

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 172 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 14:** An inmate named Abdülrezzak Şuyur [lost](#) his life in an İzmir prison three months after he was diagnosed with lung cancer. Reports indicated that the prison administration had not offered Şuyur medical treatment.

**December 14:** The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that the pre-trial detention of journalist Nazlı İlıcak violated her right to liberty and security.

**December 14:** The Human Rights Association (İHD) [reported](#) that at least 59 sick prisoners, seven of whom shortly after the deferment of the execution of their sentences, have lost their lives in Turkey since early 2020.

**December 15:** Halil Güneş, an inmate suffering from cancer, was [found dead](#) in a Diyarbakır prison. The authorities had denied release to Güneş, despite a medical board report.

**December 16:** Esra Çiçeklidağ, a former judge and the mother of a 6-month-old baby, was [arrested](#) and sent to a Kocaeli prison in violation of a law that requires the postponement of the execution of sentences for women who have given birth within the last year and a half.

## 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

**December 13:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Yüksel Almas, co-chair of an association established for solidarity with relatives of those who lost their lives in the armed conflict in the Kurdish-majority southeast, to 10 years in prison on terrorism-related charges.

**December 13:** The police in Konya [detained](#) a man named Hayrettin Bulan for staging a protest in front of the local governor's office.

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

**December 14:** The police in Ankara [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged by university students to protest the government's economic policies, briefly detaining 13 people.

**December 14:** A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) former NGO executive Yılmaz Kan to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement.

**December 14:** The Kahramanmaraş Governor's Office issued a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 14 days.

**December 15:** The authorities imposed a TL 80,000 (€ 4,500) in administrative fine and confiscated a house belonging to Acun Karadağ, a former public servant summarily fired from her job by an executive decree after a 2016 coup attempt, for participating in a protest.

**December 16:** The police in Diyarbakır detained Emine Kaya, the co-chair of a pro-Kurdish association for solidarity with relatives of prisoners.

**December 16:** An İstanbul court ruled to acquit 13 activists who stood trial for protesting a pro-government construction company for building a stone quarry in an environmentally significant area.

**December 17:** The Tunceli Governor's Office banned a planned labor rally, citing the Covid-19 pandemic.

**December 18:** The İstanbul Governor's Office banned an event planned by an opposition party.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**December 13:** A Diyarbakır prosecutor requested up to five years in prison for journalist Durken Süren who is standing trial on terrorism-related charges over her social media messages as well as her work for the pro-Kurdish Azadiya Welat and Özgür Gündem newspapers.

**December 13:** The Coalition for Women in Journalism (CFWIJ) reported that rights violations faced by women journalists in Turkey increased by 244.11 percent in 2021 compared to last year.

**December 13:** A court sentenced to house arrest three YouTube journalists known for their political street interviews who were detained on December 12.

**December 14:** The European Court of Human Rights ruled that the pre-trial detention of journalist Nazlı İlıcak violated her rights to liberty and security as well as freedom of expression.

**December 14:** A Konya court sentenced a man to 14 months in prison on charges of insulting the president, for sharing two cartoons about him on social media.

**December 14:** A Diyarbakır prosecutor demanded life in prison for journalist Rojhat Doğru, a former reporter for

Gale Kurdistan TV who is on trial for allegedly threatening the integrity of the state and having terrorist affiliation.

**December 14:** An İzmir court sentenced a man named Ahmet Saymadi to one year, two months, 17 days in prison on charges of insulting the president on social media.

**December 14:** A new report found that investigations have been launched into 211,523 people in Turkey on various accusations over their exercise of free speech during the first six years of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's presidency.

**December 15:** The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting watchdog, imposed fines on streaming platforms Netflix and Exxen due to their "immoral" content, ordering them to remove a movie and a talk show. RTÜK also fined pro-opposition Halk TV, Fox TV and TELE 1 broadcasters over their anti-government broadcasting.

**December 16:** An İstanbul court ruled to acquit journalist Mehmet Aslan of terrorism charges. Aslan stood trial over his work for the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya news agency.

**December 17:** The police detained 12 people, including HDP executives, as part of an investigation into alleged terrorist propaganda at a party meeting in İstanbul on December 12.

**December 17:** A Kayseri court ruled to block access to three news articles on corruption and nepotism allegations targeting a local district governor.

