

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 68 | October 4-10, 2021

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 306 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.

October 4: The authorities [refused](#) to postpone the execution of the prison sentence of critically ill Ayşe Özdoğan, who was arrested on October 2 and sent to prison on a terrorism conviction handed down over her alleged links to the Gülen movement.

October 4: An Antalya court [ruled](#) to arrest a pregnant woman who was detained over alleged links to the Gülen movement, in violation of the provisions of the Turkish legislation which stipulate that even if a pregnant woman is convicted, her sentence must be postponed.

October 6: Reports [revealed](#) that a Düzce prison has been refusing to release Atilla Coşkun, a critically ill inmate, despite having completed his sentence six months ago. Coşkun is still being held behind bars due to previously imposed disciplinary penalties.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

October 7: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the death of a prisoner due to a deteriorating medical condition in an Ankara prison in 2015 violated his right to life and the government's obligation to protect lives.

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.

October 6: Two people in İstanbul [announced](#) at a press conference that they were briefly abducted by people who introduced themselves as police officers who subjected them to a violent interrogation.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

October 4: A district governor in Samsun [removed](#) from office two neighborhood mukhtars over a protest against a government-led expropriation.

October 4: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

October 5: The police in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) journalist Fatoş Erdoğan while she was covering a student protest in Boğaziçi University.

October 6: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) 10 university students who were trying to make a public statement against the president's accusations against them. Two of the students were later arrested by a court.

October 6: The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) three activists who were spray painting slogans on a wall.

October 6: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) 13 people for allegedly preparing to organize a demonstration.

October 7: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) seven university students protesting the detention of students the day before.

October 7: The police in İzmir and Manisa [detained](#) 12 people, including a local HDP executive and an executive of an NGO established for solidarity with relatives of prisoners.

October 7: The police in Ankara [detained](#) activist Merve Demirel during a protest against mass dismissal of public sector workers in the aftermath of a 2016 coup.

October 7: The İstanbul Governor's Office [banned](#) a demonstration planned by doctors' associations.

October 8: Naci İnci, the rector of the Boğaziçi University who was appointed to his position by the president, [filed](#) a complaint with the police about students who took part in protests against his appointment.

October 8: An Ankara court [acquitted](#) 18 students who stood trial for being involved in a pride event in a university.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

October 4: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about the İstanbul municipality's debts to a construction company.

October 4: An Eskişehir court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about promotions within the police and gendarmerie.

October 5: According to a monthly [report](#) published by opposition MP Utku Çakırözer, at least 45 journalists appeared before a judge and eight journalists were prevented from news follow-up in September.

October 5: A monthly [report](#) released by the Coalition For Women In Journalism (CFWIJ) said that at least two women journalists in Turkey were physically assaulted by the police while following up on news in September.

October 5: The authorities [blocked](#) access to news reports about a man who was seen attacking anti-government protesters with a machete in 2013.

October 6: The Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) [released](#) its Trial Monitoring Report, noting an increase in the terrorism charges against journalists

based on the use of evidence linked to their professional activities.

October 6: The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the far-right partner of Turkey's ruling party, [drafted](#) a bill designed to restrict the functioning of media outlets and reporters receiving direct or indirect funding from abroad.

October 7: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) [launched](#) an investigation into Fox TV over the remarks of Başak Demirtaş, the wife of jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş, who criticized the arbitrary Covid-19 restrictions in prisons which left her daughters unable to visit their father for 19 months.

October 7: An İstanbul court [acquitted](#) journalists Canan Coşkun and Veli Açar who were standing trial for reporting on the case of Berkin Elvan, a 14-year-old child who was killed by the police during a protest in 2013.

October 7: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about bribery allegations implicating high-ranking police chiefs.

October 8: An Ankara court [sentenced](#) photographer and writer Mehmet Özer to one year, three months in prison on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda, over his social media posts in which he shared photographs from a leftist event.

October 8: Ankara prosecutors [indicted](#) opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu, seeking up to two years, four months in prison on charges of insulting Fahrettin Altun, the president's communications director, over her comments on allegedly unlicensed construction at Altun's house in İstanbul.

October 10: The police in Rize briefly [detained](#) a man named Çağlayan Bozacı for allegedly insulting the president during a commemoration event.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

October 8: An İstanbul court [began](#) the re-trial of jailed businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala, ruling to keep him behind bars despite a standing European Court of Human Rights order for his release.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

October 5: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) [disbarred](#) 10 prosecutors and three judges due to their alleged links to the Gülen movement.

October 8: An opinion poll [showed](#) that a majority of 69 percent in Turkey do not trust the country's judicial system.

KURDISH MINORITY

October 4: A Hakkari court [sentenced](#) Ahmet Öner, a local HDP member who had died four years ago, to eight years, nine months in prison on terrorism charges.

October 5: The security forces in Bitlis [detained](#) eight people, including local HDP executives Aziz Başboğa and İhsan Deniz.

October 5: A simultaneous translation service introduced by the parliament [excluded](#) the Kurdish language, the second most spoken language in the country.

October 7: The police in İzmir and Manisa [detained](#) 12 people, including a local HDP executive and an executive of an NGO established for solidarity with relatives of prisoners.

October 7: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) [launched](#) an investigation into Fox TV over the remarks of Başak Demirtaş, the wife of jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş, who criticized the arbitrary Covid-19 restrictions in prisons which left her daughters unable to visit their father for 19 months.

PRISON CONDITIONS

October 5: The chairpersons of the İstanbul Medical Chamber and İstanbul Bar Association [announced](#) at a press conference that Covid-19 restrictions that are still effect in Turkish prisons, despite their elimination elsewhere, lead to serious rights violations, including undue and lengthy restrictions on visitation rights.

October 5: Reports revealed that a Samsun prison has been [denying](#) medical treatment for five months to an inmate named Selami Keleş who is suffering from an eye problem.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

October 5: Reports in the media [said](#) that a large number of Syrian residents in İzmir left their homes after suffering a racist attack on September 30.

October 7: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) several migrant workers for deportation on the grounds that they had come to Turkey illegally.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

October 6: Garibe Gezer, a prisoner in Kocaeli, was severely [tortured](#) and subjected to a sexual assault by the guards.

October 8: Two students who were arrested over their participation in Boğaziçi University protests were reportedly [subjected](#) to mistreatment.

October 8: A video circulating on Turkish social media [showed](#) İstanbul municipal police using excessive force on a street vendor selling fruit.

October 9: Reports said that the guards in a Şanlıurfa prison [assaulted](#) 80 inmates and that the prison administration did not offer treatment to those who were injured as a result.

October 10: The guards in a Tekirdağ prison physically [assaulted](#) eight inmates who resisted to strip-searches during an involuntary transfer from another prison. The victims were also prevented from documenting the violence they were subjected to.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

October 5: Reports revealed that the Turkish Embassy in London [spied](#) on Turkish citizens in the UK and forwarded an illegal profiling list to Ankara, which led to their prosecution in Turkey.

October 6: Former opposition MP Eren Erdem [announced](#) that his 7-year-old son who is receiving treatment in Berlin was being bullied by ruling party supporters.

October 8: A UN fact-finding mission on Libya [said](#) that Turkey facilitated the recruitment of Syrian child soldiers aged between 15 and 18 years old, to fight for its ally in the Libyan conflict.

October 9: A drone strike suspected to be carried out by Turkey in Northern Iraq allegedly [killed](#) a civilian woman.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

October 6: Bianet news website's monthly male violence [report](#) found that men killed at least 26 women and inflicted violence of at least 65 in September.