

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 49 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 10:** Family members of [Abdullah Aslan](#), a former teacher jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement, told the media that he is unable to use his left hand and to take care of himself since his third brain surgery in August. Aslan is suffering from a brain tumor.

**October 10:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [rejected](#) Turkey's request to refer to the Grand Chamber a judgment that faulted Turkey over the detention of former Amnesty Turkey branch head Taner Kılıç on terrorism-related charges. Charged with having links to the Gülen movement, Kılıç was sentenced to six years, three months in prison. He has appealed the verdict.

**October 11:** The police in Manisa [detained](#) Meryem Karateke, a 29-year-old woman suffering from multiple sclerosis, due to her alleged affiliation with the Gülen movement. Her sister told the media that Karateke was in a vulnerable state of health following an intensive five-year-long treatment and that her detention could lead to a relapse.

**October 12:** Ali Osman Ünal, a prisoner who was belatedly diagnosed with pancreas cancer while he was behind bars, [lost](#) his life. A former public sector worker,

Ünal was jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement. He was released four months after his diagnosis.

## 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 11:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the police and the prosecutors failed to conduct an effective investigation into the disappearance of a former intelligence officer who went missing in November 2016.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

**October 10:** The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a demonstration held to commemorate the victims of a 2015 bomb attack, briefly detaining 17 people.

**October 13:** An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) an activist named Mert Karadağ to five months in prison over his participation in Boğaziçi University protests.

**October 14:** The Adana Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize an event that was planned by the HDP to mark its anniversary.

**October 15:** The Mardin Governor's Office [banned](#) an exhibition that was planned to be held in a church.

**October 15:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration about sick prisoners, briefly detaining four people.

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

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**October 10:** The police in Rize [detained](#) Çağlayan Bozacı, the son of Osman Turan Bozacı who died in a bomb attack in 2015, due to a speech he gave during a commemoration event.

**October 10:** An İstanbul court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of three months, two days to a man on charges of denigrating religious values of the public in a social media post.

**October 10:** An appeals court in İstanbul [ruled](#) to overturn a prison sentence of 13 years handed down to journalist Mehmet Baransu over his coverage of a military conspiracy. Baransu's lawyer announced that he will remain behind bars due to other sentences, which were also given on account of his work as a journalist.

**October 10:** A pro-government daily [published](#) a secretly taken photo of journalist Abdullah Bozkurt who lives in Sweden.

**October 10:** The Venice Commission released an [urgent joint opinion](#), calling on Turkish authorities not to enact a proposed legislation stipulating prison sentences for those found guilty of publicly disseminating "false or misleading information."

**October 10:** A Hatay court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency to publish news.

**October 11:** A Sakarya court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report about a military commander who was arrested for alleged sexual assault against 15 soldiers.

**October 13:** An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalists Faruk Eren and Furkan Karabay to two years, three months in prison on charges of insulting a public official, due to their reporting on the appointment of certain prosecutors.

**October 13:** The police in Konya briefly [detained](#) Dilan Babat and Fırat Can Arslan, two reporters working for the pro-Kurdish media, who were covering a funeral event.

**October 13:** The parliament [approved](#) a law that stipulate jail terms for reporters and social media users that spread "fake news."

**October 14:** An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş to two-and-a-half years in prison due to his remarks allegedly targeting a prosecutor who had indicted him.

**October 14:** A Kilis court [ruled](#) to block access to two news report and a tweet about a ruling party member who became a public prosecutor despite his criminal record.

**October 15:** The General Directorate of Security (EGM) [announced](#) investigations into 12 social media accounts due to their messages about a coal mine explosion in Bartın that claimed the lives of 41 workers.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**October 12:** A German newspaper [reported](#) that Turkish authorities are refusing to allow more than 120 German citizens, many of whom are Turkish or Kurdish Germans, to leave the country due to their criticism of the Turkish government or their affiliation with some groups not liked by the government.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**October 10:** The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [rejected](#) Turkey's request to refer to the Grand Chamber a judgment that faulted Turkey over the detention of former Amnesty Turkey branch head Taner Kılıç on terrorism-related charges. Charged with having links to the Gülen movement, Kılıç was sentenced to six years, three months in prison. He has appealed the verdict.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**October 12:** A university in Eskişehir reportedly [fired](#) academic Barış Işık a third time after he was reinstated by court orders twice.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**October 10:** A Hatay court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency to publish news.