**December 17:** The Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative court, ruled for a stay of execution on a regulation that made it easier for the authorities to cancel press cards of journalists.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**December 13:** A Diyarbakır court sentenced Yüksel Almas, co-chair of an association established for solidarity with relatives of those who lost their lives in the armed conflict in the Kurdish-majority southeast, to 10 years in prison on terrorism-related charges.

**December 13:** A Diyarbakır court sentenced former district municipal council member Panayır Çelik to six years, three months on terrorism-related charges.

**December 13:** A Diyarbakır prosecutor requested up to five years in prison for journalist Durken Süren who is standing trial on terrorism-related charges over her social media messages as well as her work for the pro-Kurdish Azadiya Welat and Özgür Gündem newspapers.

**December 13:** İstanbul prosecutors launched an investigation into the HDP due to alleged dissemination of terrorist propaganda at a party congress.

**December 14:** A Diyarbakır prosecutor demanded life in prison for journalist Rojhat Doğru, a former reporter for Gale Kurdistan TV who is on trial for allegedly threatening the integrity of the state and having terrorist affiliation.

**December 14:** A Diyarbakır court sentenced former NGO executive Yılmaz Kan to six years, three months in prison on terrorism charges, as part of an investigation into the Kurdish political movement.

**December 15:** A Diyarbakır court sentenced local Kurdish politician Celal Yoldaş to 10 years, six months in prison on terrorism-related charges.

**December 16:** The police in Diyarbakır detained Emine Kaya, the co-chair of a pro-Kurdish association for solidarity with relatives of prisoners. Kaya was arrested by a court on December 19.

**December 16:** An İstanbul court ruled to acquit journalist Mehmet Aslan of terrorism charges. Aslan stood trial over his work for the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya news agency.

**December 17:** The police detained 12 people, including HDP executives, as part of an investigation into alleged terrorist propaganda at a party meeting in İstanbul on December 12.

**December 17:** Reports revealed that the Şırnak police physically and verbally mistreated HDP members Botan Em and Rıdvan Türel who were detained on December 11.

**December 17:** Sümeyye Gök, a HDP member who was detained on December 8, was reportedly subjected to a strip-search and coerced into becoming an informant for the state while in custody.

**December 18:** The police in Mardin detained local Kurdish politician Celal Ata.

**December 19:** A 17-year-old Kurdish minor was physically assaulted by a group in Ankara in what appears to be a racist attack.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**December 14:** İstanbul prosecutors indicted four trans women over their “indecent behavior.”

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**December 14:** An inmate named Abdülrezzak Şuyur lost his life in an İzmir prison three months after he was diagnosed with lung cancer. Reports indicated that the prison administration had not offered Şuyur medical treatment.

**December 14:** An Elazığ prison denied permission to Haşim Gezer to attend the funeral of his sister Garibe Gezer who was found dead in her cell in a Kocaeli prison after reports that she was heavily tortured. The prison administration in Kocaeli where Gezer lost her life launched disciplinary investigation into some inmates for staging a protest by clapping hands.

**December 15:** Reports indicated that a Samsun prison has been denying treatment to sick inmate Bilal Akbaş for seven months for refusing to undergo mouth searches.

**December 16:** Media reports indicated an increase in the number of complaints from prisoners about lack of heating and adequate nutrition.

**December 17:** An inmate named İlyas Demir lost his life in a one-person prison cell in Bolu. His sister announced to the press that Demir had been suffering from psychological problems since 2013 and that prison authorities had not offered him treatment.

**December 19:** An inmate named Vedat Erkmen lost his life in a Tekirdağ prison in what authorities classified as a suicide. Media reports indicated that prior to his death Erkmen had been placed in a one-person cell out of concerns for his “safety.” Family members alleged that Erkmen was unlikely to commit suicide and that he might have been killed.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**December 13:** The guards in a Çorum prison physically assaulted five inmates who tried to resist a strip-search during a prison transfer.

**December 15:** Eight inmates in a Konya prison were taken to a room under the guise of meeting with their lawyers, and then interrogated by police and gendarmerie intelligence officers.

**December 17:** Reports revealed that the Şırnak police physically and verbally mistreated HDP members Botan Em and Rıdvan Türel who were detained on December 11.

**December 17:** Sümeyye Gök, a HDP member who was detained on December 8, was reportedly subjected to a strip-search and coerced into becoming an informant for the state while in custody.

**December 19:** The police in Karabük physically assaulted a 11-year-old minor suspected of stealing a bike.