

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 131 | December 19-25, 2022

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 82 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.

**December 19:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) nine people for not standing up for the national anthem at the beginning of a football game in a stadium.

**December 19:** [Vural Avar](#), a 85-year-old sick inmate, died in an Ankara prison.

## 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

**December 19:** The police in İstanbul and Kocaeli [intervened](#) in protests staged against an incident of police violence, detaining 109 people.

**December 19:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a commemoration event, briefly detaining three activists.

**December 19:** The Muş Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 13 days.

**December 21:** An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) 22 people to one year, three months in prison due to their participation in a commemoration event in 2019.

**December 21:** The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a protest staged by former public sector workers summarily dismissed by decree-laws, detaining six people.

**December 23:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration against the detention of Kurdish politicians, detaining one activist.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**December 19:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) journalist Fatih Yaşlı.

**December 19:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports on allegations that drugs were found in a vehicle belonging to a pro-government businessman.

**December 20:** Reporter Furkan Durmaz was physically [assaulted](#) while conducting a street interview in İstanbul.

**December 20:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit 103 retired admirals who stood trial on coup charges due to their joint statement in which they criticized government plans to build a new waterway across İstanbul.

**December 21:** An Ankara court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of two years, nine months and 22 days to Kurdish journalist Hayri Demir on terrorism-related charges.

**December 21:** The police in Tunceli [detained](#) a man named Gökhan Karakuş for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda on social media. Karakuş was arrested by a court on December 23.

**December 21:** An İstanbul court [ordered](#) journalist Sedef Kabaş to pay damages to the president for insulting him on a television program.

**December 21:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) fines on TV stations Tele1, Halk TV and Fox TV due to comments aired on their political programs.

**December 22:** [Sinan Aygül](#), a journalist who was arrested on December 14 due to his reporting, was released.

**December 23:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports on corruption allegations implicating Rifat Ural, the government-appointed trustee who replaced the elected Diyarbakır mayor.

**December 24:** An Ankara court [blocked](#) access to five tweets and a news reports on torture allegations against Abdulkadir Türkyılmaz, a police officer working at the counterterrorism branch of the Ankara police department.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

**December 25:** The Interior Ministry [banned](#) HDP MP Zeynel Özen from travelling abroad.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**December 19:** A Hakkari court [sentenced](#) Kurdish politicians Dilek Hatipoğlu and Nurullah Çiftçi to 11 years, three months in prison on terrorism-related charges. Hatipoğlu and Çiftçi were retried after their earlier sentence was overturned by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that their right to a fair trial was violated.

**December 21:** An Ankara court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of two years, nine months and 22 days to Kurdish journalist Hayri Demir on terrorism-related charges.

**December 23:** The police in nine provinces [detained](#) 14 people, including Kurdish politicians from the Democratic Regions Party (DBP).

**December 23:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) six members and executives of the HDP.

**December 23:** The police in Muş [detained](#) four members of the HDP.

**December 25:** The Interior Ministry [banned](#) HDP MP Zeynel Özen from travelling abroad.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**December 21:** Reports revealed that an Aydın prison was [holding](#) 46 prisoners in a ward with a capacity of 10 people.

**December 24:** The authorities [interrupted](#) sick inmate Emin Gurban's ongoing treatment by transferring him from a Kocaeli prison to a Konya prison against his will.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**December 22:** Turkish authorities [decided](#) to deport Hossein Manbari and Shugar Mohammadi, two Iranian Kurds who reportedly face execution in Iran for having taken part in protests against the government several years ago.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**December 24:** An Ankara court [blocked](#) access to five tweets and a news reports on torture allegations against Abdulkadir Türkyılmaz, a police officer working at the counterterrorism branch of the Ankara police department.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**December 19:** Sweden's Supreme Court [refused](#) to extradite journalist Bülent Keneş to Turkey. The court said some of the charges against Keneş are not crimes in Sweden and there is a risk that the journalist would face persecution on the basis of his political beliefs. Keneş's extradition request was specifically put forward by the Turkish president as a precondition for Turkey's approval of Sweden's NATO membership.