

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 130 | December 12-18, 2022

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 96 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.

**December 13:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) delivered another [judgment](#) on the massive pretrial detention of judges and prosecutors after a failed coup in 2016, condemning Turkey in a case concerning 82 judges and prosecutors. The Strasbourg court ordered Turkey to pay each applicant 5,000 euros in non-pecuniary damages. With this latest ruling, the number of judges and prosecutors whose applications have been upheld by the ECtHR in their cases against Turkey reached 929.

**December 15:** [Sümeyye Aydın](#), the mother of an 11-month-old child, was sent to prison in violation of a law that requires the postponement of the execution of prison sentences for women who have given birth within the last year and a half. Aydın was sentenced to seven years, six months in prison for alleged links to the Gülen movement and she has been under house arrest for eight months.

**December 15:** The police in İstanbul [conducted](#) house raids to detain 26 people for sending money to their imprisoned relatives. The detainees are charged with terrorism financing.

## 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

**December 12:** The police in Van [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged to protest the detention conditions of the jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), briefly detaining 48 people.

**December 13:** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [ordered](#) a 60-day postponement of strikes at two steel factories in Kocaeli, citing concerns about national security.

**December 13:** The Şırnak Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 7 days.

**December 15:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged outside a courthouse, briefly detaining eight people.

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

**December 17:** The Küçükçekmece district governor's office in İstanbul [banned](#) a concert organized by a pro-Kurdish association. The police [intervened](#) in a protest staged against the ban, briefly detaining 26 people.

**December 17:** The police in Kocaeli [detained](#) opposition activist Ali Demir for hanging a political banner on an overpass.

**December 17:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) Kurdish activists Jiyan Timurtaş and Şerzan Kılıçarslan due to an event about the flag of Kurdistan.

**December 17:** The Kahramanmaraş Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 10 days. The ban came ahead of an anniversary of a massacre that took place in the province.

**December 18:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest march about sick prisoners, detaining 70 people. The detainees were released the next day.

**December 18:** The police in İzmir [intervened](#) in a protest against the prison conditions of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, detaining 42 people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**December 12:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Çetin Desde.

**December 12:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Mustafa Sönmez on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**December 12:** Van prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Oktay Candemir due to a social media post.

**December 14:** An court [sentenced](#) İstanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu to two years, seven months and 15 days in prison on charges of insulting election officials in 2019. If upheld, the conviction will see İmamoğlu banned from politics and unable to compete in elections.

**December 14:** The police in Bitlis [detained](#) journalist Sinan Aygül on charges of inciting hatred and hostility due to his reporting on a child abuse incident in the province.

**December 14:** The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) [reported](#) that the number of jailed journalists in Turkey rose from 18 to 40 in 2022.

**December 15:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) Cihan Kolivar, a labor union executive, on charges of insulting the nation due to his remarks on a television program.

**December 15:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports and a tweet on a photo in which prosecutor Furkan Okudan was seen together with ruling party executives. Okudan is in charge of an investigation into İstanbul's opposition mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu that may potentially see him banned from politics.

**December 16:** İzmir prosecutors [indicted](#) Eren Keskin, an executive of the Human Rights Association (İHD), due to her social media posts.

**December 16:** The police in Ankara [detained](#) documentary filmmaker and journalist Sibel Tekin on terrorism charges. The next day, Tekin was arrested by an Ankara court.

**December 16:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering allegations a judge named Mehdi Komşul was previously investigated for alleged sexual harassment. Komşul presided over the trial of Ekrem İmamoğlu, the opposition mayor of İstanbul who on December 14 received a prison sentence for allegedly insulting election officials in 2019.

**December 16:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports on allegations that some 30,000 IT professionals moved abroad in 2021.

**December 17:** The police in Antalya [detained](#) nine leftist activists on charges of insulting the president and public officials.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**December 16:** İzmir prosecutors [indicted](#) Eren Keskin, an executive of the Human Rights Association (İHD), due to her social media posts.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**December 13:** Mary Lawlor, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders, released a [statement](#) expressing concern over the apparent misuse of counterterrorism legislation to target human rights defenders in Turkey.

**December 14:** An court [sentenced](#) İstanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu to two years, seven months and 15 days in prison on charges of insulting election officials in 2019. If upheld, the conviction will see İmamoğlu banned from politics and unable to compete in elections.

**December 15:** An Adana court [handed down](#) a five-month prison sentence on two prison guards who were accused of torture. The guards were convicted for inflicting “simple bodily harm.” Their sentence was later converted into a monetary fine.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**December 13:** An Adiyaman court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Mehmet Varol to six years, 10 months and 15 days in prison on terrorism-related charges.

**December 14:** The police in Mersin [detained](#) nine people, including HDP executives, on terrorism-related charges.

**December 17:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) Kurdish activists Jiyan Timurtaş and Şerzan Kılıçarslan due to an event about the flag of Kurdistan.

**December 17:** The Küçükçekmece district governor’s office in İstanbul [banned](#) a concert organized by a pro-Kurdish association.

**December 18:** A plainclothes police officer in İstanbul [slapped](#) Kurdish politician Ferhat Encü during a scuffle at a protest.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**December 12:** An Eskişehir prison [denied](#) hospital referral to sick inmate Devrim Ayık for refusing to undergo a mouth search.

**December 13:** Reports [indicated](#) that an Afyon prison was holding 15 inmates in wards designed for eight people, offering insufficient meals and denying inmates video calls.

**December 16:** Reports [highlighted](#) that a women’s prison in Mersin was not being adequately heated and the hot water provided to inmates was insufficient.

**December 18:** The guards in a Giresun prison [damaged](#) personal items belonging to inmates and confiscated books during a ward search.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**December 15:** An Adana court [handed down](#) a five-month prison sentence on two prison guards who were accused of torture. The guards were convicted for

inflicting “simple bodily harm.” Their sentence was later converted into a monetary fine.

**December 17:** The police in Diyarbakır [mistreated](#) Suphi Orhan and Muhsin Acar during house raids.

**December 18:** A plainclothes police officer in İstanbul [slapped](#) Kurdish politician Ferhat Encü during a scuffle at a protest.