

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 139 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.

**July 22:** [Mehmet Sait Demiröz](#), a former member of the Supreme Court of Appeals who was jailed due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement, died after spending a week in intensive care. Demiröz suffered from an advanced lung problem called emphysema and he was recently rearrested after a lung surgery. His spouse had publicly complained that he was not receiving proper treatment and that his health was deteriorating.

## 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

**July 18:** Gendarmerie in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a workers' protest, detaining 20 people.

**July 18:** The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 17 days.

**July 18:** The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**July 20:** The police in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir [intervened](#) in demonstrations held to commemorate the victims of an ISIL massacre in 2015, detaining a total of 170 people.

**July 21:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) eight people protesting about the situation of sick prisoners.

**July 21:** A culture festival in Tunceli was [cancelled](#) after local authorities imposed roadblocks that made the event impossible to hold.

**July 22:** The police in İstanbul [sealed off](#) the building of an religious association after an İstanbul court ruled to shut it down.

**July 23:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a football event organized by the HDP to commemorate a 19-year-old Kurdish university student who was killed by the police, detaining 11 people.

**July 23:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a leftist militant who held a demonstration to protest an alleged Turkish artillery strike that killed nine civilians in northern Iraq.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**July 18:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to two tweets posted by journalist Metin Cihan about a high-level ruling party official who was accused of obstructing justice in the case of the suspicious death of a minor.

**July 18:** An Aydın court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report about the suspicious death of a prisoner in the province.

**July 19:** İstanbul prosecutors [ordered](#) the confiscation and censorship of two books on the Kurdish militants' fight against ISIL.

**July 20:** Mardin prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into Kurdish journalist Öznur Değer over her social media messages and summoned her for a questioning.

**July 20:** A court [ruled](#) to block access to 24 news stories on allegations that an organization linked to the first lady had received special treatment from government agencies.

**July 21:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about a singer's remarks about his son.

**July 22:** Diyarbakır prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into the Diyarbakır Bar Association over a statement that the bar released about alleged Turkish artillery strikes that killed nine civilians in northern Iraq.

**July 22:** A Sivas court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report about allegations that the governor of the province had unlawful ties to a corporation. The same court later [ordered](#) the removal of reports on the access ban.

**July 22:** The administration of Boğaziçi University in İstanbul [banned](#) the screening of LGBT-themed films as part of the university's open-air film event on campus.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**July 19:** The Council of State [ruled](#) that the president acted within his rights when he issued a presidential decree announcing Turkey's withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention in March 2021.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**July 20:** Members of a Kurdish family in Denizli was [targeted](#) in a racist attack by local inhabitants who threatened them with death.

**July 20:** The Constitutional Court [found](#) rights violations in the trial of Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş, who was prosecuted over slogans chanted at a demonstration he attended in 2011.

**July 22:** The police in Van [detained](#) HDP youth member Arjin Tüncer.

**July 23:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a football event organized by the HDP to commemorate a 19-year-old Kurdish university student who was killed by the police, detaining 11 people.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**July 21:** Unidentified assailants in İstanbul physically [assaulted](#) four LGBT individuals.

**July 22:** The administration of Boğaziçi University in İstanbul [banned](#) the screening of LGBT-themed films as part of the university's open-air film event on campus.

**July 24:** A group of unidentified individuals in Malatya physically and verbally [assaulted](#) six people for carrying rainbow flags during a festival. Two people were injured as a result of the attack.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**July 20:** Inmates in a Balıkesir prison reportedly [suffered](#) from food poisoning due to meals served in prison. The inmates were not offered medical care afterwards.

**July 21:** Kadri Ekinci, an inmate incarcerated in a Diyarbakır prison, was [found](#) dead in his cell. While the authorities classified Ekinci's death as suicide, his family claimed that he was heavily mistreated by the prison administration and that he was unlikely to have killed himself.

**July 21:** A women's prison in Kocaeli [denied](#) medication to inmate Ayfer Ayçiçek for refusing to take her medication in front of the guards.

**July 22:** [Mehmet Sait Demiröz](#), a former member of the Supreme Court of Appeals who was jailed due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement, died after spending a week in intensive care. Demiröz suffered from an advanced lung problem called emphysema and he was recently rearrested after a lung surgery. His spouse had publicly complained that he was not receiving proper treatment and that his health was deteriorating.

**July 22:** An Antalya prison has reportedly been [denying](#) medical treatment to Ahmet Zeki Özkan, an inmate suffering from cancer.

**July 24:** An Elazığ prison [refused](#) to deliver a letter sent to sick inmate Mehmet Emin Özkan on the grounds that it would “cheer him up.” The letter was sent by jailed Kurdish politician Leyla Güven.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**July 24:** Media reports [said](#) that the owner of a Somali restaurant in Ankara faces deportation after his restaurant was the target of a series of racist attacks.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**July 18:** The guards in an Erzurum prison [mistreated](#) inmate Emrah Yakut and threatened to kill him.

**July 23:** A group of guards in an Isparta prison [mistreated](#) inmates who were transferred from another prison.

**July 23:** Reports [revealed](#) that the police in Hatay verbally assaulted and mistreated 24 people who were detained on July 13 during a festival for displaying a photo of a leftist militant.

**July 23:** The police in Hatay physically [assaulted](#) a person with initials K.Ç. who was detained on July 15 while trying to break up a fight.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**July 20:** The Iraqi government [blamed](#) Turkey for artillery strikes that killed nine civilians and wounded 23 others in Zakho.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**July 19:** The Council of State [ruled](#) that the president acted within his rights when he issued a presidential decree announcing Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in March 2021.