**October 12:** Reports said that an İstanbul prison was not [responding](#) to petitions submitted by jailed HDP MP Semra Güzel and not allowing her to participate in joint activities with other prisoners.

**October 12:** Jailed Kurdish journalist Ziya Ataman [said](#) in a letter that he was held in a one-person cell and that his access to outdoors was limited to 1.5 hours per day.

**October 13:** The police in Konya briefly [detained](#) Dilan Babat and Fırat Can Arslan, two reporters working for the pro-Kurdish media, who were covering a funeral event.

**October 14:** An Ankara court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş to two-and-a-half years in prison due to his remarks allegedly targeting a prosecutor who had indicted him.

**October 14:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) journalist Meral Danyıldız who was covering the demolition of houses as part of an urban renewal project.

**October 17:** The police in Diyarbakır [confiscated](#) copies of the Kurdish-language Xwebûn newspaper that were being sent to İstanbul.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**October 10:** An Erzurum prison [denied](#) to inmate Abdalbaki Harmancı the nutrients he specifically needs due to a health condition.

**October 12:** Reports said that an İstanbul prison was not [responding](#) to petitions submitted by jailed HDP MP Semra Güzel and not allowing her to participate in joint activities with other prisoners.

**October 12:** Jailed Kurdish journalist Ziya Ataman [said](#) in a letter that he was held in a one-person cell and that his access to outdoors was limited to 1.5 hours per day.

**October 13:** The guards in a Bolu prison [confiscated](#) inmates' personal items. Reports from the prison facility also indicated that meals offered to inmates were inadequate and that their sportive activities were arbitrarily restricted.

**October 13:** A women's prison in Diyarbakır [imposed](#) disciplinary sanctions on 36 women due to their participation in a joint hunger strike. The sanctions were later annulled by a court.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**October 16:** Greece [announced](#) that it rescued 92 migrants almost naked and bruised after allegedly being forced across the Evros river from Turkey into Greece. Turkish authorities denied the allegation.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**October 10:** The police in Hakkari [strip-searched](#) and mistreated seven women who were taken into custody for participating in a demonstration.

**October 10:** Reports revealed that prisoners Abdülkadir Turay, Hamdullah Öz and Yusuf Erat were physically [assaulted](#) during their transfer from Mardin to Erzincan.

**October 10:** The general assembly of the Ankara Bar Association [voted](#) to disclose a previous report on allegations of torture at Ankara police headquarters in January 2022. The report was kept confidential by the previous bar management, which had left to the resignation of several high ranking members, and it concerned alleged mistreatment of a number of people detained over suspected links to the Gülen movement.

**October 12:** [Süphan Çabuk](#), a sick inmate incarcerated in a Rize prison, lost his life after being hospitalized. Reports alleged that he had bruises on his body indicative of physical violence and that his autopsy report was not shared with his family.

**October 13:** The police in İstanbul [mistreated](#) eight people that were in custody.

**October 14:** The guards in an Edirne prison physically [assaulted](#) inmate Naci Kaya for resisting a strip-search.

**October 15:** The guards in a Kocaeli prison verbally [assaulted](#) inmate Ahmet Dizlek, threatening to kill him.

**October 15:** The guards in an Elazığ prison physically [assaulted](#) two inmates who were involuntarily transferred from Van.

**October 15:** The guards in a Yozgat prison verbally [assaulted](#) three inmates who were transferred from Şanlıurfa.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**October 10:** A pro-government daily [published](#) a secretly taken photo of journalist Abdullah Bozkurt who lives in Sweden. The same newspaper had previously published secretly taken photos of Germany-based journalist Cevheri Güven and his home. Bozkurt, along with several other exiled Turkish journalists, were the target of physical assaults in recent years.