

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 71 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.

24 January: Turkish authorities [detained](#) 71 individuals across 23 provinces over alleged links to the Gülen movement, including accusations of social media posts and ByLock use, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced, despite an ECtHR ruling stating ByLock use is not a criminal offense.

24 January: Twelve years after the Gezi Park protests, celebrity manager Ayşe Barım was [detained](#) in İstanbul for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government, with prominent actors Halit Ergenç, Dolunay Soysert, Mehmet Günsür, and Rıza Kocaoğlu summoned to testify as part of the investigation.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

23 January: Negligence [contributed](#) to the deaths of 78 people in a fire at the Grand Kartal Hotel in Turkey's Kartalkaya ski resort, with experts citing non-functional fire alarms, insufficient fire exits, and wooden cladding that fueled the blaze.

20 January: Hüsamettin Karadeniz, a retired imam diagnosed with advanced lymphoma, [died](#) in Kırşehir Prison after Turkish authorities repeatedly denied his

requests for release on medical grounds; imprisoned since 2021 for alleged ties to the Gülen movement, his appeals for treatment were also rejected by Ankara University Oncology Hospital.

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

22 January: Police [detained](#) 38 people, including ESP Co-Chair Murat Çepni and Limter-İş Chair Kanber Saygılı, during a protest in İstanbul's Kadıköy against the detention of 41 journalist and association members from leftist groups.

25 January: Police [used](#) physical force to detain 34 people in Ankara's Ulus Square who were promoting a Furkan Movement conference scheduled for January 26, 2025.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

21 January: A total of 37 individuals, including pro-Kurdish and leftist politicians, journalists, and activists, were [detained](#) in an İstanbul-based counterterrorism operation targeting alleged links to the Marxist Leninist Communist Party (MLKP).

23 January: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) journalists Yakup Çetin, Ahmet Memiş, Cemal Azmi Kalyoncu, Gökçe Fırat

Çulhaoğlu, Ünal Tanık, and Yetkin Yıldız to prison on terrorism-related charges linked to the Gülen movement in a retrial, despite a prior Supreme Court ruling that the evidence was insufficient, the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) reported.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

20 January: İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu is under [investigation](#) for allegedly targeting Chief Public Prosecutor Akın Gürlek with remarks made on Monday, following the detention of CHP youth branches head Cem Aydın, as part of ongoing probes into opposition figures and CHP municipalities.

21 January: Ümit Özdağ, leader of Turkey's far-right Victory Party, was [arrested](#) on charges of "inciting hatred and enmity among the public," in what critics see as an arbitrary move by President Erdoğan's government to target opposition parties and silence dissenting voices.

21 January: Mertcan Üreten, a CHP municipal council member from Manisa's Yunusemre district, was [detained](#) for sharing İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's remarks about the İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor on social media.

22 January: İstanbul Bar Association Board Member Fırat Epözdemir was [detained](#) at İstanbul Airport on January 23, 2025, on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization," with searches conducted at his home and office, where his computer and some documents were confiscated.

KURDISH MINORITY

23 January: Kurdish film director Kazım Öz was briefly [detained](#) in İstanbul over allegations of "terrorist propaganda" in his 2017 film "Zer" and was released after questioning, with a hearing scheduled for March 13.

23 January: A Kurdish inmate, Ahmet Kaya, a prisoner allegedly assaulted by guards in 2023 at Van High-Security Prison, is in [critical](#) condition due to untreated injuries, including breathing difficulties, bone degeneration, and gum disease.

OTHER MINORITIES

21 January: A growing wave of nationalism in Turkey is [exacerbating](#) challenges for the Christian minority, who face social discrimination, institutional pressures, and targeted attacks, with Turkey ranking among the top 50 countries for Christian persecution in Open Doors' 2025 World Watch List.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

20 January: Iranian rapper Amir Hossein Maghsoudloo, known as Tataloo, has been [sentenced](#) to death for blasphemy after being deported from Turkey in late 2023.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

21 January: The family of 57-year-old inmate Dilek Dağlı, currently held in a Turkish prison, has [called](#) for her release due to worsening health conditions, including liver problems, nerve compression, high blood pressure, hearing loss, and meniscus damage, which have left her unable to perform basic tasks.

22 January: Twenty-year-old Furkan Özen accused Turkish police of brutality after being [hit](#) by an armored vehicle during protests in Mersin's Akdeniz district, claiming officers intentionally struck him, assaulted him on the ground, and continued to beat him inside a police vehicle before denying him medical treatment.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

21 January: Orhan İnandı, a Turkish educator abducted by Turkish intelligence from Kyrgyzstan in 2021, [told](#) opposition lawmaker and human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu that he was tortured in custody, denied surgery for 16 months after his arm was broken, and subjected to severe ill-treatment.