

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 1 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.

April 12: The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), which monitors the enforcement of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [called](#) on Turkey to significantly reform its criminal and anti-terrorism laws and urgently release political prisoners.

April 14: Ece Nur Esen, a 16-year-old woman whose health was [affected](#) by the persecution of her parents by the state of emergency decree for years, died of a heart attack.

## 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

April 8: Turkish police on Saturday used excessive force to disperse a group of young people who had gathered in the

central İstanbul neighborhood of Taksim to demand that the Turkish government cut off its trade with Israel in light of Israel's ongoing war on Gaza and [detained](#) 38 of them.

April 9: The Van Bar Association, the Human Rights Association (İHD) and the Association for the Freedom of Lawyers (ÖHD) have [prepared](#) a joint report on law enforcement's handling of protests that erupted in Van over a local election controversy, accusing the police of firing plastic bullets at the protesters and using disproportionate force.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

April 8: Elazığ 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ruled](#) that at least 3 news articles and posts on the allegation that 8 female students were sexually harassed by the school principal in Elazığ be blocked from access and deleted on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

April 8: A total of 6,879 people [appeared](#) in Turkish courts in 2023 on allegations of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan or his Justice and Development Party (AKP) government.

April 13: Political communicator Evren Barış Yavuz, who was [detained](#) after being targeted by Baykar General Manager Haluk Bayraktar, the older brother of AKP President Tayyip Erdoğan's son-in-law Selçuk Bayraktar, was arrested by a judge.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

April 9: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of a member of the Council of State, Bekir Sözen, who was removed from his position following the adoption of a restructuring law in 2016.

April 9: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has [granted](#) priority status to a second case lodged by businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala, who has been detained since October 2017, publishing details of continuing and new violations of his rights.

April 13: Şaban Vatan, the father of Rabia Naz, who died six years ago and whose death was allegedly covered up by a senior ruling party member, has [called](#) on Turkey's authorities to ensure accountability and justice.

## **KURDISH MINORITY**

April 11: Medet Serhat, who was assassinated in 1994, was [known](#) for his defense of Kurdish politicians during the Democracy Party (DEP) Trial. His son, Rumet Serhat, said the grave was intact during their last visit and the attack must have happened within the past few days.

## **TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

April 8: Ersel Furkan Güven, a university student who was jailed due to his alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement, was [sent back](#) to prison soon after undergoing surgery and has been increasingly suffering from health problems behind bars.

April 9: Prison guards in western Turkey allegedly [broke](#) the arm of Bahar Kurt, a jailed member of the leftist Grup Yorum music band.