

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 138 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.

February 22: Turkish police on Wednesday [detained](#) 67 people for alleged links to the Gülen movement, a faith-based group accused by the government of “terrorist activities”.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

February 23: Following a recent landslide at the Çöpler gold mine in the eastern Turkish province of Erzincan, reports have [emerged](#) that government and company officials ignored several warnings of a potential disaster, leading to a tragic event in which nine workers were trapped under toxic debris.

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

February 22: Istanbul University students, who were to hold a forum on February 22, 2024 to protest the decision to open the Istanbul University campus to visitors, were [prevented](#) from entering the campus by the police.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

February 19: A Turkish lawyer, Feyza Altun, has been [detained](#) for insulting Sharia, the religious law that is part of the Islamic tradition, on social media platform X.

February 19: At least 9 news articles about Levent Uysal, MHP Mersin MP, owner of Nişantaşı University and founder of Nişantaşı Education Foundation (NEV), were [ordered](#) to be blocked and deleted by the Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

February 20: 143 news reports and social media posts about Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Mersin MP on <https://www.birgun.net>, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr> and <https://halktv.com.tr> were [banned](#) to access by Istanbul Penal Court of Peace No 5 on February 19, 2024, on the grounds of violation of personal rights, and it is decided to remove the content.

February 20: At least 3 news reports on the Diyarbakır Bar Association's complaint to the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) against Gülsüm Akkoyun, the judge who acquitted police officers charged in connection with the ISIS bombing attack in İstasyon Square on June 5, 2015, were [blocked](#) from access by the Sakarya 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

February 20: Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has [reassigned](#) and temporarily halted any possibility of promotion or pay increase for an imam, Yusuf Kılıç, for refusing to bring his congregation to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's election rally in April of last year.

February 21: Ahmed Katie, a Syrian human rights activist who went missing in November after his outspoken criticism of Turkey's worsening treatment of refugees, is among those [arrested](#) by Turkish authorities on charges of spying for French intelligence.

February 22: Metin and Kemal Kahraman's concert planned by Eğitim-Sen in Bingöl for February 21, World Mother Language Day, was [banned](#) by the governorship and police.

February 22: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting and streaming regulator, has [imposed](#) more than 9 administrative fines and temporary broadcast halts on a number of TV stations due to their content.

February 22: A Turkish prosecutor has [demanded](#) up to 10 and a half years in prison for Hayko Bağdat, a Turkish-Armenian journalist based in Germany, on charges of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

February 24: Turkey's Telecommunications Authority (BTK) [decided](#) to ban Twitch, one of the most popular live streaming platforms in the country, and [Kick](#) upon a notification from the General Directorate of the National Lottery (Milli Piyango).

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

February 22: The decisions of Turkey's highest court are being systematically [disregarded](#) by both the Supreme Court of Appeals and, increasingly, the local courts, deepening the judicial crisis in Turkey.

February 22: A former judge who was [removed](#) from the bench after filing an appeal against the nomination of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a presidential candidate in last year's election failed to get his petition to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in a timely fashion due to lost mail.

February 23: Turkey's Constitutional Court has [declined](#) to issue a third ruling in the case of a jailed opposition politician, Can Atalay, who was stripped of his

parliamentary status last month, given that its two previous rulings that his rights had been violated were not complied with by the lower courts.

KURDISH MINORITY

February 19: the billboards prepared by Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and Democratic Regions Party (DBP) for February 21, World Mother Language Day and local elections with the slogan "Dem dema zimanê Kurdî ye" were [prevented](#) by the trustee from being hung on billboards.

February 22: A court in southeast Turkey has [announced](#) its verdict in the trial of 15 local Kurdish politicians accused of terrorism, handing down sentences totaling close to 104 years in prison in total.

OTHER MINORITIES

February 22: Turkey's government is [putting](#) independent groups under increasing restrictions, including smear tactics, administrative harassment, and the threat of criminal prosecution.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

February 23: A candidate, Veli Gündüz Şahin, for mayor of a district in Ankara from the main opposition Republican People's Party's (CHP) has [attracted](#) criticism for discriminatory remarks he made about refugee children while campaigning for the March local elections.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

February 22: A child named S.T. (17, M) was [subjected](#) to physical violence of the police in Seydişehir district of Konya on February 20, 2024, on the grounds that he did not obey the stop warning while driving his father's car.

February 22: The clothes sent to a prisoner named Fikret Erden in Kırıkkale F Type High Security Closed Prison were [delivered](#) after 3 months and the food given to prisoners was insufficient.

February 22: A prisoner named Fikret Erden was not [given](#) his medication in Kırıkkale F Type High Security Prison.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

February 22: Turkish authorities have [continued](#) the practice of organizing the abduction and rendition to Turkey of individuals with alleged links to the Gülen movement, Human Rights Watch said in a recent report.