

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 27 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.

March 13: Police and gendarmerie forces in seven provinces [conducted](#) house raids early Tuesday to detain 23 active duty and former soldiers as well as former military cadets on charges of links to the Gülen movement.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

March 12: The mother of Berkin Elvan, a teenager who was struck in the head with a gas canister fired by a police officer during the anti-government Gezi Park protests in İstanbul in 2013 and subsequently succumbed to his injuries, has [said](#) justice remains elusive 10 years after her son's death.

## 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.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

March 11: Three people were [detained](#) for protesting Turkey's ongoing trade with Israel amid the conflict in Gaza during an event attended by a cabinet minister and ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) officials in western Bursa province.

March 11: Şırnak Governorate [made](#) a declaration on March 11, 2024 and announced that Gabar Mountain Region within the borders of Central District and Güçlükonak District of Şırnak Province has been declared as a temporary special security zone for 15 days between March 11 and March 25, 2024.

March 11: Adana Governorate [prevented](#) four members of the music group Kolektifa Ritmên Azad from performing at the March 8 rally, citing ongoing investigations against them for "illegal organization membership" and "making illegal organization propaganda".

March 13: A report titled "Civil Society Organizations in Turkey: Freedom of Association and Right to Participation" [sheds](#) light on the ongoing restriction of the civil society space in Turkey and the increasing pressure that civil society organizations (CSOs) are facing from the state.

March 13: Members of DEM Party İstanbul Provincial Organization who were distributing leaflets in front of Süreyya Opera House in Kadıköy district of İstanbul to call for the İstanbul Newroz to be held on 17 March 2024 at Yenikapı Meeting Area were [prevented](#) by the police and the people distributing leaflets were blockaded by the police. 18 people, including DEM Party Kadıköy Co-Mayoral Candidates Nimet Çelebi Erdoğan and Veysi Eski, were detained.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

March 11: The news report on the allegation that Cevher Benek, the AKP mayor of Hilal town, who has a finalized prison sentence for bribery, bid rigging and corruption, defrauded dozens of people, was [blocked](#) from access by the Uludere Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 11: At least 3 other news articles in which Siddik Erikli's name was mentioned were also [blocked](#) by the Access Providers Association on the grounds that they contained the same content as the previously sanctioned news articles.

March 13: A local court in eastern Turkey has [blocked](#) access to the Kurdish Mezopotamya news agency on the grounds that it poses a threat to national security and public order.

March 13: At least 9 news articles and social media posts about Levent Uysal being a citizen of Serbia and having a residence permit from the United Arab Emirates were [ordered](#) to be blocked from access and deleted by the Istanbul 10th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 13: At least 6 news articles about President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's son Bilal Erdoğan were [ordered](#) to be blocked from access and deleted by the Istanbul Anatolian 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 13: Five content on the EngelliWeb website and the post made from the X account of the EngelliWeb project were [ordered](#) to be blocked and deleted by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolia 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 14: Turkish prosecutors [launched](#) over 52,000 investigations into individuals on allegations of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan or his Justice and Development Party (AKP) government between 2019 and 2022.

March 16: The Freedom of Expression Association's EngelliWeb project [found](#) that at least 58,301 domain names/subdomains were blocked in January and February 2024.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

March 13: A new report released on Wednesday by the London-based human rights organization Statewatch [reveals](#) systemic human rights violations by Turkish authorities in their prosecutions of people for Gülen movement membership over the use of the ByLock smartphone application.

March 15: The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has [declared](#) Turkey in "serious breach" of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and rule of law principles due to the continued detention of Osman Kavala.

## KURDISH MINORITY

March 12: The UN's Commission of Inquiry on Syria has [released](#) a statement that said Turkey's airstrikes on civilian targets in northeast Syria could amount to war crimes.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

March 15: Çanakkale Governorate [announced](#) that at least 8 people, including 2 babies, lost their lives after a boat carrying refugees sank off the coast of Eceabat district of Çanakkale.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

March 14: Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-chair of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), who is kept in Edirne F Type Prison, was [subjected](#) to body search every time he enters and leaves the room and was asked to take off his shoes in front of the camera.

March 15: It is learned that Mehmet Erbey, a prisoner in Tekirdağ prison was [transferred](#) to Izmir Buca High Security Prison against his will, his family was not informed about the transfer, his illnesses progressed due to torture and ill-treatment in prison and he was kept in a single room in the prison he was transferred to.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

March 12: A total of five women were [killed](#) by their family members over the last two days, while another woman was stabbed and injured.