from maltreatment.

August 26: A conscript named Mehmet Ali Akşit in a written complaint [revealed](#) the details of an incident of torture he was subjected to by his superiors.

August 26: A report jointly prepared by two Turkish human rights organizations [revealed](#) that inmates were subjected to strip-searches, insults and battery in Diyarbakır prisons.

August 27: The gendarmes in Diyarbakır [tortured](#) eight people during house raids to detain them.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

August 23: Turkish air strikes reportedly [killed](#) two civilians in northern Iraq.

August 24: A new [report](#) released by the Stockholm Center for Freedom detailed the ways in which the Turkish government has abused INTERPOL mechanisms to harass critics abroad.