

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 256 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.

**January 3:** Rights groups [announced](#) that the Forensic Medicine Institution issued a report that said sick inmate Civan Boltan can remain in prison, despite physicians that treated him indicating otherwise.

**January 6:** The Ministry of Justice [denied](#) MP and medical doctor Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu authorization to visit jailed Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk, who has been held behind bars despite being diagnosed with dementia and hospital reports indicating that she was unfit to stay in prison.

**January 7:** The family members of 82-year-old prisoner Yusuf Bekmezci [announced](#) that he was in intensive care after undergoing an operation during which his heart stopped. Jailed for links to the Gülen movement, the businessman was not released despite suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**January 7:** A police officer in Konya [opened fire](#) at a vehicle which reportedly did not comply with an warning to stop, killing one person who was inside. The officer was detained and arrested due to 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

**January 3:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**January 4:** The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**January 6:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) a person protesting in front of a courthouse to demand the release of a sick prisoner.

**January 6:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a person protesting in front of a courthouse to demand the release of imprisoned lawyers.

**January 6:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) three former municipal workers protesting their layoff.

**January 7:** An İstanbul court [released](#) on probation Ersin Berke Gök and Caner Perit Özen, university students standing trial along with 12 others due to their participation in Boğaziçi University protests.

**January 9:** The Tunceli Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**January 3:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about seizure of cocaine in the port of Mersin.

**January 3:** The Journalists' Association [reported](#) that 67 journalists stood trial in December 2021, facing up to a total of 1,334 years in prison and three life sentences while eight journalists were sentenced to 14 years in prison.

**January 4:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to Radio Garden on the grounds that the online radio platform had not obtained a broadcasting license.

**January 5:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Ferhat Çelik upon a warrant issued by Gaziantep prosecutors over a news report.

**January 5:** An administrative court in Ankara [ruled](#) in favor of journalist Birkan Bulut who had filed a lawsuit against the presidential directorate of communications over its refusal to process his request for a press card.

**January 6:** A Van court [ruled](#) to acquit journalists Adnan Bilen, Cemil Uğur, Şehriban Abi and Zeynep Durgut of terrorism charges while sentencing Journalist Nazan Sala to one year, three months in prison. The journalists stood trial and underwent months-long detention over their coverage of an alleged incident of torture involving soldiers.

**January 6:** Van prosecutors [indicted](#) local HDP executive Handan Karakoyun due to a social media message.

**January 6:** Kocaeli prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu due to comments he made in front of a Kocaeli prison after he was not allowed to visit sick prisoner Aysel Tuğluk.

**January 6:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

**January 6:** The Constitutional Court [ordered](#) the state to pay compensation to academics Esra Mungan, Kıvanç Ersoy, Muzaffer Kaya and Meral Camcı who were detained on terrorism charges due to a press conference that they held.

**January 7:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Rojhat Doğru to life in prison as well as to 12 years, one month in prison on four different charges over his coverage of widespread protests in predominantly Kurdish provinces in 2014.

**January 7:** An İzmir court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on nepotism allegations implicating a faculty dean at a local university.

**January 7:** The Constitutional Court [ordered](#) the state to pay damages to seven media outlets that faced access bans on their reports and a column. The court ruled that the access bans were a violation of freedom of expression and dissemination of thought.

**January 8:** A Konya court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports and a blog page about allegations that a local district mayor was filmed drinking alcohol while driving.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**January 4:** Prosecutors [dismissed](#) an investigations into allegations of systematic torture and sexual assault against Garibe Gezer, an inmate who died in December after reports that she was heavily tortured in a Kocaeli prison. The authorities claimed that Gezer had committed suicide.

**January 7:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit 12 defendants and imposed a suspended fine on one other who stood trial for a mob attack on Barbaros Şansal, fashion designer and an outspoken critic of the Turkish government.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**January 5:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Ferhat Çelik upon a warrant issued by Gaziantep prosecutors over a news report published by the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya news agency.

**January 6:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to release former HDP MP Abdullah Zeydan after an appeals court overturned his 8-year prison sentence on terrorism-related charges.

**January 6:** A Van court [ruled](#) to acquit journalists Adnan Bilen, Cemil Uğur, Şehriban Abi and Zeynep Durgut of terrorism charges while sentencing Journalist Nazan

Sala to one year, three months in prison. The journalists stood trial and underwent months-long detention over their coverage of an alleged incident of torture involving soldiers.

**January 6:** The Ministry of Justice [denied](#) MP and medical doctor Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu authorization to visit jailed Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk, who has been held behind bars despite being diagnosed with dementia and hospital reports indicating that she was unfit to stay in prison. Prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into Gergerlioğlu over his comments in front of the Kocaeli prison where Tuğluk is incarcerated.

**January 6:** Van prosecutors [indicted](#) local HDP executive Handan Karakoyun due to a social media message.

**January 6:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

**January 7:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Rojhat Doğru to life in prison as well as to 12 years, one month in prison on four different charges over his coverage of widespread protests in predominantly Kurdish provinces in 2014.

**January 7:** A Gaziantep court [sentenced](#) 62 people, including members of the HDP and the Democratic Regions Party (DBP), to varying prison sentences on terrorism-related charges.

**January 9:** A mob in Ankara attacked three Kurdish university students, injuring one of them. Two people were briefly [detained](#) in connection with the incident.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**January 4:** A prison administration in Şırnak did not [deliver](#) clothes sent by family members of inmate Kasım Yiğit.

**January 5:** A new [report](#) published by a rights group based on pandemic-related complaints received from prisoners noted problems concerning quarantine wards, lack of proper ventilation and unhygienic facilities.

**January 6:** A Samsun prison [blocked](#) the medical treatment of inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

**January 9:** Rights groups [reported](#) that children aged between 0 and 6 who live behind bars alongside their mothers are deprived of access to adequate nutrition and basic amenities such as diapers and that many of them suffer stunted development.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**January 3:** An administrative court in Bolu [imposed](#) an injunction on the implementation of a series of discriminatory regulations passed by the city council to impose exorbitant fees on migrants to access public services in the city.

**January 3:** Two children [took](#) shelter in the border province of Van after their mother, a migrant woman from Afghanistan, froze to death while trying to cross into Turkey from Iran.

**January 8:** A migrant reportedly [froze](#) to death near the Greek border in the province of Edirne.

**January 9:** A large group of local inhabitants [attacked](#) shops belonging to Syrians in İstanbul. The governor's office announced that seven people were detained in connection with the incident.

**January 9:** A racist mob [assaulted](#) an Afghan family in Ankara, injuring at least one person.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**January 4:** The police in Balıkesir [assaulted](#) two people who allegedly failed to comply with a warning to stop.

**January 4:** Prosecutors [dismissed](#) an investigations into allegations of systematic torture and sexual assault against Garibe Gezer, an inmate who died in December after reports that she was heavily tortured in a Kocaeli prison. The authorities claimed that Gezer had committed suicide.

**January 6:** Guards in an İstanbul prison physically [assaulted](#) former military cadets who are incarcerated for allegedly participating in an coup attempt in July 2016.

**January 6:** The police in İstanbul [mistreated](#) a protester during its intervention in a demonstration.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

**January 9:** Syrian media [reported](#) that Turkey's proxy groups arrested several civilians for protesting poor living conditions in the Turkish-occupied zone.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**January 5:** A monthly male violence monitoring report [found](#) that men killed 34 women and inflicted violence on at least 61 women in December.

**January 5:** A women's rights platform [reported](#) that 280 women were murdered by men in 2021 while 217 others died under suspicious circumstances.