

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 85 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 29: Turkish police have [detained](#) 70 people across 20 provinces over their alleged links to the Gülen movement, a faith-based group accused by the government of “terrorist activities,” Turkey’s interior minister, Ali Yerlikaya.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

March 29: Gökhan Ünyeli, an officer in the Turkish military who had been under investigation for alleged links to the Gülen movement and was recently [suspended](#) from the service, has died by suicide in Ankara.

## 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

March 26: Turkish authorities have [banned](#) at least 28 concerts and cultural events in the Kurdish language across 16 provinces since 2019.

March 29: 15 people were [detained](#) during the police intervention against executives and members of Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and Marmara Association for Assistance to Families of Prisoners and Convicts (MATUHAYDER) who held a press declaration on March 28, 2024 in front of Bakırköy Women's Prison about Hatice Yıldız (75, k) who was detained on March 22, 2024 after the finalization of the sentence in the lawsuit filed against her for 'financing an illegal organisation' for sending money to her daughter and her daughter's ward mate in prison, and then arrested and sent to Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

March 26: The news article on various allegations made by CHP Izmir MP Mahir Polat against AKP's Bayraklı mayoral candidate Bilal Kırkpınar, Karşıyaka mayoral candidate İsmail Çiftçioğlu, metropolitan mayoral candidate Hamza Dağ and former Izmir governor and current Adana governor Yavuz Selim Köşger was [blocked](#) from access by Adana 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 26: The news article on IYI Party Ankara Metropolitan Municipality candidate Cengiz Topel's allegations of irregularities and bid rigging against Ankara Metropolitan Mayor Mansur Yavaş was [blocked](#) from access with the decision of Ankara 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 26: Following the fake brochures distributed in Adana against CHP's Çukurova mayoral candidate Emrah Kozay, at least 3 news articles about the distribution of fake brochures against AKP's Seyhan mayoral candidate Erdal Hatipoğlu were [blocked](#) from access by the Adana 4th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 26: Muğla 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace [blocked](#) access to at least 2 news articles about alleged irregularities in an audio recording allegedly belonging to CHP Menteşe Mayor candidate Gonca Köksal, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 27: An İstanbul court has handed down a prison sentence to the managing editor of a newspaper, Erdem Avşar, for reporting on a mafia boss's allegations about the executive of a pro-government media group.

March 27: Vercel.app, the domain name of Vercel, a front-end web application hosting platform, was [blocked](#) by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority.

March 28: Mersin 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace [blocked](#) access to a news article on the footage of AKP's Akdeniz Mayor and candidate Muhammet Mustafa Gültak stepping on a Turkish flag on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 29: A Turkish court has [sentenced](#) journalist Uğur Koç to 11 months in prison on charges of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

March 29: At least 3 news articles about a baby [found](#) dead in his bed in a love home affiliated to the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services in Kastamonu have been blocked.

March 29: It was [decided](#) to block access to and delete the news articles mentioning the name of Metin Kıratlı, the Presidential Head of Administrative Affairs, with the decision of the Association of Access Providers, on the grounds that they have the same content as at least 2 news articles that were previously sanctioned by a judge's decision.

March 29: The IP address of the DistroWatch platform, which provides news, reviews, rankings and general information about Linux distributions, was [blocked](#) by the National Cyber Incident Response Center (USOM) on the grounds of "IP hosting/spreading malware".

March 29: The news article by İsmail Arı from BirGün Newspaper, in which he [reported](#) that the opening of Kariye, which was to be converted into a mosque in 2020, had been delayed for three years and that the restoration was carried out by the company owned by the wife of Sevilay Tuncer, former AKP Istanbul provincial executive, was banned from access and deleted by the Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

March 30: At least 2 news articles about a father's brutal beating of his child at an astroturf field in Erzurum were [blocked](#) from access by Erzurum 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

March 26: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of Adem Kartal, the former vice president of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors' (HSYK) inspection board, who was removed from his position following the adoption of a law in 2014 and has not been reappointed.

## KURDISH MINORITY

March 27: Turkish prosecutors have [dropped](#) the case of seven Kurdish civilians who were killed by soldiers in southeast Turkey in 1991 due to the expiration of the statute of limitations.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

March 26: Halil Muratoğlu, a prisoner in Samsun Kavak S Type Prison was [sentenced](#) to ban on some activities, ban on visits and solitary confinement for 11 to 20 days.

March 28: Prisoners Bahar Kızılaltun and Zeynep Gonca Karakoç were [subjected](#) to physical and verbal violence of wardens in İzmir Şakran Women's Prison.

March 29: Prisoners in Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison were [forced](#) to take off their shoes after visits, and prisoners who reject to do so were subjected to physical violence of the wardens.