

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 38 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 27: [Gülten Sayın](#), the mother of 6-year-old Yusuf Kerim Sayın who is suffering from a type of bone cancer, was reportedly arrested on December 16 to serve a prison sentence on charges of links to the Gülen movement.

December 28: An appeals court [upheld](#) the life sentence of Osman Kavala, a civil society leader who is accused of attempting to overthrow the government by financing street protests in 2013. Turkish authorities have ignored a European Court of Human Rights ruling ordering Kavala's release.

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.

December 26: Reports on the media [revealed](#) that a man named Savaş Çelik was held in unofficial detention for three months after being handed over to Turkish authorities in Lebanon and rendered to Turkey. Çelik

was reportedly interrogated under heavy physical torture during that time.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

December 26: The gendarmes in İzmir [intervened](#) in several workers' protests that were sparked by the layoff of a mineworker, detaining 22 people.

December 26: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration staged outside the French consulate to protest an armed attack on a Kurdish association in Paris, briefly detaining 14 people.

December 29: The authorities in Van [imposed](#) monetary fines on at least 25 people for attending a women's rights march in November 2022.

December 29: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit 12 university students who stood trial for protesting a rector that was appointed by the government and for carrying rainbow flags.

December 30: The Mardin Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

December 30: The Siirt Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 27: A Hatay court [ruled](#) to block access to the Twitter account of the Etkin news agency (ETHA).

December 28: A Van court [handed down](#) suspended prison sentences of 10 months to HDP executives Fikret Doğan, Dilgeş Aslan and Cengiz Acar on charges of inciting hatred and enmity among the public. The court

also imposed a monetary fine on Yaver Kumli as part of the same trial. The local politicians were on trial for hanging a banner on a party building about a racist attack against a Kurdish family in Konya.

December 28: The authorities [blocked](#) access to at least six news reports on corruption allegations implicating Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu.

December 29: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least six news reports covering controversial comments made by a political party leader about child marriages.

December 30: An İzmir court [handed down](#) suspended prison sentences of one year, two months to activists Aytül Uçar, Emine Akbaba and İrem Çelikbaş on charges of insulting the president during a protest.

January 1: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) on five government-critical TV channels fines of a total of TL 17,33 million (€ 868.000) in 2022. The channels were fined 54 times, according to reports.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

December 27: Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into leading human rights defender Şebnem Korur Fincancı on terrorism-related charges. Fincancı is already in pretrial detention and on trial for spreading terrorist propaganda due to her remarks calling for an investigation into allegations that Turkey's military used chemical weapons in northern Iraq.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 28: An appeals court [upheld](#) the life sentence of Osman Kavala, a civil society leader who is accused of attempting to overthrow the government by financing street protests in 2013. Turkish authorities have ignored a European Court of Human Rights ruling ordering Kavala's release.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 27: A court ruled to [arrest](#) Kurdish politicians Keskin Bayındır and Hayrettin Altun who were detained last week as part of an investigation into the Democratic Regions' Party (DBP). The other detainees taken into

custody as part of the operation were released under judicial control.

December 29: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) nine members and executives of the HDP on terrorism-related charges while acquitting one who was on the same trial.

December 29: An Ankara prison [rejected](#) visitation applications of several people who were planning to visit nine jailed Kurdish journalists. The rejection was reportedly based on background checks conducted on the visitors by the provincial gendarmerie command.

PRISON CONDITIONS

December 27: A Kocaeli prison reportedly [obstructed](#) the treatment of Mehmet Gürler, an inmate suffering from multiple sclerosis.

December 28: A Diyarbakır prison did not [deliver](#) a book that was sent to jailed journalist Ramazan Geciken by his family.

December 29: An Ankara prison [rejected](#) visitation applications of several people who were planning to visit nine jailed Kurdish journalists. The rejection was reportedly based on background checks conducted on the visitors by the provincial gendarmerie command.

December 30: A Konya prison [denied](#) vitamin B12 to inmates who are on a hunger strike to protest rights violations in prisons.

December 31: An Erzurum prison [imposed](#) disciplinary sanctions on seven inmates for chanting slogans to protest metal fences placed on windows, suspending their outside communication for 14 months.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 26: Reports on the media [revealed](#) that a man named Savaş Çelik was held in unofficial detention for three months after being handed over to Turkish authorities in Lebanon and rendered to Turkey. Çelik was reportedly interrogated under heavy physical torture during that time.

December 27: [Alparslan Kuytul](#), a community leader jailed after his outspoken criticism of the government, is reportedly being kept alone in an eight-person ward in an

Ağrı prison. Reports also said that the prison administration was denying video calls to Kuytul.