

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 80 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.

January 17: An İstanbul prison [refused](#) to allow inmate Yakup Saygılı to attend his father's funeral. The prison administration also did not provide a justification for its decision. Saygılı is a former police chief who led corruption operations in 2013 that implicated high-ranking government officials.

January 18: [Ahmet Cengiz Karlı](#), a sick inmate incarcerated in Tokat, lost his life while on the way back from a hospital visit. His lawyer announced that the hospital sent him back to prison despite the fact that he was suffering from a severe case of pneumonia.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

January 17: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit police officer Yakup Şenocak who shot Kurdish university student Kemal Kurkut to death during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

January 18: A Kayseri court [handed down](#) a prison sentence of only seven-and-a-half months to police officer Hüseyin Engin over the death of university student Ali İsmail Korkmaz who in 2013 was beaten to death during the anti-government Gezi Park protests. The officer was convicted of "willfully causing minor injury."

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 ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

January 20: A Kocaeli court [handed down](#) suspended prison sentences to 15 people over their participation in a commemoration event in 2014.

January 20: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged outside a prison to protest rights violations in prisons, briefly detaining 10 people.

January 20: The authorities [confiscated](#) a large amount of money that was deposited at the bank account of the Nesin Foundation on the grounds that the foundation's donation campaign was unauthorized.

January 22: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a commemoration event held by a left-wing group, detaining six activists.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

January 16: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to at least four news reports and two opinion articles covering allegations of corruption implicating presidential aide Metin Kıratl.

January 19: The police in Bitlis briefly [detained](#) journalist Sinan Aygül due his reporting of a news story.

January 19: An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) up to four years in prison for opposition politician Eren Erdem on charges of insulting the president on social media.

January 19: A Tunceli court [banned](#) the publication and sale of two books of author Murat Kahraman.

January 19: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Nişmiye Güler who stood trial on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

January 16: The Constitutional Court [annulled](#) several articles of two laws on a state of emergency imposed following a failed coup in 2016. The ruling expected to facilitate the reinstatement of some of the public servants who were summarily dismissed from their jobs by state of emergency decree-laws.

January 17: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit police officer Yakup Şenocak who shot Kurdish university student Kemal Kurkut to death during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

January 18: A Kayseri court [handed down](#) a prison sentence of only seven-and-a-half months to police officer Hüseyin Engin over the death of university student Ali İsmail Korkmaz who in 2013 was beaten to death during the anti-government Gezi Park protests. The officer was convicted of “willfully causing minor injury.”

January 20: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the firing of worker Resul Aydın from a state-owned sugar refinery due to his wife’s alleged links to the Gülen movement violated his right to respect for private and family life.

KURDISH MINORITY

January 17: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit police officer Yakup Şenocak who shot Kurdish university student Kemal Kurkut to death during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

January 18: A Diyarbakır prison [imposed](#) a disciplinary sanction on inmate İhsan Uğur for speaking in Kurdish during a hospital visit, suspending his sportive and social activities for a month.

January 18: Gençlerbirliği, an Ankara-based football club, [terminated](#) its contract with footballer Rodin Cem Deprem

a day after it was concluded, reportedly after finding out that the Swedish club where he previously played was founded by the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden.

January 19: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) HDP executive Bahar Karakaş Uluğ to seven years, six months in prison on terrorism-related charges. Uluğ was previously expelled from a local city council by the Interior Ministry.

OTHER MINORITIES

January 17: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in favor of the Hasköy Aya Paraskevi Church Foundation and said the General Directorate of Foundations’ rejection of its request for the return of property constituted a rights violation.

January 17: The Aya Yorgi Church in İstanbul was [vandalized](#) by unidentified assailants who spray painted slogans on the walls.

PRISON CONDITIONS

January 16: An Ağrı prison [denied](#) hospital referrals to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

January 17: An İstanbul prison [refused](#) to allow inmate Yakup Saygılı to attend his father’s funeral. The prison administration also did not provide a justification for its decision. Saygılı is a former police chief who led corruption operations in 2013 that implicated high-ranking government officials.

January 17: A Kütahya prison has reportedly been [denying](#) medical treatment to prisoners for a month.

January 17: A Giresun prison [denied](#) hospital referral to inmate Zübeyir İdem for refusing to undergo a mouth search.

January 18: A Diyarbakır prison [imposed](#) a disciplinary sanction on inmate İhsan Uğur for speaking in Kurdish during a hospital visit, suspending his sportive and social activities for a month.

January 19: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a prison administration in Kahramanmaraş which denied inmate Ahmet Bayanmelek permission to attend his mother’s funeral violated his right to respect for private and family life.

January 21: An Ağrı prison [restricted](#) inmates' access to books. Prosecutors in the province reportedly did not respond to inmates' petitions. The prison administration also did not provide sick inmate Abidin İnci his medication at the required frequency of once a month.

January 21: Reports [highlighted](#) overcrowding in a women's prison in Denizli, revealing that some inmates were forced to sleep on the ground.

January 22: A Van prison reportedly [obstructed](#) sick inmate Gıyasettin Sevmiş's treatment.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

January 19: The Stockholm Center for Freedom [released](#) a report on pushbacks of asylum seekers at Turkish-Greek borders, which focuses on how the refoulement of Turkish political asylum seekers has devastating consequences on their lives.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

January 18: The guards in an Antalya prison physically [assaulted](#) two inmates who resisted rear-handcuffing for a court visit. The inmates were reportedly injured and their injuries were not treated.

January 20: The police in İstanbul [mistreated](#) activist Berfin Polat who was in custody after being detained during a demonstration.

January 21: Media reports [revealed](#) that a Diyarbakır prison imposed on inmate Derya Ren a disciplinary sanction of three days in solitary confinement due to her resistance to a strip-search.

January 21: A police officer in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) and injured a man named Muhammet Raşit Kaçan over an argument.

January 22: The guards in an Elazığ prison physically [assaulted](#) 15 inmates.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

January 16: The German Foreign Ministry [announced](#) that it had summoned the Turkish ambassador to issue a warning after ruling party MP Mustafa Açıkgöz was seen engaging in hate speech in a video that widely circulated on social media. In the video, Açıkgöz called for the

“destruction” of the supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as well as the members of the Gülen movement.