

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 77 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.

**March 22:** Antalya prosecutors [ordered](#) the detention of 21 people on the grounds that they provided financial support to people who are jailed over alleged links to leftist terror groups.

## 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

**March 20:** The police in Kocaeli briefly [detained](#) two people following their attendance in a Newroz celebration.

**March 21:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) 160 people who gathered to celebrate the Newroz.

**March 23:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit peace activist Hanife Yıldız who stood trial over a demonstration in May 2022.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**March 20:** A court [arrested](#) journalist Hamdullah Bayram who was detained on March 16.

**March 20:** Government officials in Hatay [confiscated](#) and destroyed the equipment of three Greek journalists who were covering news.

**March 20:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Mehmet Ali Erdoğan due to a news report which contained a reference to “Kurdistan.” Erdoğan was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

**March 20:** A Rize court [ruled](#) to block access to Engelliweb, a press freedom monitoring platform that reports on online censorship.

**March 20:** An İstanbul court [imposed](#) a censorship on a book authored by writer Yavuz Ekinci on the grounds that it contained terrorist propaganda. The decision means that the book will be banned from sale and that the copies that are already in the market will be confiscated by the authorities.

**March 21:** An İzmir court [ruled](#) to block access to four news reports covering bribery and fraud allegations about ruling party politician Doğan Çelik.

**March 21:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about allegations that a district governor was reassigned elsewhere because of his brother’s alleged ties to the mafia.

**March 22:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) monetary fines and temporary broadcast bans on government-

critical channels Halk TV, Show TV and Fox TV channels due to their programming.

**March 23:** Reports [indicated](#) that in the last month courts in blocked access to six websites used by pro-Kurdish or leftist news outlets.

**March 24:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Bülent Kılıç on charges of insulting and resisting police officers who brutally detained him while covering a pride march in 2021. The prosecutors found no grounds to investigate the police brutality Kılıç was subjected to.

**March 24:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports about a pro-government right-wing political party's alleged ties to extremism.

**March 25:** Author Cemil Kılıç was [assaulted](#) by unidentified assailants in front of his home in İstanbul.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**March 21:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of academics Alphan Telek, Edgar Şar and Zeynep Kivilcim whose passports were revoked due to their dismissal from civil service during the post-coup state of emergency.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**March 24:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Bülent Kılıç on charges of insulting and resisting police officers who brutally detained him while covering a pride march in 2021. The prosecutors found no grounds to investigate the police brutality Kılıç was subjected to.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**March 20:** The police in Bursa briefly [detained](#) local HDP executive Mehmet Dilek.

**March 20:** The police in Kocaeli briefly [detained](#) two people following their attendance in a Newroz celebration.

**March 21:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) 160 people who gathered to celebrate the Newroz.

**March 22:** The Diyarbakır Bar Association [filed](#) a criminal complaint against police officers who allegedly tortured a 14-year-old Kurdish boy during Newroz celebrations in the province.

**March 22:** The police in İzmir [detained](#) seven people, including HDP executive İdil Uğurlu.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**March 26:** An 18-year-old Afghan woman who is kept at a repatriation center in Iğdır [filed](#) a criminal complaint, claiming that she was raped on March 6 by four other detainees who are staying in the same center. Reports said that the authorities have taken no action and that the woman is still held in the same place as the alleged offenders.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**March 22:** The Diyarbakır Bar Association [filed](#) a criminal complaint against police officers who allegedly tortured a 14-year-old Kurdish boy during Newroz celebrations in the province. Five officers were suspended from their duties in connection with the incident.

**March 24:** Police officers in Erzurum physically [assaulted](#) street peddler Nuri Bayraktar and his two sons due to an argument.

**March 24:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Bülent Kılıç on charges of insulting and resisting police officers who brutally detained him while covering a pride march in 2021. The prosecutors found no grounds to investigate the police brutality Kılıç was subjected to.

**March 25:** The police in İzmir physically [assaulted](#) lawyers who visited a police station to meet with three detainees.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**March 21:** Turkey-backed fighters in northern Syria reportedly [shot at](#) a family of Kurds celebrating Newroz, killing at least four people.