

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 209 | Date 17-23 June

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 26 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.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

20 June: Yıldırım Han, an inmate from Şırnak Type-T Prison, [died](#) Wednesday night after being transferred to a hospital in Ankara due to deteriorating health, having voiced concerns two weeks prior about extreme isolation, lack of hot water, and arbitrary punishments by guards.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunc](#), 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.

20 June: The Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CİSST) [announced](#) that there has been no word from Syrian prisoner Ali Veli for 100 days following his release from Erzincan Type-L Closed Prison on March 12; unidentified callers using a Turkish phone number contacted his family, claiming Veli would be released in

exchange for his father and later sent images of him being tortured.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

18 June: Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç has [announced](#) the issuance of an arrest warrant for a popular YouTuber whose remarks on Islam and the Prophet Muhammad during a recent interview on the platform have sparked criticism for being “insulting.”

22 June: A Turkish court has [blocked](#) access to news reports about Judge Gül A., who was dismissed following a number of allegations including threats, blackmail, bribery and substance abuse, on the grounds that the articles contained “non-objective and accusatory” language.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

18 June: Stefan Schennach, one of the co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for the monitoring of Turkey’s obligations and commitments, once again [called](#) on Turkish authorities to implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), following a fact-finding visit to the country.

18 June: A group of 115 individuals, including writers, artists, and journalists, issued a joint written [statement](#) condemning the decision to appoint a ‘trustee’ to Hakkari.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

19 June: A total of 781 people [sought](#) assistance in 2023 from the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) for themselves or a relative due to alleged incidents of torture and ill-treatment.

18 June: Muharrem Cankılıç, a 63-year-old ailing man [incarcerated](#) in a northwest Turkey prison, has reportedly told his visitors that he expects to die behind bars due to the authorities' refusal to acknowledge the severity of his medical problems.

22 June: During a visit on June 22 to offer condolences for those who died in the June 20 fire in Diyarbakır and Mardin, Governor Ali İhsan Su's comment attributing the fire to "stubble burning" sparked a strong reaction from villagers, leading to an altercation in which the governor's guards [assaulted](#) a young man, S.Ç., and deleted the footage he had recorded on his phone.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

20 June: Followers of the faith-based Gülen movement and supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) are the primary [targets](#) of Turkish intelligence agents in Germany, according to a report from the German interior ministry.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

19 June: A women's group has raised [concerns](#) about women's institutions in Diyarbakır and Batman, which were dismantled by government-appointed trustees and turned into 'coffee houses for men' after replacing elected mayors from pro-Kurdish parties due to 'terrorism' investigations.

20 June: Mika Raun, a popular transgender social media personality, was [assaulted](#) in Antalya, Turkey, in front of her boyfriend's mother and sister, sparking condemnation from LGBT rights groups; she shared videos of her ordeal, revealing police escorted her to the hospital.