

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 46 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.

September 12: [Gülser Yıldırım](#), an imprisoned Kurdish politician, has not been released despite being eligible for parole.

September 13: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [found](#) rights violations in the imprisonment of former judges Metin Özçelik and Mustafa Başer who were arrested for ruling to release political prisoners in 2014.

September 14: A hospital in İzmir [issued](#) a report that said that Şerife Sulukan, a prisoner suffering from severe paralysis, is fit to remain in prison. Sulukan is a former teacher who was jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement.

September 14: The Human Rights Monitoring Committee of the parliament [found](#) no rights violations in the case of Veysel Atasoy, a political prisoner who died after contracting Covid-19 behind bars. Jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement, Atasoy was handcuffed to his bed for 35 days during his treatment at the hospital.

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

September 12: The police in İzmir briefly [detained](#) four people protesting the high cost of living for university students.

September 13: The İzmir Governor's Office [banned](#) a sporting event organized by the provincial bar association.

September 13: The Şırnak Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

September 14: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit 21 people who stood trial over their participation in a Labor Day demonstration in 2021.

September 16: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by the HDP to demand mother tongue education for Kurds, detaining nine people.

September 16: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Yıldız Damla, a member of an association established for solidarity with people who lost relatives in the conflict in the predominantly Kurdish southeast, to six years, three months on terrorism charges. The judgment came after an appeals court overturned the same sentence that was previously handed down to Damla.

September 16: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, briefly detaining 30 people.

September 16: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) five people protesting the detention of two leftist politicians.

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

September 17: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration about sick prisoners, briefly detaining seven people.

September 18: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, briefly detaining one person.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

September 12: Diyarbakır prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into opposition politician Nevaf Bilek for allegedly disseminating terrorist propaganda in an interview he gave to a Kurdish-language television channel.

September 12: The police in İstanbul [removed](#) an opposition party banner that was critical of the government and detained local politician Mustafa Can Kapan for resisting the removal. Kapan reportedly faces an investigation due to the banner and was summoned for a questioning on September 15.

September 12: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Etkin news agency (ETHA).

September 13: Journalist Sinan Aygül was [sent](#) to jail after he refused to pay a fine he was given on charges of insulting a ruling party MP.

September 13: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) actor İlyas Salman, seeking up to two years in prison for allegedly denigrating the nation in a video he posted on social media.

September 13: The anti-terror department of İstanbul police [summoned](#) human rights lawyer Eren Keskin for a questioning over a reply to one of her tweets.

September 13: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three reports on earlier access bans imposed on allegations related to municipal debt in the province.

September 14: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) monetary fines and a temporary broadcast ban on the pro-opposition Halk TV channel due to its

coverage of the handing over of the remains of a young Kurdish man to his father.

September 14: An opposition MP [reported](#) that a total of 9,168 criminal cases were opened against people on charges of insulting the president last year and that 305 minors appeared in court on insult charges during the period.

September 14: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the Muğla Governor's Office violated the freedom of expression of documentary filmmaker Nejla Demirci by refusing to authorize her to film a documentary on two former public sector workers dismissed during the 2016-2018 state of emergency.

September 15: An Elazığ court [sentenced](#) a man named Yusuf Güneş to one year, six months, 22 days in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda for posting a video of people singing in Kurdish on social media.

September 15: The police in Mersin [detained](#) 10 employees of the local opposition-run municipality on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda. The detainees were released the next day.

September 15: An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a monetary fine on former opposition MP Berhan Şimşek over his remarks on a television program.

September 15: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into several social media users for allegedly insulting the president in satirical videos.

September 16: The Presidency Communications Directorate [revoked](#) the permanent press card of journalist Tuğrul Eryılmaz, citing national security reasons.

September 16: The Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR) [released](#) a report which found 71 press freedom violations in Turkey in the first half of the year.

September 17: The police in Sivas physically [assaulted](#) reporter Hüsnü Ümit Avcı who was filming a building that was on fire.

September 17: Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Mustafa Mert Bildircin on charges of insulting the president due to a news story covering the government's relations with religious cults.

September 18: The police in Muğla briefly [detained](#) local opposition politician Mürsel Yüksel over a banner that was hung on a party building. The banner was removed by order of local prosecutors.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

September 13: The Freedom of Belief Initiative [released](#) a report which found 29 religiously motivated hate crimes in Turkey in 2021. The incidents mostly targeted Alevis and Christians, according to the report.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

September 13: Reports [indicated](#) that the authorities were continuing the detention of people for allegedly using ByLock, a messaging app that the authorities interpret as evidence of membership in the Gülen movement, despite a previous judgment by the European Court of Human Rights that the use of the app cannot by itself be admitted as criminal evidence.

September 13: Documents pertaining to a European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) judgment [revealed](#) that Turkey submitted to the court fabricated documents to justify the pretrial detention of former judges Mustafa Başer and Metin Özçelik.

September 15: The authorities [denied](#) disability benefit to severely disabled and autistic 15-year-old child whose father was previously dismissed from public service on account of alleged Gülen links.

September 17: A prosecutor in Denizli was only [suspended](#) for three months after it was revealed that he was secretly filming his sexual intercourses with women that were involved in his investigations and then blackmailing the women.

KURDISH MINORITY

September 12: [Gülser Yıldırım](#), an imprisoned Kurdish politician, has not been released despite being eligible for parole.

September 12: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Etkin news agency (ETHA).

September 13: Members of a Kurdish family in Aydın were [assaulted](#) by local inhabitants.

September 13: The police in Mersin [detained](#) local Kurdish politician Metin İnci. On September 16, İnci was arrested by a court.

September 14: A group of Kurdish workers were [assaulted](#) by local inhabitants in Mersin.

September 15: An Elazığ court [sentenced](#) a man named Yusuf Güneş to one year, six months, 22 days in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda for posting a video of people singing in Kurdish on social media.

September 15: The guards in an Ankara prison verbally [threatened](#) inmate Murat Bilger for speaking in Kurdish on the phone with his family.

September 16: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by the HDP to demand mother tongue education for Kurds, detaining nine people.

September 16: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Yıldız Damla, a member of an association established for solidarity with people who lost relatives in the conflict in the predominantly Kurdish southeast, to six years, three months on terrorism charges. The judgment came after an appeals court overturned the same sentence that was previously handed down to Damla.

PRISON CONDITIONS

September 12: Images of a 70-year-old prisoner who was brought to the hospital in handcuffs in Mardin [sparked](#) widespread public reaction.

September 13: The Constitutional Court [found](#) rights violations in the case of a prison administration which imposed a disciplinary sanction on an inmate after reading his petition to the Justice Ministry.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

September 13: Turkey's coastguard [announced](#) that six migrants, including two babies, died at sea after Greece pushed them back to Turkish waters in the Aegean.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

September 15: The guards in an Ankara prison verbally [threatened](#) inmate Murat Bilger for speaking in Kurdish on the phone with his family.

September 17: The police in İzmir [mistreated](#) three people who were detained for allegedly being involved in an armed attack.

September 17: The police in Sivas physically [assaulted](#) reporter Hüsni Ümit Avcı who was filming a building that was on fire.