

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 95 | April 11-17, 2022

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 43 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.

**April 11:** [Aslı Ünlü](#), a five-months-pregnant woman, was arrested for alleged links to the Gülen movement, despite laws that stipulate the postponement of sentences for pregnant women.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**April 11:** A police officer in Şırnak [ran over](#) lawyer Serkan Karakaş. The officer was detained after he admitted during his questioning that his action was deliberate.

**April 16:** Soldiers in Hakkari [shot](#) dead Tahsin Yalçın, a 21-year-old man.

## 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

**April 12:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest staged by the HDP and detained three people, including executives of the party. The detainees were released the next day.

**April 12:** An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) the closure of an association due to an LGBTI event it organized.

**April 13:** İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) 40 women over their participation in Women's Day events.

**April 13:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) two former municipal workers protesting their layoff.

**April 13:** An İzmir court [ruled](#) to acquit seven people who stood trial over a protest march.

**April 13:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**April 14:** Gendarmes in Adıyaman briefly [detained](#) 20 people protesting the construction of a marble quarry.

**April 14:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) six women protesting the prices of female hygiene products.

**April 14:** The authorities [started](#) a legal process to close down the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu), accusing it of "illegal and immoral activities" and "damaging the Turkish family structure." The women's rights group is instrumental in raising awareness on violence against women and compiling data on femicides as well as other types of gender-based violence and abuse.

**April 14:** An Eskişehir court [ruled](#) to acquit six people who stood trial for participating in protests against high costs of living for students.

**April 15:** The police [detained](#) at least 66 people on terrorism-related charges for their attendance at Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır in March.

**April 15:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest about sick prisoners, briefly detaining three people.

**April 15:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a man staging a protest about sick prisoners.

**April 17:** The police in Ankara [detained](#) a man who participated in a protest about the imprisonment of military cadets on coup charges.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**April 11:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) 1,661 fines on media organizations in 2021, totaling \$3.7 million.

**April 12:** Author Ergün Poyraz, who is known for his government-critical books, was [attacked](#) by three people in front of his house in Aydın. Poyraz was seriously injured as a result of the attack and he was hospitalized.

**April 12:** The U.S. Department of Justice [rejected](#) Turkey's request for legal assistance in a case against former national swimmer Derya Büyükuncu, who is sought by Turkish authorities on charges of insulting the president on social media. The U.S. said Büyükuncu's remarks were within the scope of freedom of expression.

**April 12:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Hasan Cemal who stood trial on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**April 13:** The Supreme Court of Appeals [overturned](#) a lower court decision ordering opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu to pay damages to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and one of his friends for his allegations that they had secretly transferred money to an offshore company based in the Isle of Man.

**April 13:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports on allegations that a ruling party member had to resign from the party following controversy about a municipal tender.

**April 13:** An İstanbul court ordered journalist Ali Engin Demirhan to pay damages to the state-run TRT broadcaster over a news report that he published.

**April 14:** An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Altan Tan to 15 months in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

**April 14:** An appeals court in İstanbul [upheld](#) the prison sentences handed down to Kemal Sancılı, İnan Kızılkaya and Eren Keskin on terrorism-related charges as part of an investigation into the now-closed Özgür Gündem newspaper.

**April 14:** A Bursa court [sentenced](#) former MP Mehmet Tüm to 11 months, 20 days in prison on charges of insulting the president in his speeches.

**April 14:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit Genco Erkal, a 83-year-old actor who stood trial on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**April 14:** Media reports [indicated](#) that the ruling party is planning on legislation seeking up to three years in prison for economic researchers who publish data unapproved by the official statistics agency.

**April 14:** The authorities [blocked](#) access to a website used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

**April 14:** Kocaeli prosecutors [ordered](#) the removal of a banner placed by the HDP on a party building.

**April 16:** [Alp Emeç](#), a member of an opposition party, was detained and arrested on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**April 17:** The police in Rize forcibly [removed](#) the banners of an opposition party criticizing the government's policies on local agriculture.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**April 15:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to prolong the pretrial detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been kept in jail since 2017 without conviction and despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**April 13:** The U.S. State Department released its annual human rights [report](#) on Turkey, which noted, among others, further deterioration in rule of law in 2021.

