

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 99 | May 9-15, 2022

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 113 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](#), 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

**May 9:** The Eskişehir Governor's Office [banned](#) a planned music festival.

**May 9:** The Adana Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**May 10:** The police in Mardin briefly [detained](#) 12 people, including five minors, over their participation in Newroz celebrations.

**May 10:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit two underage children who were detained and tried over their participation in an LGBT pride march.

**May 10:** The Eskişehir Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**May 10:** The Batman Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**May 10:** The Rize Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 5 days.

**May 11:** The police in Mardin [detained](#) 10 people over their participation in Newroz celebrations.

**May 11:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) six people protesting about prisoners on hunger strike.

**May 11:** The Gaziantep Governor's Office [banned](#) a rally planned by opposition party DEVA.

**May 13:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) three people protesting for prisoners on hunger strike.

**May 13:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**May 13:** The Tunceli Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 7 days.

**May 14:** The police in Tunceli violently [intervened](#) in the funeral of a Kurdish politician, detaining four people. Three of the detainees were later released while one was arrested by a court on charges of resisting the police.

**May 15:** The Kocaeli Municipality [cancelled](#) a concert by Kurdish singer Aynur Doğan.

**May 16:** Opposition MP Sezgin Tanrikulu [announced](#) that the police detained 288 people in 45 demonstrations in April.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**May 10:** A Mersin court [ruled](#) to block access to three columns about cocaine trafficking allegations involving the port of Mersin.

**May 10:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist İsmail Saymaz over one of his reports.

**May 10:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into an individual due to a photo posted on social media during a religiously significant night. The individual was questioned and later released by a court.

**May 11:** An Ankara court [ordered](#) opposition politician Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu to pay damages to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan over a speech he made.

**May 11:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web page used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency (ETHA).

**May 11:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) monetary fines on pro-opposition channels TELE1, Halk TV, KRT and Flash Haber TV over their coverage of statements made by two opposition politicians on a court decision.

**May 12:** The Supreme Court of Appeals [upheld](#) a prison sentence of nearly 10 years previously handed down to opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda and insulting the president in tweets posted between 2012 and 2017.

**May 12:** An İzmir court [sentenced](#) opposition politician Tacettin Çolak to three years, one month and 27 days in prison on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**May 12:** Media reports [said](#) that Turkish courts will decide whether or not a social media post was aimed at producing or disseminating fake news and disinformation under a new law that is to soon be proposed by the ruling party.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**May 10:** Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ [announced](#) that the government is working on legislation to increase jail sentences over charges of food stockpiling up to three years. The announcement came amid reports of high inflation in the country.

**May 10:** A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit four police officers who were previously sentenced to two years, 15 days in prison on negligence charges over a bomb attack against a rally organized by the HDP. The officers' were retried after an appeals court overturned their sentences.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**May 10:** The police in Mardin briefly [detained](#) 12 people, including five minors, over their participation in Newroz celebrations.

**May 10:** The police in Şırnak [detained](#) two people, including HDP executive Müzeyyen İnan.

**May 11:** The police in Mardin [detained](#) 10 people over their participation in Newroz celebrations.

**May 14:** The police in Tunceli violently [intervened](#) in the funeral of a Kurdish politician, detaining four people. Three of the detainees were later released while one was arrested by a court on charges of resisting the police.

**May 15:** An Ankara prison [refused](#) to deliver a book to jailed Kurdish politician Sebahat Tuncel on the grounds that it contained "security threats."

**May 15:** The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) pro-Kurdish politician Hafize İpek and NGO executive Metin Kılavuz as part of an investigation into widespread Kurdish protests in 2014.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**May 9:** Suat Oğuz, a prisoner suffering from Hepatitis B, [contracted](#) Covid-19 behind bars for the second time.

**May 14:** [Abdullah Ece](#), a 73-year-old inmate who contracted Covid-19 in an İzmir prison, died after being hospitalized.

**May 15:** An İstanbul hospital [refused](#) to carry out a necessary surgery on sick inmate Cengiz Halis Çelik on the grounds that there were no available prisoner rooms.

**May 15:** An Ankara prison [refused](#) to deliver a book to jailed Kurdish politician Sebahat Tuncel on the grounds that it contained "security threats."

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**May 10:** Human rights activists and union workers [said](#) that migrant workers in Turkey are being exploited by their employers and that they do not have access to the right to join unions.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**May 10:** Neighborhood watchmen in İstanbul first verbally [harassed](#), then detained and physically assaulted a 16-year-old girl.

**May 12:** The police in İstanbul violently [raided](#) the house of musician Halime Demirkapı, physically assaulting Demirkapı and damaging some of her belongings in the house.

**May 12:** The police in İstanbul physically [mistreated](#) Vedat Özdemir and Münevver Ilgın during a house raid.

**May 12:** The guards in an Adana prison [strip-searched](#) two inmates who were transferred from another prison.

**May 13:** [Yılmaz Uzun](#), a man who was detained in İstanbul, claimed that he was tied to a chair and beaten for two hours by the police.

**May 14:** Opposition MP Sezgin Tanrikulu [reported](#) that a total of 339 incidents of torture or maltreatment took place in April, 78 of them in prisons.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

**May 13:** Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF), a Sweden-based organization, released a [report](#) on Turkey's transnational repression, detailing the abuse of terrorism financing sanctions to target the government's critics living abroad.