

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 59 | August 2-8, 2021

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 182 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.

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 2: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a protest march held by workers, briefly detaining three people.

August 2: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) four people who were protesting the racist attack on a Kurdish family in Konya that claimed the lives of seven people.

August 2: The police in Gaziantep [detained](#) seven people who were protesting the racist attack on a Kurdish family in Konya that claimed the lives of seven people.

August 2: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) activist Nursel Tanrıverdi who was staging a sit-in to protest her summary removal from her public sector job after a coup in 2016.

August 3: The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a women's rights protest, briefly detaining 15 people.

August 3: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a workers' protest, briefly detaining five people.

August 4: A fact sheet [released](#) by the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey said that between the years 2015 and 2019 the authorities violated the freedom of association 5,498 times.

August 4: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

August 6: A Van court [ruled](#) to arrest three people who were detained for attending a protest on July 30, while releasing under judicial control seven others who were detained for the same reason.

August 6: The police in İstanbul [attacked](#) a group protesting femicides, detaining one person over the slogans that were shouted.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

August 2: The authorities [announced](#) that they have launched investigations into social media users on charges of causing fear and panic among the public by "spreading disinformation" about the wildfires across southern and western Turkey.

August 2: Adıyaman prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Özgür Boğatekin for allegedly provoking public hatred and enmity due to a social

media post in which he criticized the authorities for failing to protect members of a Kurdish family that was killed on July 30 in a racist attack.

August 3: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) journalist Uğur Şahin while trying to film an incident of gender-based violence.

August 3: Opposition MP Utku Çakırözer [announced](#) that at least 18 journalists were subjected to violence and prevented from reporting during news follow-up in July.

August 3: Broadcasting watchdog RTÜK [issued](#) written and verbal warnings to TV stations, threatening them with punishment if they cover the wildfires across southern and western Turkey.

August 4: The police in Kocaeli [detained](#) three people due to their social media posts.

August 4: The authorities [blocked](#) access to several news articles and gender-based violence reports published by the Bianet news website.

August 5: A group of people in Muğla [interrupted](#) a live show broadcast by the government-critical Halk TV on deadly wildfires in the region, physically attacking the crew and the guests.

August 5: A [report](#) by a Washington-based think tank revealed how Turkey's ruling party established and used an army of Internet trolls to dominate political discourse and set the public agenda on social media, considered the last bastion of silenced opposition groups and human rights defenders in the country.

August 6: The police in Muğla [detained](#) one local inhabitant who protested a cabinet minister during a visit to areas hit by regional wildfires.

August 6: Aydın prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Ahmet Kanbal, seeking up to three years in prison for publishing an interview about a military officer.

August 6: Gendarmerie officers in Muğla [prevented](#) a group of journalists from entering a power plant threatened by wildfires, based on an accreditation list that discriminated against government-critical outlets.

August 6: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Kızıl Bayrak news website, which is known for its reporting on Kurdish issues.

August 6: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report on the allegations of a former judge that former justice minister Bekir Bozdağ personally urged him to use an encrypted messaging app that Turkish authorities now consider as proof of terrorism links.

August 6: A regional appeals court in Diyarbakır [overturned](#) a prison sentence of one year, six months that was handed down to former HDP co-chair Figen Yüksekdağ on charges of insulting the president. The court ruled to acquit Yüksekdağ.

August 7: The police in Antalya [detained](#) a person for allegedly insulting the president and a local district mayor. The person was arrested after appearing before a court later in the same day.

August 7: The airport police in İstanbul [detained](#) Switzerland-based Alevi leader İsmail Ataş upon arrival in Turkey, for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda on social media. Ataş was released the next day.

August 8: An Eskişehir court [ruled](#) to block access to the Nupel news website.