**April 15:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to prolong the pretrial detention of civil society leader Osman Kavala, who has been kept in jail since 2017 without conviction and despite a European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**April 11:** The police in Şırnak [detained](#) 10 people, including local HDP executives.

**April 11:** A school in Mersin [expelled](#) a teacher named Hüdai Morsümbül for speaking Kurdish and Arabic with his students and encouraging them to enroll in elective Kurdish courses.

**April 12:** The police in several provinces [detained](#) 46 people, including former mayors from the HDP, as part of an investigation into a series of protests in Kurdish-majority southeast in 2014. Arrest warrants were issued for 91 suspects as part of the investigation.

**April 12:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest staged by the HDP and detained three people, including executives of the party. The detainees were released the next day.

**April 13:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) HDP press worker Vedat Dağ to 10 years, three months on several charges.

**April 14:** An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Altan Tan to 15 months in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

**April 14:** The authorities [blocked](#) access to a website used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

**April 14:** Kocaeli prosecutors [ordered](#) the removal of a banner placed by the HDP on a party building.

**April 15:** The police [detained](#) at least 66 people on terrorism-related charges for their attendance at Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır in March.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**April 11:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that compulsory religion classes in schools violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

**April 12:** An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) the closure of an association due to an LGBTI event it organized.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**April 14:** A Kocaeli prison [refused](#) to deliver to an inmate a book sent by an author.

**April 14:** A Samsun prison [denied](#) hospitalization to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**April 11:** At least four people were [killed](#) and 25 others were injured after a van carrying migrants rolled over in the province of Batman.

**April 14:** Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu [announced](#) that Turkey has deported 19,336 Syrian refugees for security reasons since 2016.

**April 17:** A female migrant was [found](#) dead after shooting erupted at the Turkish-Greek land border.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**April 11:** The police in Tunceli physically [mistreated](#) a man named Doğukan Gül who was in custody.

**April 13:** Two inmates in an İstanbul prison [took](#) their own lives after an incident of torture by prison guards.

**April 13:** Reports revealed that the police in Bitlis physically [assaulted](#) an 18-year-old man for making the V sign while taking a picture.

**April 13:** The police in Şırnak physically [assaulted](#) a woman during a house raid.

**April 13:** The police in Ankara [mistreated](#) a man named Şahin Turgut.

**April 14:** The police in Batman physically [assaulted](#) an inmate and his lawyer in a courthouse.

**April 14:** The guards in an Afyon prison verbally [threatened](#) inmate Xemgin Karakaş with death.

**April 15:** The guards in a Diyarbakır prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates during a ward search. The prison administration cut off the phone calls of inmates who attempted to talk about the incident of torture.

**April 15:** An Adana prison [subjected](#) inmate Barış Aydın to strip-search during a transfer.

**April 15:** Media reports [indicated](#) that the Ankara Bar Association refused to publish three reports prepared by its human rights committee on torture allegations. The bar's administration had also blocked the publication of a similar report in January, which had led to the resignation of six lawyers.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**April 11:** Germany's Deutsche Bank reportedly [closed](#) the accounts of three critics of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan without providing a reason.

**April 12:** The U.S. Department of Justice [rejected](#) Turkey's request for legal assistance in a case against former national swimmer Derya Büyükuncu, who is sought by Turkish authorities on charges of insulting the president on social media. The U.S. said Büyükuncu's remarks were within the scope of freedom of expression.

**April 14:** German federal prosecutors [indicted](#) a man who was arrested in Düsseldorf in September 2021, charging him of spying on dissidents for Turkey's intelligence agency. The man was arrested in September 2021 in a Düsseldorf hotel after an employee noticed a weapon on him.

**April 15:** Reports on international media [alleged](#) that Turkey is running secret prisons across Turkish-controlled northwestern Syria.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**April 14:** The authorities [started](#) a legal process to close down the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu), accusing it of "illegal and immoral activities" and "damaging the Turkish family structure." The women's rights group is instrumental in raising awareness on violence against women and compiling data on femicides as well as other types of gender-based violence and abuse.