

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 133 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.

**February 13:** Nusret Muğla, a 84-year-old ailing inmate jailed on conviction of links to the Gülen movement, [died](#) of Covid-19. In December, Muğla had told his family in a telephone call that his prison cell in Manisa did not have proper heating or basic necessities.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**February 9:** The police in İstanbul [opened](#) fire on a vehicle that reportedly did not comply with an order to stop, killing one person who was inside. Two officers were detained in connection with the incident.

## 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

**February 7:** The police in Mardin [detained](#) 41 people a day after they attended protests against the increases in electricity prices. The detainees were released the next day.

**February 8:** The police in Van [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged by health workers, briefly detaining eight people.

**February 9:** Mardin prosecutors [indicted](#) civil society activists Abdullah Ayav, Vesile Yüksel and Ruken Aslan on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda, over an event that featured Kurdish-language theater and music.

**February 9:** The authorities [imposed](#) monetary fines on five trans women over a protest in March 2021.

**February 10:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) 16 people who gathered in front of a cemevi, an Alevi place of worship, for a funeral.

**February 10:** The police in Rize briefly [detained](#) a local leftist politician for carrying a banner to protest increases in energy prices.

**February 10:** An Eskişehir court [ruled](#) to acquit five people who stood trial over their participation in protests against high cost of student housing.

**February 11:** An İzmir court [ruled](#) to acquit 25 lawyers and a journalist who stood trial over their participation in a protest against the appointment of government trustees to replace the elected mayors of three predominantly Kurdish provinces in August 2019.

**February 12:** The police in Muş [detained](#) lawyers Tarık Güneş and Rümet Agir Özer, former executives of the Human Rights Association (İHD) on terrorism-related charges. Güneş was arrested by a court on February 13 while Özer was released on probation.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**February 7:** The authorities [issued](#) a detention warrant for Kemal Özkiraz, the owner of a prominent polling company, for allegedly insulting a famous imam on social media.

**February 7:** A court [released](#) pending trial journalist Nurcan Yalçın who was detained on February 4.

**February 8:** A Kars court [sentenced](#) journalist Selda Manduz to one year, six months in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda on social media.

**February 8:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalists Serkan Ozan, Olcay Büyüктаş Akça, Ozan Yurtoğlu and Hazal Ocak; seeking up to four years in prison on accusations that they insulted the president's son in news reports.

**February 8:** A Hatay court [ruled](#) to block access to leftist news website Gazete Yolculuk.

**February 8:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the pretrial detention of journalist Cemil Uğur violated his rights. Uğur was arrested after reporting on allegations that soldiers in Van had tortured two Kurdish villagers. He stood trial on terrorism charges along with four other journalists but was ultimately acquitted by a Van court.

**February 8:** An appeals court [overturned](#) the prison sentences of documentary filmmakers Çayan Demirel and Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, the directors of a documentary about the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) who were convicted on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda. The retrial of the filmmakers will be held at a Batman court.

**February 9:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council [gave](#) Turkish-language services of Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and Euronews a 72-hour deadline to apply for online broadcasting licenses, threatening that the international news agencies would be banned if they fail to comply.

**February 9:** Prosecutors across 12 provinces [ordered](#) the detention of 26 people on charges of insulting the president, over their social media comments about the president who tested positive for Covid-19. The detainees were released on probation after their questioning.

**February 9:** An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a monetary fine on journalist Deniz Yücel on charges of insulting a prosecutor.

**February 9:** Kurdish filmmaker Abdüselam Kılıç was [detained](#) at İzmir Airport upon arrival from Germany. Kılıç is reportedly facing terrorism-related charges.

**February 10:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Mehmet Şahin to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges.

**February 10:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit writer Aslı Erdoğan of terrorism charges. Erdoğan stood trial over her support to a now-shuttered pro-Kurdish newspaper. She was held in pretrial detention for more than four months.

**February 10:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) [launched](#) an investigation into Halk TV over a program about the assassination of a Turkish Cypriot mob boss with alleged ties to the Turkish government.

**February 12:** A prosecutor [sought](#) up to 12 years, 10 months in prison for journalist Sedef Kabaş who was arrested last month on charges of insulting the president on TV.

**February 12:** Journalist İsmail Arı was verbally [threatened](#) by ruling party MP Ahmet Akay after he published a video of Akay's lawyer holding an illegal firearm.

**February 13:** The FOX TV channel [ended](#) the broadcast of Masked Singer, a program that was targeted by Turkish authorities and a presidential decree for allegedly spreading paganist propaganda.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**February 10:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to extend the pretrial detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been behind bars on a series of shifting

charges since 2017 despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

**February 12:** The police in Muş [detained](#) lawyers Tarık Güneş and Rumet Agir Özer, former executives of the Human Rights Association (İHD) on terrorism-related charges. Güneş was arrested by a court on February 13 while Özer was released on probation.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**February 10:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to extend the pretrial detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been behind bars on a series of shifting charges since 2017 despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

**February 11:** Meral Barut, a former police officer summarily dismissed from public service after a failed coup attempt in July 2016, was [reinstated](#) to her job three years after she died of cancer in 2019.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**February 7:** The police in Mardin [detained](#) former HDP executive Kadir Işık and two others in house raids. During the operation, the officers physically mistreated Işık and broke his nose.

**February 8:** An Elazığ prison [imposed](#) a disciplinary sanction of 10 days in solitary confinement on jailed Kurdish politician Leyla Güven.

