

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 163 | July 31-August 6, 2023

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 27 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.

**August 1:** Mustafa Said Türk, an 86-year-old bedridden man who was convicted of links to the Gülen movement, was [hospitalized](#) soon after being sent to prison to serve his sentence. Although Türk's lawyer requested a stay of execution of the sentence, citing old age and severe illness, it was denied by Manisa courts.

## 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 31:** Gendarmes in Hatay [intervened](#) in a demonstration against the expropriation of agricultural lands, detaining seven people.

**August 1:** The Tunceli Governor's Office [banned](#) three concerts that were planned as part of a local cultural

festival. Several band members were detained after the announcement of the ban.

**August 1:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) that a ban on a 2021 cultural event organized by a Kurdish NGO was unlawful.

**August 2:** Gendarmes in Muğla [intervened](#) in an environmental protest against the construction of a coal mine in a forested area, briefly detaining one activist.

**August 2:** Gendarmes in Mardin and Şanlıurfa [intervened](#) in protests against a local electricity supplier, detaining a total of seven people.

**August 4:** A district governorate in İstanbul [banned](#) an opposition exhibition event on the grounds that "it could turn into an opposition rally."

**August 4:** The Adana Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a day.

**August 5:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of two days.

**August 5:** The police in İstanbul and Adana [intervened](#) in demonstrations about those who disappeared in police custody in the 1990s, detaining a total of 44 activists.

**August 5:** The Samsun Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert, citing national and spiritual values.

**August 6:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a man named Nurettin Koç for staging a sit-in protest in a park about the government's economic policies.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**August 1:** A seven-day broadcast ban imposed on the pro-opposition TELE1 TV channel by the Radio and Television

Supreme Council (RTÜK) [took effect](#) after an Ankara court lifted an injunction that was previously imposed on the sanction by a lower court.

**August 3:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering allegations that children under state protection were sent to an event organized by a religious foundation.

**August 3:** Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into opposition party employee Gençosman Killik over a brochure. Killik was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

**August 4:** Diyarbakır prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Diren Yurtsever over her reporting on a local electricity distribution company. Yurtsever was summoned by the police for a questioning as part of the investigation.

**August 4:** Ankara prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Hasan Sivri over his social media posts about the earthquakes in February. Sivri faces charges of spreading misinformation.

**August 4:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a suspended prison sentence handed down to musician Erdal Güney on charges of insulting the president due to the lyrics of a song was in violation of the freedom of expression.

**August 5:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to at least six news reports covering judicial corruption allegations made by an exiled mob boss who used to have close ties to the government.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**August 1:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) that a ban on a 2021 cultural event organized by a Kurdish NGO was unlawful.

**August 2:** A women's prison in Ağrı [sent](#) several inmates to one-person cells as a disciplinary punishment for singing in Kurdish and performing a folk dance.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**July 31:** A trans woman named Atiye Güney was physically [assaulted](#) by three unidentified individuals in İstanbul.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**July 31:** The Human Rights Association (İHD) [released](#) a report which found that at least 10,789 rights violations took place in 153 prisons in 58 provinces across Turkey in 2022.

**August 2:** Several inmates held in an İstanbul prison [reported](#) that rats were present in their wards and that their complaints about it were ignored by the prison administration.

**August 5:** Reports [indicated](#) that meals provided to inmates in two Yozgat prisons were inadequate and unhygienic.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**July 31:** Greek authorities reportedly [pushed back](#) five Turkish nationals after they fled across the border to seek political asylum. The asylum seekers were immediately detained by Turkey's security forces after being pushed back.

**August 2:** An İstanbul prosecutor [launched](#) an investigation into the suspicious death of Nabeel Hasan, a Palestinian national, in a Turkish prison less than a week after he was arrested for involvement in a fight.

**August 3:** The İstanbul Governor's Office [released](#) a statement ordering Syrian refugees who are registered in other provinces to leave İstanbul by September 24.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**July 31:** The guards in a Konya prison [mistreated](#) inmate Vahdettin Erdem. On August 3, reports indicated that Erdem was verbally [threatened](#) by prison guards after his family announced the mistreatment to the media.

**July 31:** A women's prison in İstanbul [restricted](#) the communication privileges of five inmates for holding an event to commemorate the victims of a terrorist bombing in 2015.

**August 1:** [Burhan Barut](#), an inmate incarcerated in Antalya, went on a hunger strike alleging that he was subjected to severe torture including being hogtied.

**August 2:** A women's prison in Ağrı [sent](#) several inmates to one-person cells as a disciplinary punishment for singing in Kurdish and performing a folk dance.

**August 2:** An İstanbul prosecutor [launched](#) an investigation into the suspicious death of Nabeel Hasan, a Palestinian national, in a Turkish prison less than a week after he was arrested for involvement in a fight.

**August 5:** An Adana prison [denied](#) hospital referrals to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

**August 5:** A prison administration in Adana arbitrarily [restricted](#) inmates' social and cultural privileges.

## **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

**July 31:** The UN Human Rights Council reportedly [received](#) a formal complaint regarding Turkish airstrikes in Iraq, allegedly targeting a civilian hospital and resulting in the death of eight people.

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

**August 2:** Men [killed](#) 22 women and inflicted violence on at least 63 women in July, according to a gender-based violence report.