August 8: The police in Muğla [prevented](#) reporter Sarya Toprak from covering a meeting of a cabinet minister with local inhabitants in a public place, forcibly removing Toprak from the area after she refused to stop filming.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

August 2: The European Court of Human Rights [asked](#) the Turkish government if it is lawful to interfere with freedom of religion in the case of an applicant who was convicted over links to the Gülen movement due to his attendance in the group's religious "sohbet" meetings.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

August 3: The Constitutional Court [issued](#) a pilot judgment about a provision of the Turkish Penal Code prescribing the penalty for offenses committed "on behalf of" and armed criminal organization, asking the parliament to fix the structural problems that render the law "overly broad."

August 6: An investigative report [revealed](#) that earlier this year a Turkish court released from pre-trial detention three alleged members of the Islamic State in Iraq and

the Levant (ISIL) who were accused of kidnapping a 7-year-old Yazidi girl and trying to sell her online.

KURDISH MINORITY

August 2: A group of Kurdish seasonal workers in Antalya were [subjected](#) to a racist attack.

August 2: The police in İzmir [detained](#) two HDP youth members in house raids.

August 3: [Abdurrahman Karabulut](#), the lawyer for a Kurdish family, seven of whose members were murdered on July 30 in a racist attack in Konya, said he has been receiving death threats for representing the family.

August 6: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Kızıl Bayrak news website, which is known for its reporting on Kurdish issues.

August 6: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) seven lawyers who represented jailed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan.

August 6: A regional appeals court in Diyarbakır [overturned](#) a prison sentence of one year, six months that was handed down to former HDP co-chair Figen Yüksekdağ on charges of insulting the president. The court ruled to acquit Yüksekdağ.

PRISON CONDITIONS

August 5: An inmate named Cenk Sarı [died](#) of a heart attack in an Antalya prison.

August 5: The Association of Lawyers for Freedom [released](#) its quarterly report on prisons in the Marmara region, noting a continuation of the arbitrary strip-searches and restrictions on activities in common spaces and sports.

August 7: Reports [revealed](#) that İsmet Özçelik, a sick inmate held in a Denizli prison, has been deprived of his necessary medication for 20 days.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

August 2: One Syrian and two Lebanese families were [subjected](#) to a racist attack in a park in Ankara.

August 4: The municipal council of Bolu [approved](#) a controversial proposal made by Mayor Tanju Özcan to

impose a 10 times higher water and solid waste tax on refugees living in the province.

August 4: Turkish security forces [detained](#) some 300 refugees who were found in a truck near the Iranian border.

August 8: Turkey's Defense Ministry [accused](#) Greece of abandoning a group of refugees on an uninhabited Turkish island, citing drone footage.

August 8: Turkish soldiers reportedly [battered](#) and pushed back a group of migrants trying to cross to Turkey from Syria.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

August 2: Several relatives of a Kurdish family whose seven members were killed in a racist attack on July 30, [said](#) that they were physically assaulted by the police in Konya for wanting to see the house where the massacre took place.

August 5: Soldiers in Hakkari physically [assaulted](#) the members of a family during a house raid to detain them.

August 8: Turkish soldiers reportedly [battered](#) and pushed back a group of migrants trying to cross to Turkey from Syria.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

August 4: A war monitor [reported](#) that shelling by Turkish forces and their rebel proxies killed three children and a male relative in northern Syria.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

August 2: [Azra Gülendam Haytaoğlu](#), a 21-year-old journalism student who went missing in Antalya a week earlier, was found brutally murdered. A man identified as Mustafa Murat Ayhan was detained in connection with the murder.

August 3: Twenty women were [killed](#) by men in July, while 12 others died under suspicious circumstances, according to a monthly report released by the We Will End Femicide Platform. Bianet's male violence monitoring [report](#) put the number of murders at 24. The report also said that men inflicted violence on at least 77 women and forced 36 to sex work.

August 7: [Ümitcan Uygun](#), a man accused of murdering his girlfriend Aleyna Çakır and released from prison pending trial on July 17, was detained as part of an investigation into the death of his new girlfriend Esra Hankulu.