

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 118 | September 19-25, 2022

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 58 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 19:** [Sevda Ersoy](#), a four-month pregnant woman sentenced to seven years, six months in prison on conviction of Gülen links, was arrested to serve her sentence. Turkey's laws stipulate the postponement of the execution of sentences for pregnant women.

## 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.

**September 21:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest, briefly detaining 16 people. The demonstration was organized by the Saturday Mothers, a group of activists and family members seeking the whereabouts of loved ones who disappeared while in police custody in the 1990s. Some of the group's members are on trial over their participation in earlier protests.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

**September 20:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration held in support of the protests in Iran over the death of a woman due to torture, detaining two people.

**September 21:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest, briefly detaining 16 people. The demonstration was organized by the Saturday Mothers, a group of activists and family members seeking the whereabouts of loved ones who disappeared while in police custody in the 1990s. Some of the group's members are on trial over their participation in earlier protests.

**September 21:** The Şanlıurfa Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert by singer İlkay Akkaya, citing security and public order reasons.

**September 25:** A district governor's office in İstanbul [banned](#) a festival.

**September 25:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged against the banning of a festival, detaining 15 people.

**September 25:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) six people for carrying a flag of the Iraqi Kurdistan in a football stadium during a match.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**September 19:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Hatice Şahin to six years, three months in prison on conviction of terrorist organization membership due to her coverage of events held by a Kurdish political group.

**September 19:** The police in Diyarbakır [confiscated](#) 100 copies of a Kurdish-language newspaper without a reason.

**September 20:** A Hatay court [sentenced](#) a woman named Feleknaz Aslan to 10 months in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda for carrying a shawl in traditional Kurdish colors during Newroz celebrations in 2015.

**September 20:** The police in Aydın briefly [detained](#) musician Kadir Çat over a song he sang at a HDP rally.

**September 21:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Kadri Esen to one year, three months in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda on social media.

**September 22:** [Cevheri Güven](#), an investigative journalist reporting from exile, was targeted by the pro-government Sabah daily which published secretly taken photos of him and his home in Germany. Turkish journalists have recently been the target of physical attacks in several countries in Europe.

**September 23:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Nurcan Yalçın to two years, six months in prison on charges of aiding and abetting a terrorist organization, due to her journalistic work in 2015 and 2016.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**September 19:** The İstanbul Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize an investigation into police officers who physically assaulted journalists during a demonstration in May.

**September 23:** Reports [revealed](#) that the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) has so far reinstated only 95 judges and prosecutors out of the 4,156 that were disbarred following a coup attempt in 2016.

**September 25:** [Sevgi Balcı](#), a nurse who committed suicide after being summarily removed from public service as part of a widespread purge after a 2016 coup attempt, was reinstated to her job six years after her dismissal.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**September 19:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Hatice Şahin to six years, three months in prison on conviction of terrorist organization membership due to her coverage of events held by a Kurdish political group.

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## PRISON CONDITIONS

**September 19:** [Barış Keve](#), a prisoner incarcerated in Malatya, reportedly committed suicide after being placed in a one-person cell.

**September 20:** The Human Rights Association (İHD) [announced](#) that in the last eight months, a total of 55 prisoners lost their lives in Turkey's prisons. The group reported that 27 prisoners died of disease, 18 died under suspicious circumstances, eight committed suicide and two died for unknown reasons.

**September 24:** The guards in an İstanbul prison [confiscated](#) hygiene products of some inmates. Reports also said that some prisoners in the facility had scabies and the prison administration denied them medical care for it.

**September 24:** The guards in a Kocaeli prison [confiscated](#) a poetry book that the inmates had during a ward search.

**September 24:** The Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey (TİHEK) [reported](#) that some medicines in a Bitlis prison's infirmary were expired.

**September 25:** An Antalya prison [denied](#) medication and hospital referral to inmate Ali Karakut who suffers from Hepatitis B.

**September 25:** A Diyarbakır prison [denied](#) medical treatment to inmate Mehmet Polat.

**September 25:** Reports [revealed](#) that the authorities have been ignoring requests by political prisoners held in a prison in the border province of Edirne after being pushed back by Greece for their transfer to prisons closer to their homes and families.

**September 25:** Prominent human rights lawyer Çiğdem Koç [announced](#) on social media that prisoners have been receiving exorbitant electricity bills since prison facilities were officially reclassified as places of business.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**September 21:** Mohamed Isse Abdullah, the owner of a Somali restaurant in Ankara, was [detained](#) to be deported. Abdullah has recently faced pressure from the local police due to the colors of his restaurant's signboard.

**September 23:** Turkish coast guard [announced](#) the recovery of the dead bodies of two people after a migrant boat drifted off the coast of İzmir due to engine failure.

**September 25:** Six migrants including four children [lost](#) their lives after a migrant boat capsized off the coast of Çanakkale.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**September 20:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the violent detention of Gülsüm Elvan in 2017 was in violation of the prohibition of ill-treatment. The police had broken Elvan's arm while rear-handcuffing her.

**September 21:** The police in Hakkari [mistreated](#) a man named Esat Çakmak who was in custody.

**September 21:** Media reports indicated that 10 people who were detained by gendarmes in Hakkari were [coerced](#) into becoming informants for the state.

**September 21:** The police in İstanbul rear-handcuffed and [mistreated](#) two people while detaining them during a house raid.

**September 22:** Letters of Mehmet Bozan, an inmate who lost his life in an Ankara prison a month ago, [revealed](#) that he was frequently mistreated by prison guards.

**September 25:** The guards in an Antalya prison physically and verbally [assaulted](#) inmate Ali Karakut.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**September 22:** [Cevheri Güven](#), an investigative journalist reporting from exile, was targeted by the pro-government Sabah daily which published secretly taken photos of him and his home in Germany. Turkish journalists have recently been the target of physical attacks in several countries in Europe.