

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 78 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.

4 April: Turkish authorities [detained](#) 73 people and arrested 48 of them across 27 provinces between March 19 and 27 over alleged Gülen movement links, based on accusations such as ByLock use, payphone contact, and social media activity, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced.

## 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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

3 April: Meta has been [fined](#) a “substantial amount” by Turkey for refusing to suspend protest-related accounts after İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu’s arrest, while X complied with similar orders amid ongoing nationwide demonstrations.

4 April: Turkish authorities have [removed](#) several celebrities from state-run TV projects and blocked social media accounts after they supported a boycott protesting İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu’s arrest, with one actor detained and widespread backlash from artists and unions.

4 April: A new draft regulation in Turkey would [grant](#) the telecom authority BTK direct power to block access to platforms like Facebook, X, WhatsApp, and YouTube on national security grounds, requiring major platforms to establish licensed local entities or face service bans.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

3 April: German pianist Davide Martello, known for his 2013 Gezi Park performance, was [detained](#) by Turkish police while trying to play at protests over İstanbul Mayor İmamoğlu’s arrest and forced to leave the country.

## KURDISH MINORITY

7 April: A new report by the Kurdish Language Rights Monitoring and Reporting Platform (Kurdish Monitoring) [documented](#) 24 cases of obstruction against the use of Kurdish in public life during the first three months of 2025, highlighting systematic restrictions across public spaces, media, arts, and prisons.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

2 April: Amnesty International has [launched](#) an urgent global campaign for Syrian refugee Muhammed Alkayali, who has lived legally in Turkey for over a decade and now faces extradition to Saudi Arabia—despite serious health issues and no presented evidence for the Red Notice issued against him—raising concerns of arbitrary detention, torture, and unfair trial if returned.

3 April: Nine migrants [died](#) and 25 were rescued after a boat sank off the western coast of Turkey near Ayvacık on, with one person still missing as search efforts continue, according to the local governor's office and coast guard.

## **PRISON CONDITIONS**

2 April: Human rights advocates have [condemned](#) Turkey's Y-type high-security prisons—used for political and terrorism-related inmates—for imposing inhumane conditions including extreme isolation, constant surveillance, lack of sunlight, and overcrowding, with some prisoners nearing 200 days on hunger strike in protest.

## **TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

31 March: İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Deputy Secretary General Mahir Polat, who was arrested as part of the “urban consensus” investigation, was [hospitalized](#) after falling ill in prison; despite having previously undergone an angiography with six stents placed, and suffering from thyroid cancer, sleep apnea, hypertension, and diabetes, he was discharged and sent back to prison.

2 April: DEM Party MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu has [called](#) on Turkish authorities to urgently release Ramazan Aktaş, a former teacher imprisoned over alleged Gülen links, who is suffering from end-stage pancreatic cancer and enduring extreme pain due to delayed treatment and neglect in Isparta Prison.

2 April: Police in Şanlıurfa province, south-east Turkey, allegedly [assaulted](#) lawyer Yılmaz Birden while he was trying to meet his detained client, hitting him in the head with a gun butt and causing a bleeding wound that required treatment at District Hospital.

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

4 April: According to bianet's March report, men in Turkey [killed](#) at least 24 women and 10 children, forced 56 women into sex work, harassed 20 women, abused 15 children, and inflicted violence on 59 women, while 42 women and 9 children died under suspicious circumstances.