

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 579 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.

**October 21:** Reports revealed that a prison administration in İzmir [denied](#) parole to inmate Remziye Polat on the pretext that she did not show “remorse.”

## 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

**October 19:** The police in Antalya [intervened](#) in a demonstration and briefly detained Fatma Karakuzu and Melek Çetinkaya. Karakuzu is the mother of Ayşe Özdoğan, an end-stage cancer patient who is imprisoned over alleged links to the Gülen movement. The two were holding the demonstration to call for Özdoğan’s release.

**October 19:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration in front of a courthouse. Three people were briefly detained.

**October 20:** The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a demonstration to protest the mass dismissals from public service, briefly detaining four people.

**October 20:** A Mardin court [acquitted](#) five journalists and three others who stood trial over their participation in demonstrations.

**October 21:** The Constitutional Court [found](#) no rights violation in the case of four individuals previously convicted on charges related to the Gezi Park protests of 2013.

**October 21:** The Şanlıurfa Governor’s Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of seven days.

**October 22:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) 45 students for protesting the government-appointed rector of Boğaziçi University.

**October 25:** The police in Van [intervened](#) in a press briefing organized by local medical chambers, briefly detaining two people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**October 19:** The European Court of Human Rights [condemned](#) Turkey in the case of Vedat Şorli, who was sentenced to imprisonment for insulting the president. The court urged Turkey to amend the law on insulting the president.

**October 19:** Airport police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) rapper Önder Doğan (a.k.a. Murda). Doğan is accused of encouraging drug use in some of his songs.

**October 19:** Van prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Oktay Candemir due to a social media message. Candemir was summoned by the police for a questioning.

**October 19:** Prosecutors [summoned](#) actress Berna Laçın to testify. She was questioned her social media comments about high food prices.

**October 20:** An İzmir court [began](#) the trial of documentary filmmaker Oktay İnce on charges of insulting the president. The prosecutor demanded İnce's imprisonment.

**October 20:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to arrest a person for allegedly insulting Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the republic.

**October 20:** A Burdur court [blocked](#) access to two news reports and a column published by the Evrensel newspaper.

**October 20:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports about corruption allegations involving the state-owned Ziraat Bank.

**October 20:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about bribery allegations implicating high-ranking police chiefs.

**October 20:** The Bianet news website [reported](#) that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the year, 29 journalists suffered physical attacks, 11 were detained and 205 were put on trial, mostly on terrorism-related charges. The authorities blocked access to a total of 248 news articles.

**October 21:** The police in İzmir [detained](#) 17 HDP members due to their social media messages.

**October 22:** An İstanbul court [handed down](#) a five-month suspended sentence to Pınar Yıldırım, a popular social media influencer known as "Pucca," on charges of insulting men on social media.

**October 22:** An İstanbul court [issued](#) a detention warrant against Germany-based musician Ferhat Tunç for allegedly insulting a former prime minister.

**October 22:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Fırat Fıstık over his reports on the government-appointed rector of Boğaziçi University.

**October 22:** A Gaziantep court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about municipal tenders allegedly awarded to a relative of a local district mayor.

**October 22:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a column and two news articles about plagiarism allegations implicating an academic.

**October 22:** Opposition MP Utku Çakırözer [reported](#) that in the first nine months of the year state-owned companies published nearly 45 percent of their advertisements on three pro-government TV channels while no advertisements were placed on major government-critical stations.

**October 24:** Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Barış Pehlivan over a column he wrote about the Gendarmerie General Command.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**October 18:** Ten foreign embassies in Ankara [released](#) a joint statement calling for the immediate release of Osman Kavala. The businessman has been jailed for four years, despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release. Kavala [announced](#) on October 22 that he will no longer attend court hearings or make defense statements because he has lost all hope for a fair trial.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**October 20:** The Italian Federation for Human Rights (FIDU) [submitted](#) an expert opinion to the European Court of Human Rights in which it said that the overly broad and vague wording of Turkey's anti-terror legislation does not satisfy the quality of law and therefore is prone to arbitrary use.

**October 22:** Imprisoned human rights defender Osman Kavala [announced](#) that he will no longer attend court hearings or make defense statements because he has lost all hope for a fair trial. Kavala has been held behind bars for four years despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**October 18:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) HDP member Mehmet Eşref Mamedoğlu to seven years, six months in prison on terrorism charges.

**October 19:** An Edirne court [sentenced](#) German-Kurdish singer Saide İnaç to three years, one month and 15 days in prison on terrorism charges.

**October 19:** A Yozgat prison [forbade](#) inmates to speak in Kurdish on the phone and interrupted the calls of the inmates who spoke in Kurdish.

**October 20:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) former district mayor Ayşe Gökkan to 30 years in prison on terrorism charges.

**October 21:** The police in İzmir [detained](#) 17 HDP members due to their social media messages.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**October 19:** A Yozgat prison [forbade](#) inmates to speak in Kurdish on the phone and interrupted the calls of the inmates who spoke in Kurdish.

**October 20:** Reports revealed that an İstanbul prison [censored](#) letters sent by jailed academic Nuriye Gülmen. The prison administration banned the letters on the grounds that they were 'objectionable.'

**October 20:** A prison administration in Şırnak [hindered](#) the treatment and hospitalization of inmates.

**October 21:** A Samsun prison [denied](#) hospitalization to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**October 19:** Member of European Parliament Tineke Strik [said](#) in an interview that Turkey cannot be considered a safe country for migrants and asylum seekers. Strik pointed out that the country is not bound by the refugee convention when it comes to non-European nationals.

**October 22:** Turkish media [reported](#) that 13 Moroccan migrants who had illegally crossed into Greece from Turkey were stripped and beaten before they were illegally sent back to Turkey.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**October 19:** Reports [revealed](#) that Adem Özbey, an inmate held in a prison in Van, was taken out of his ward for a questioning during which he was tortured. Another

inmate from the same facility reported that Özbey was not taken to a hospital afterwards.

**October 20:** Seven inmates who were involuntarily [transferred](#) from a Diyarbakır prison to other provinces were subjected to strip-searches. Those who resisted were physically assaulted.

**October 20:** The guards in an Ankara prison physically [assaulted](#) 10 inmates who resisted strip-searches during an involuntary transfer from a Kırıkkale prison.

**October 20:** A female inmate held in a Mersin prison was reportedly [subjected](#) to a sexual harassment by a soldier during a hospitalization. After she reacted to the harassment, she was taken back to prison without receiving her treatment.

**October 23:** The police in Diyarbakır [tortured](#) two people during a house raid to detain them.

**October 23:** The guards in a Kayseri prison physically [assaulted](#) a disabled inmate named Şaban Kaygusuz for resisting a strip-search.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

**October 21:** A Stockholm-based NGO released a [report](#) on the extrajudicial or unlawful rendition of Turkish government critics living outside Turkey.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**October 20:** A female inmate held in a Mersin prison was reportedly [subjected](#) to a sexual harassment by a soldier during a hospitalization. After she reacted to the harassment, she was taken back to prison without receiving her treatment.