

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 184 | Date December 25-31, 2023

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 13 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

December 27: It was [learned](#) that 2 people were detained in house raids on December 26, 2023 through the investigation of Diyarbakır Public Prosecutor's Office on Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) 1st Youth Assembly Congress held in Diyarbakır on December 24, 2023 and detention period was extended for 1 more day on December 27, 2023.

December 27: Governorates of Bingöl and Siirt [announced](#) on December 26, 2023 that all events such as demonstrations, marches, press declarations, hunger strikes, sit-in protests, rallies, opening stands, setting up

tents, distributing leaflets, hanging banners and similar activities are banned for 6 days from December 26, 2023 until January 1, 2024.

December 28: The police [intervened](#) the press declaration of Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Tunceli Provincial Organization and DEM Party Dersim Provincial Organization against the operations in Northeast Syria and detained 6 people. The police intervened the press declaration in front of DEM Party Ceylanpınar District Organization in Ceylanpınar district of Urfa for the same reason and detained 10 people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 26: An investigation was [launched](#) into veteran journalist Can Ataklı due to his statements targeting the father of a Turkish soldier who was recently killed in an attack by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in northern Iraq.

December 26: At least 3 news articles about Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and IETT, in which CHP Istanbul Deputy Özgür Karabat's name was [mentioned](#), were banned from access by the Bodrum 2nd Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights, and the content related to the requestor was deleted.

December 27: Journalist Metin Cihan's posts on his X account, in which he brought to the agenda that Erkan Köseadağ, Deputy Provincial Director of Culture and Tourism of Ağrı and President of Ağrı Federation of Amateur Sports Clubs, had sexually abused child athletes, and at least 6 news articles on the subject were [blocked](#) from access by the Ağrı Criminal Judge of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 27: The news report on the sexual abuse of a three-year-old girl in Izmir by her father's lover was [blocked](#) from access by the decision of Karşıyaka 1st Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 27: Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç announced on Wednesday that 125 people have been [detained](#) on accusations of disseminating terrorist propaganda on social media, while three individuals have been arrested.

December 28: Fuat Oktay, Turkey's former vice president and current ruling party MP, on Wednesday denied allegations that he received \$50 million in bribes from a mafia group to protect their assets in the country and [accused](#) the journalist who broke the story of being a "terrorist."

December 28: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) a temporary broadcast ban as well as a fine on FOX TV over a series that was slammed by religious groups due to its critical portrayal of Islamic cults in the country.

December 28: At least 3 news articles mentioning Adem Soytekin, the owner of Asoy Construction, which participates in municipal tenders, were [blocked](#) from access by the Istanbul 10th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 29: The news about the Istanbul Bar Association's objection to the blocking of access to at least 3 news articles about the bribery ring in the courthouse was [blocked](#) by the decision of the Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 29: The content titled "News about Ahmet Burak Erdoğan" on the Engelliweb website was [blocked](#) from access by the decision of the Istanbul Anatolian 9th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 29: At least 6 news articles about President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's son Ahmet Burak Erdoğan were [blocked](#) from access by the Istanbul Anatolian 9th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 29: On December 28, 2023, journalist Furkan Karabay was [called](#) to the police station on the grounds of a news report he had published and was detained on the charges of 'targeting people who took part in the fight against terrorism' and 'slander' and was taken to Istanbul Provincial Security Directorate. Furkan Karabay was arrested by the court on December 29, 2023.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 28: The former president of Turkish football club Ankaragücü, who was arrested earlier this month after punching a referee at the end of a game in Ankara, [received](#) a hero's welcome following his release pending trial on Wednesday.

December 29: Turkey's Interior Ministry has [suspended](#) 445 police officers working for the Security Directorate General (EGM) due to suspected links to the faith-based Gülen movement.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 28: On the 12th anniversary of the 2011 Roboski massacre, the families who gathered to commemorate the 34 Kurdish civilians killed in a Turkish military airstrike are still [demanding](#) accountability for the killings, the perpetrators of which have not been disclosed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government.

December 28: A granddaughter of Sheikh Said, an iconic Kurdish figure who led a Kurdish nationalist rebellion against the new Republic of Turkey in 1925, was [ordered](#) to post a photo of a Turkish flag on her social media accounts for 30 days as part of punitive measures following her release from detention.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 26: It was [learned](#) that M.S.K., a prisoner in Izmir F Type Prison No 2 was not given an orthopedic chair by the prison administration.

December 27: It was [learned](#) that prisoners in Antalya High Security Prison were subjected to mouth searches and reverse handcuffs during transfer to hospital, and prisoners who reject these practices were taken back to prison without treatment and were prevented from accessing their right to health.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

December 28: Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MİT) [renditioned](#) two men (Mustafa Tan and Mustafa Bircan) from Algeria as part of its international abduction campaign against alleged members of the faith-based Gülen movement.