

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 69 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.

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.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

May 1: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in May Day demonstrations, detaining at least 239 people.

May 2: The police in Edirne [intervened](#) in an election event organized by the Green Left Party (YSP), detaining seven party members.

May 4: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged to protest the murder of a Kurdish street musician, detaining two people.

May 4: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a leftist party's election event, violently detaining nine people.

May 4: The police in Adana [intervened](#) in an election event held by the Green Left Party (YSP), detaining 14 people. The detainees were released the next day.

May 4: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by the Green Left Party (YSP), detaining 15 people.

May 6: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized to seek justice for those who disappeared in police custody in the 1990s, detaining 24 people.

May 7: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) four people following their attendance at a rally, for wearing bracelets colored yellow, red and green – colors associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

May 3: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to arrest journalists Dicle Müftüoğlu, Sedat Yılmaz, Erol Balcı, Abdurrahim Tanyeli and Ramazan Debe who were detained last week as part of widespread detentions against pro-Kurdish political networks.

May 3: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) two people named Emircan Bozkurt and Ömer Köker on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media. The detainees were arrested by a court the next day.

May 3: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) seven people, including a 15-year-old minor, on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda.

May 3: Turkey ranked 165th among 180 countries in the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) 2023 World Press

Freedom [Index](#). The ranking represented a fall of 16 places compared to last year.

May 3: A quarterly media freedom [report](#) found that at least 195 journalists stood trial in Turkey in the first quarter of 2023. The report also said that Turkish authorities imposed censorship on at least 187 online news articles and other journalistic content.

May 3: An İstanbul court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of 10 months to singer Gülşen Bayraktar Çolakoğlu on charges of inciting hatred, due to a comment she made about religious high schools.

May 4: A Bitlis court [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Sinan Aygül to four months, 15 days in prison over his reporting on the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) in 2020.

May 4: An Ankara court [ordered](#) civil society leader Nasuh Mahruki to pay damages for insulting the ruling party on social media.

May 4: An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a censorship on a book authored by Ayten Öztürk, a woman who in 2018 was reportedly abducted from Lebanon by the Turkish intelligence and interrogated under torture in unofficial detention for six months. İstanbul prosecutors launched an investigation into Öztürk on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda.

May 4: İstanbul courts [ruled](#) to block access to at least four news reports about allegations that a child was molested at a hospital owned by the Minister of Health.

May 5: A Van court [sentenced](#) journalists Ferhat Çelik and İdris Yayla to one year, three months in prison for reporting on allegations that two Kurdish villagers were tortured by soldiers in the province in 2021.

May 5: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Bülent Mumay to one year, eight months in prison for reporting on allegations that a local municipality faced sequestration due to its debts inherited from the time when it was run by the ruling party.

May 5: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports on allegations that a company owned by the president's relatives was facing sequestration due to its debts.

May 6: In separate rulings delivered by İstanbul courts, Turkish authorities [blocked](#) access to five YouTube videos

and a Twitter account belonging to a man close to the president who has been making corruption allegations.

May 7: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) academic Berk Esen upon his arrival from abroad, due to a tweet he posted in 2020.

May 7: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) journalist Banu Acun.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

May 5: Media reports [indicated](#) that four lawyers were among those who were detained as part of the large-scale investigations carried out against pro-Kurdish political networks.

KURDISH MINORITY

May 2: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) 32 people as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political networks.

May 3: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to arrest journalists Dicle Müftüoğlu, Sedat Yılmaz, Erol Balcı, Abdurrahim Tanyeli and Ramazan Debe who were detained last week as part of widespread detentions against pro-Kurdish political networks.

May 4: [Cihan Aymaz](#), a Kurdish street musician, was stabbed to death in İstanbul after he refused to sing a nationalist song.

May 4: A Bitlis court [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Sinan Aygül to four months, 15 days in prison over his reporting on the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) in 2020.

May 5: A Van court [sentenced](#) journalists Ferhat Çelik and İdris Yayla to one year, three months in prison for reporting on allegations that two Kurdish villagers were tortured by soldiers in the province in 2021.

May 5: Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu [said](#) in an interview that the practice of removing elected mayors from office in predominantly Kurdish provinces and replacing them with pro-government trustees was carried out upon instructions from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

May 7: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) four people following their attendance at a rally, for wearing bracelets

colored yellow, red and green – colors associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

PRISON CONDITIONS

May 5: A prison administration in Denizli [prevented](#) the entry of an NGO report on prison conditions in Turkey.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

May 4: Media reports indicated that Turkish authorities [arrested](#) Rümeyssa Som, a mother of two who was pushed back from Greece. Som attempted to flee Turkey due to a prison sentence of almost eight years handed down to her due to her alleged links to the Gülen movement.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

May 4: The police in Ankara [used](#) excessive violence while detaining nine people at a leftist party's election event. One person was reportedly injured as a result of the brutality.

May 4: The police in İstanbul physically [mistreated](#) Aydın Koçuk and Mehmet İktö who were detained during a demonstration to protest the murder of a Kurdish street musician. The victims were reportedly injured as a result of the violence.

May 6: A prison administration in Ağrı [imposed](#) a disciplinary sanction of three days of solitary confinement to Alparslan Kuytul, the leader of a religious group who was imprisoned following his outspoken criticism of the government, for saying "May God save our people from this dictatorship" during his phone call with his wife.

May 6: Gendarmes in Hatay [intercepted](#) an election vehicle of the Green Left Party (YSP) and physically mistreated those who were inside.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

May 4: Men killed 24 women and inflicted violence on at least 56 others in April, according to a monthly gender-based violence [report](#).