

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 134 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.

May 21: Abdullah Aslan, a former teacher who was arrested for alleged links to the Gülen movement shortly after surgery to remove a tumor from his brain, [suffered](#) a second relapse and requested his release to seek medical treatment.

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 16: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) two people protesting for prisoners on hunger strike.

May 17: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Hanife Yıldız, a peace activist fighting for accountability for the enforced disappearances of the 1990s, while she was

attempting to stage a demonstration in front of a courthouse.

May 17: The gendarmes in Şanlıurfa briefly [detained](#) five people protesting a local energy supplier.

May 17: The police in Balıkesir [detained](#) three people for carrying rainbow flags during an LGBT event.

May 17: The Muş Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert by Metin Kahraman and Kemal Kahraman.

May 17: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism [removed](#) a K-Pop group from a festival on the grounds that the group encouraged homosexuality.

May 17: A municipality in Kocaeli [banned](#) the staging of a Kurdish-language theater play.

May 18: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit 17 people who stood trial for protesting to raise awareness about hunger strikes in prisons.

May 18: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration to commemorate a left-wing militant, detaining 25 people. The detainees were released the next day.

May 19: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) two people protesting for prisoners on hunger strike.

May 20: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by the HDP, briefly detaining four people.

May 20: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in an LGBT pride march, detaining 70 activists.

May 22: The İstanbul Governor's Office [banned](#) a picnic organized by an association.

May 22: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest against Turkey's military incursion into northern Iraq, detaining 25 protesters.

May 22: The police in İstanbul, Adana and Hatay [intervened](#) in demonstrations organized by members of an anti-government religious group, detaining at least 11 people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

May 17: The police briefly [detained](#) two minors for allegedly insulting the president in slogans they chanted during a women's rights march.

May 17: An İstanbul court [ordered](#) the BirGün newspaper to pay damages to the president's son-in-law due to a report alleging that his company was granted special favors by a government agency.

May 18: A court [sentenced](#) journalist Reyhan Çapan to one year, six months in prison over a news report.

May 20: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Kurdish musician Zelal Gökçe on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda.

May 20: Journalists Seyhan Avşar, Hale Gönültaş and Eylem Emel Yıldız [announced](#) that they received death threats over their reporting.

May 20: A Gaziantep court [ruled](#) to block access two tweets and at least four news reports about allegations that some news websites received fake court orders for removal of content.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

May 17: The Human Rights Association (İHD) [announced](#) that one of its provincial co-chairs in Hakkari received death threats.

May 21: The Justice Ministry [denied](#) a request by the co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to visit jailed businessman and civil society leader Osman Kavala in prison.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

May 16: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) [disbarred](#) 15 judges and prosecutors on account of their alleged ties to terrorism.

KURDISH MINORITY

May 19: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) 12 people, including executives and members of the HDP.

May 20: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a demonstration organized by the HDP, briefly detaining four people.

May 20: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Kurdish musician Zelal Gökçe on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda.

OTHER MINORITIES

May 17: The police in Balıkesir [detained](#) three people for carrying rainbow flags during an LGBT event.

May 19: LGBT rights activists and lawyers in Eskişehir [filed](#) a criminal complaint about anonymous leaflets that called for murdering LGBT people.

PRISON CONDITIONS

May 19: An Aksaray prison [denied](#) the right to video calls to political prisoners.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

May 16: Media reports [revealed](#) that Greek soldiers pushed back 15 Turkish nationals who crossed the land border to seek political asylum.

May 17: The Ankara Bar Association [announced](#) that hundreds of refugees were recently detained and sent to a repatriation center, demanding information from the authorities and a possibility to talk to the refugees.

May 18: The Bolu Municipality [hung](#) Arabic-language banners that contained hateful rhetoric against refugees living in the province.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

May 17: Former intelligence officer Ali Burak Darıcılı [said](#) in a YouTube interview that Turkey's intelligence service has bribed locals in Africa and Central Asia to secure the abduction of members of the Gülen movement who were then forcibly returned to Turkey.

May 18: The Turkish government [demanded](#) the extradition of 21 political exiles from Sweden in

exchange for not blocking the country's bid to become a NATO member.

May 18: A Turkish kebab shop owner in Germany physically [assaulted](#) Ramazan Yilmazer, a government critic who has been living in Germany for 41 years.