

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 20 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.

August 29: Media reports revealed that the Turkish government [rejected](#) a request for an official visit of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD). The reports also revealed that the working group has been trying to schedule a visit to Turkey since November 2016, amidst the country's mass detention campaign against critics that was launched in the aftermath of a failed military coup d'état.

August 30: Turkish authorities [arrested](#) Reyhan Abdi, a Kurdish migrant woman from Syria and the mother of a two-month-old baby, on terrorism-related charges. Turkey's laws prohibit the incarceration of pregnant and post-partum women even if they are found guilty.

September 2: [Tacettin Başer](#), a cancer patient imprisoned for alleged links to the Gülen movement, died 15 days after his release from prison due to health problems. Earlier reports had revealed that Başer's diagnosis was belated for by the prison administration for six months and that he was given painkillers despite displaying symptoms of cancer.

September 4: The wife of inmate Yusuf Köksal [announced](#) on social media that her husband has not been released despite being eligible for parole.

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.

August 30: The İstanbul police [intervened](#) in a demonstration held on the occasion of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances to commemorate Turkey's enforced disappearance victims, briefly detaining 12 people. The meeting was organized by the Saturday Mothers, a group of activists and relatives seeking the whereabouts of loved ones who disappeared while in police custody in Turkey in the 1990s.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

August 30: The İstanbul police [intervened](#) in a demonstration held on the occasion of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances to commemorate Turkey's enforced disappearance victims, briefly detaining 14 people.

August 30: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by teachers to demand better wages, briefly detaining nine people.

August 30: A district governor's office in Adana and the Mardin Governor's Office [banned](#) concerts that were organized on the occasion of a national holiday.

August 31: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

September 1: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) 86 people over their participation in demonstrations in January.

September 1: The police in İstanbul and Van [intervened](#) in demonstrations held on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, briefly detaining at least 108 activists.

September 1: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

September 2: A district governor's office in Balıkesir [prevented](#) two people from taking the stage at a local concert.

September 3: The İstanbul Governor's Office [banned](#) a gathering organized by an opposition MP to raise awareness about enforced disappearances.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

August 29: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) reporter Elif Bayburt.

August 31: Bursa prosecutors [indicted](#) reporters Rozerin Gültekin and Ergin Çağlar who were detained during a police intervention against a demonstration.

August 31: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into academic Celal Şengör for allegedly denigrating the religious values of the public due to his remarks on a television program.

September 1: A plainclothes police officer in İstanbul sexually [harassed](#) reporter Tuğçe Yılmaz who was covering a demonstration.

September 1: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to six news reports on corruption-related revelations made by a mob boss.

September 1: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to two opinion pieces and four news articles on bribery allegations related to Turkey's national railway company.

September 1: Police officers in Van [pulled](#) guns on journalists during their intervention in a demonstration held on the occasion of the International Day of Peace.

September 2: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on bribery allegations implicating a businessman close to the government.

September 2: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a website used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

September 2: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) pop singer Gülşen Bayraktar Çolakoğlu, seeking up to three years in prison for inciting hatred and enmity among the public due to her remarks about religious high schools. Last week, the singer was arrested and released after widespread public outcry a few days later.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

September 1: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [accused](#) the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) of issuing politically motivated rulings on applications from Turkey. In recent years, Turkey's authorities refused to implement several ECtHR orders for the release of political prisoners, which has led the Council of Europe to initiate infringement proceedings against the country.

KURDISH MINORITY

August 29: [Makbule Özer](#), a 80-year-old Kurdish prisoner, was not provided with an interpreter during her hospital referral and had to communicate with doctors "in body language."

August 29: The personal notes kept by Bazo Yılmaz, a 67-year-old Kurdish politician who died in a Şanlıurfa prison on August 18, [revealed](#) that he was deprived of nutrients and subjected to neglect and mistreatment during his incarceration.

August 30: The remains of Hakan Arslan, a man who was killed during clashes between Turkish security forces and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in January 2016 were [returned](#) to his father in a plastic bag nearly seven years after his death.

August 30: A group of Kurdish agricultural workers in Sakarya were [assaulted](#) by local inhabitants. The incident resulted in the injury of two people including a minor and led the workers to leave the district.

September 1: [Muhammed Eren Sütçü](#), an assailant who in December staged an attack at a HDP office in İstanbul

and injured two party employees, was released from prison pending trial.

September 3: Kurdish politician Semra Güzel was [detained](#) while trying to flee the country. Güzel was stripped of her parliamentary immunity and was facing terrorism-related charges.

OTHER MINORITIES

September 1: Christian musician Şaban Ok [announced](#) that he was receiving death threats by phone.

PRISON CONDITIONS

August 29: The personal notes kept by Bazo Yılmaz, a 67-year-old Kurdish politician who died in a Şanlıurfa prison on August 18, [revealed](#) that he was deprived of nutrients and subjected to neglect and mistreatment during his incarceration.

August 30: Reports on the media [said](#) that political prisoners incarcerated in a women's prison in Denizli were subjected to forced labor at the hands of a guard.

August 30: [Gökhan Yıldırım](#), an inmate who started a hunger strike in December 2021, claimed that hospital doctors issued a false medical reports for him.

August 31: Reports revealed that [Reyhan Abdi](#), a Kurdish Syrian woman who was arrested on August 30 despite having a two-month-old baby, was held in an unventilated room and was given only a bottle of water a day.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

August 31: Amnesty International [released](#) a report accusing Turkey and Iran of preventing entry of Afghan refugees or forcibly returning them to face life-threatening risks under the Taliban regime.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

August 30: The guards in a Rize prison [mistreated](#) inmate Mirza Çağlayan.

August 30: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison [mistreated](#) inmate Kurbanî Özcan. Reports in the media revealed that when Özcan wanted to report the incident, he was

verbally threatened by the prison director who told him "you are not going to leave here alive."

September 1: A plainclothes police officer in İstanbul sexually [harassed](#) reporter Tuğçe Yılmaz who was covering a demonstration.