

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 204 | Date 13-19 May

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 562 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.

14 May: Turkey has escalated the mass detention of people over alleged links to the Gülen movement, [detaining](#) 544 individuals across the country in a new crackdown on the movement.

## 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

15 May: The police [intervened](#) the protest organised by Student Collectives in İstiklal Street for Ata Emre Akman, a university student who was killed while working as a motorbike courier in Balıkesir. 11 students were detained.

17 May: The governors of 12 provinces including Diyarbakır, Mardin, Dersim, Bingöl, Bitlis, Kars, and İzmir [banned](#) all kinds of demonstrations, meetings, and protests

following the Kobanê Trial in which Kurdish politicians were sentenced to imprisonment.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

14 May: Following a joke made by theatre actor Metin Zakoğlu about Murat Kurum, AKP's candidate for Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, 5 of his plays at Atatürk Cultural Centre were [cancelled](#) by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

15 May: An İstanbul court has for a third time [rejected](#) a request for a retrial for jailed businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala.

## KURDISH MINORITY

15 May: Turkish police have [detained](#) dozens of people in several provinces across the country, including İstanbul, as part of operations that mainly targeted members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM).

16 May: An Ankara court on Thursday issued a [verdict](#) in the long-running Kobani trial and handed down lengthy prison sentences for dozens of Kurdish politicians, including imprisoned leaders Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

14 May: Turkish prosecutors have dismissed a complaint of torture filed by Aysun Işınkaralar, the former director of a dormitory affiliated with the Gülen movement, who alleges she was [tortured](#) (she was hooded, throttled and

subjected to electric shocks) by police and neglected by doctors while in custody in 2018.

14 May: Hatice Yıldız, an ailing 75-year-old woman who had been sentenced to four years on charges of “financing a terrorist organization” because she sent money to her jailed daughter and her cellmate, has reportedly been [suffering](#) from a declining state of health after falling ill in prison.

15 May: Two teenage girls detained last week in a police operation focused on alleged members of Gülen movement [recounted](#) their traumatic experiences during a live broadcast on Tuesday, reporting psychological abuse and rights violations during their time in custody.

## **WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

17 May: The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has [removed](#) Betül Nur Yılmaz from the list of FIFA-eligible referees despite the association’s invitation after learning about her pregnancy. Yılmaz is preparing to take the decision to the ECHR, saying it was “sexist and discriminatory.”