

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 63 | August 30-September 5, 2021

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 104 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.

**September 4:** Mehmet Ali Çelebi, a 70-year-old sick inmate, [died](#) a few days after his release from an Ankara prison.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**September 3:** An armored police vehicle [ran over](#) and killed a 7-year-old boy in Şırnak named Mihraç Miroğlu. The officer driving the vehicle was only summoned for a testimony three days later and was [released](#) immediately afterwards.

## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#) and [Hüseyin Galip Küçüközyiğit](#), former public sector workers who were sacked from their jobs by decree-laws during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who were reported missing respectively as of August 6, 2019 and December 29, 2020, in what appear to be the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

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

**September 1:** A district governor in İstanbul [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of five days. The ban came ahead of planned World Peace Day rallies on September 1.

**September 1:** The Eskişehir Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days. The ban came prior to a planned World Peace Day celebration.

**September 3:** The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**September 5:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a rally to mark the World Peace Day, detaining 57 people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**August 30:** Opera singer and columnist Güvenç Dağüstün was physically [assaulted](#) by two unidentified assailants following a concert in İstanbul.

**September 1:** Mardin prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into JinNews reporter Öznur Değer over her coverage of a racist attack against a Kurdish family in Konya that claimed the lives of seven people.

**September 1:** An İstanbul court [blocked](#) access to news reports about an ongoing organized crime case which implicates a high-ranking police officer.

**September 1:** Media reports cited ruling party officials who revealed that a new bill to be proposed in October

to bring more restrictions on social media will [call for](#) prison sentences for social media users who “spread organized lies and disinformation online.” Officials also [said](#) that the “Social Media Directorate” will be set up to identify users who “produce or disseminate fake news online.”

**September 2:** The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that the conviction of Resul Üçdağ on terrorism-related charges over two pictures that he had shared on Facebook violated his freedom of expression.

**September 3:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the police violence against journalist Gökhan Bıçıcı in 2013 during news follow up violated his right to protection from inhumane treatment.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**September 6:** A police officer who [ran over](#) and killed a 7-year-old child while driving an armored vehicle in Şırnak was released by prosecutors immediately after giving testimony, despite eyewitness statements which claimed that the vehicle was speeding at the time of the incident.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**September 1:** Mardin prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into JinNews reporter Öznur Değer over her coverage of a racist attack against a Kurdish family in Konya that claimed the lives of seven people.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**August 30:** Media reports [said](#) that Turkish border forces threw into the Evros river more than 50 refugees who were pushed back by Greece.

**September 1:** A total of 78 Afghan migrants were [found](#) hiding underneath bags of cement in the back of a truck in Van.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**September 2:** A lawyers’ association [announced](#) that Sonuç Gürdeğir, one of their clients, was subjected to heavy torture in police custody following his detention on August 24.

**September 3:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the police violence against journalist Gökhan Bıçıcı in 2013 during news follow up violated his right to protection from inhumane treatment.

**September 4:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a courier in stranglehold.