**February 8:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the pretrial detention of journalist Cemil Uğur violated his rights. Uğur was arrested after reporting on allegations that soldiers in Van had tortured two Kurdish villagers. He stood trial on terrorism charges along with four other journalists but was ultimately acquitted by a Van court.

**February 9:** Kurdish filmmaker Abdülsemel Kılıç was [detained](#) at İzmir Airport upon arrival from Germany. Kılıç is reportedly facing terrorism-related charges.

**February 9:** Mardin prosecutors [indicted](#) civil society activists Abdullah Ayav, Vesile Yüksel and Ruken Aslan on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda, over an event that featured Kurdish-language theater and music.

**February 10:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Mehmet Şahin to six years, three months in prison on

terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement.

**February 13:** The police in Van, Diyarbakır and Mardin [detained](#) nine people, including HDP youth members, in house raids.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**February 8:** The Federation of Alevi Associations [announced](#) that they refuse to pay high electricity bills for cemevis, Alevi places of worship which are not officially recognized as places of worship but as businesses.

**February 9:** The authorities [imposed](#) monetary fines on five trans women over a protest in March 2021.

**February 10:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) 16 people who gathered in front of a cemevi, an Alevi place of worship, for a funeral.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**February 7:** An Edirne prison [denied](#) medical treatment to inmate Abdurrahim Demir for refusing to undergo treatment in handcuffs.

**February 8:** Zeynep Köyden, a mother of two jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement, [announced](#) in a letter to an MP that she has not seen her daughters, aged 5 and 10, in seven months due to the distance of more than 800 kilometers between the prison facility and her home. Köyden requested transfer to a prison closer to her home in Balıkesir.

**February 8:** An Elazığ prison [imposed](#) a disciplinary sanction of 10 days in solitary confinement on jailed Kurdish politician Leyla Güven.

**February 8:** An annual [report](#) on Turkey's prisons published by the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CİSST) noted lack of access to healthcare as a major problem.

**February 10:** Reports revealed that İsa Yaşar, a 57-year-old inmate held in a Kırıkkale prison, [lost](#) his life due to his health problems.

**February 10:** Reports revealed that a prison administration in Kocaeli has been [denying](#) chemotherapy to sick inmate Ahmet Dizlek for three months.

**February 11:** Families of inmates held in an İstanbul prison [complained](#) on social media that inmates' drinking water was arbitrarily restricted by the prison administration.

**February 11:** An Afyon prison [denied](#) medical treatment to sick inmate Nail Demir.

**February 12:** Şahin Adanur, an inmate held in a Mersin prison, [died](#) of Covid-19 after spending 53 days in intensive care in a hospital.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**February 9:** Three Egyptian nationals living in İstanbul were [stabbed](#) in what appears to be a racist attack. The assailant, a person living in the same building, was arrested in connection with the incident.

**February 10:** Assailants in Ankara [attacked](#) a market owned by an Iraqi migrant, causing property damage.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**February 7:** The police in Mardin [detained](#) former HDP executive Kadir Işık in a house raid. During the operation, the officers physically mistreated Işık and broke his nose.

**February 8:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the pretrial detention of journalist Cemil Uğur violated his rights. Uğur was arrested after reporting on allegations that soldiers in Van had tortured two Kurdish villagers. He stood trial on terrorism charges along with four other journalists but was ultimately acquitted by a Van court.

**February 9:** Rıza Türmen, a former judge at the European Court of Human Rights and head of the Ankara Bar Association's human rights committee, [resigned](#) from the bar due to its refusal to publish a report on an alleged incident of torture at the Ankara Police Department. Türmen's resignation followed that of six other lawyers who resigned from the bar the previous week.

**February 9:** The police in Diyarbakır physically [assaulted](#) three people with whom they got involved in a verbal argument in front of their shop.

**February 10:** The guards in an Antalya prison physically [assaulted](#) an inmate named Perihan Yoğurtçu after she attempted to resist a strip-search.

**February 10:** A police officer in Şırnak [hit](#) a protester with a shield, injuring the protester in the face.

**February 10:** The guards in an Ağrı prison physically [assaulted](#) an inmate named Barış Demir.

**February 10:** A prison administration in Şanlıurfa [denied](#) visitation rights to relatives of inmates who refused to undergo strip-searches.

**February 11:** Bazo Yılmaz and Bayram Demirhan, two sick inmates held in a Şanlıurfa prison, [refused](#) hospitalization due to the mistreatment during the transfer to the hospital.

**February 11:** A prison administration in Çorum [sent](#) male guards to search the wards of female prisoners.

**February 12:** The police in Mersin reportedly [subjected](#) a detainee to psychological torture.

**February 12:** A prison administration in Tokat [denied](#) visitation rights to relatives of inmates who refused to undergo strip-searches.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

**February 9:** A Washington Post [report](#) claimed that Ethiopia used a Turkish-made drone in January in an attack that killed 59 civilians sheltering in a school.

**February 11:** A Kosovar court [pressed charges](#) against three Kosovar officials involved in the extrajudicial deportation of six Turkish teachers to Turkey in March 2018. The officials face up to five years in prison on charges of abuse of official position or authority and illegal deprivation of liberty.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**February 8:** A monthly gender-based violence report released by Bianet [found](#) that men killed 23 women and inflicted violence on 57 women in January.

**February 10:** Lawyers [criticized](#) a government proposal to restrict the duration of alimony, saying it aimed to stop women from seeking divorce, forcing them to stay in abusive marriages.