

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 336 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.

September 6: Media reports [pointed out](#) that Yusuf Bekmezci, an 82-year-old businessman sentenced to 17 years in prison over links to the Gülen movement, continues to be held behind bars despite several significant health problems and his advanced age.

September 8: The Constitutional Court [dismissed](#) lengthy detention and lack of fair trial complaints filed by poet İlhan Sami Çomak, who has been imprisoned for 27 years and who continues to be held behind bars despite a European Court of Human Rights order for a retrial.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

September 10: A police vehicle in Sakarya hit and [killed](#) a 14-year-old child. The incident was the third such accident in two weeks. The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV) [reported](#) that from January 1, 2018 to September 10, 2021, a total of 16 people, including nine children and a person with disabilities, lost their lives by being run over by the vehicles of security forces and public institutions.

September 10: A police accident report concerning a 7-year-old boy who was crushed to death by an armored

police vehicle in Şırnak last week [found](#) the child to be the primarily negligent party.

September 10: The European Court of Human Rights [condemned](#) Turkey in the case of Murat Yılmaz, a 19-year-old man who was shot dead by the gendarmerie forces in Van in 2009, ordering Ankara to pay damages for violation of the right to life.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#) and [Hüseyin Galip Küçüközyiğit](#), former public sector workers who were sacked from their jobs by decree-laws during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who were reported missing respectively as of August 6, 2019 and December 29, 2020, in what appear to be the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

September 6: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

September 6: The Bitlis Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

September 8: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a ban imposed by a governor's office on all protests in a southeastern city violated the applicants' constitutional right to assembly and demonstration.

September 9: Osmaniye prosecutors [indicted](#) local HDP politician Müslüm Çağan and presenter Erdal Tecik, seeking punishment on terrorism-related charges over their participation in Newroz celebrations in 2018.

September 9: An İstanbul court [accepted](#) an indictment drafted by prosecutors against 46 people who were detained during an LGBT pride march in June.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

September 6: A Muğla court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about a hotel that was evacuated during the wildfires in the region. The hotel was reportedly constructed following a previous wildfire in the area.

September 6: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to two websites used by the pro-Kurdish JinNews, citing national security reasons.

September 7: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) fashion designer Barbaros Şansal to three months, 22 days in prison on charges of disparaging the government in one of his tweets in 2017.

September 7: The Coalition For Women in Journalism (CFWIJ) released its monthly [report](#) in which it noted eight cases of violations against women journalists in Turkey.

September 8: Broadcasting watchdog RTÜK [imposed](#) a fine on the government-critical Halk TV channel over the remarks of a commentator who criticized a woman for behaving rudely to a main opposition leader.

September 9: Şanlıurfa prosecutors [indicted](#) Emine Şenyavaş, a woman who has been staging sit-in protests to demand justice for three members of her family who were murdered by people connected to the ruling party, seeking up to four years in prison on charges of “insulting a public officer.”

September 9: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a social media post by opposition MP Ahmet Şık about allegations involving one of the president’s lawyers.

September 10: The police in Aydın briefly [detained](#) activist Hikmet Hazer who was hanging banners containing political slogans.

September 10: Media Research Association released a [report](#) on the impact of a social media law that went into effect in October 2020. The report found that from October 2020 to April 2021 Turkish authorities required the removal of at least 658 digital content, out of which 336 were news reports about allegations of corruption and 308 involved allegations of misconduct that

implicated high ranking government officials, bureaucrats, politicians or prominent businesspeople.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

September 9: An İstanbul court [refused](#) to lift a travel ban previously imposed on academic and columnist Mümtazer Türköne who needs to seek treatment for health problems abroad.

September 10: The Constitutional Court [said](#) that a travel ban imposed on Latife Akyüz, one of the academics who were dismissed from their jobs for signing a peace declaration in 2016, violated her rights.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

September 8: The Constitutional Court [dismissed](#) lengthy detention and lack of fair trial complaints filed by poet İlhan Sami Çomak, who has been imprisoned for 27 years and who continues to be held behind bars despite a European Court of Human Rights order for a retrial.

September 10: The Constitutional Court in an individual case [ruled](#) that an intelligence report cannot by itself be as a justification to hinder the appointment of a public servant.

KURDISH MINORITY

September 6: Former HDP MP Aysel Tuğluk was [denied](#) access to proper healthcare in prison, according to a written statement released by her lawyers.

September 6: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to two websites used by the pro-Kurdish JinNews, citing national security reasons.

September 6: İsmail Beşikçi Foundation released a [report](#) on the rights violations against musicians and stage actors performing in Kurdish, noting widespread criminalization of the Kurdish language and increasing restrictions on artistic activities in the last few years.

September 9: Osmaniye prosecutors [indicted](#) local HDP politician Müslüm Çağan and presenter Erdal Tecik, seeking punishment on terrorism-related charges over their participation in Newroz celebrations in 2018.

September 10: A school in Adana reportedly [wrote](#) nationalist slogans on its staircase, including one that said “Either speak Turkish or be silent.”

September 11: Racist slurs were [written](#) on the door of a house belonging to a Kurdish family in Mersin.

OTHER MINORITIES

September 7: Hrant Dink Foundation launched its [Hate Speech Digital Archive](#), an online tool allowing detailed searches on discriminatory and hateful discourse based on national, ethnic and religious identity in the national and local press in Turkey between 2009 and 2019.

PRISON CONDITIONS

September 6: Former HDP MP Aysel Tuğluk was [denied](#) access to proper healthcare in prison, according to a written statement released by her lawyers.

September 7: An Ankara prison [launched](#) a disciplinary investigation into four inmates for allegedly singing and decided to restrict their external communications for a month as a punishment.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

September 6: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) Uighur migrant Kurban Tohtiniyaz. Family members announced that they were not allowed to visit him at the police station and that they fear a possible deportation to China where the ethnic group is subjected to a genocidal mistreatment.

September 7: Amnesty International released a [report](#) detailing the systematic ill treatment of Syrian refugees who returned to their country after fleeing it. The report came amid increasing calls and pledges from the Turkish opposition to return Syrian migrants to Syria.

September 9: As friends express growing concern about the whereabouts of Fred Kajjubi, Ugandan dissident blogger living in Turkey who disappeared on August 4, member of parliament and prominent human rights defender Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [submitted](#) an inquiry to the Turkish parliament, questioning Kajjubi's fate.

September 11: Opposition MP and prominent human rights advocate Sezgin Tanrıkulu [announced](#) that a total of 248 incidents of torture were reported in Turkey in July, with 67 of them taking place in prisons.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

September 9: The guards in an İzmir prison reportedly [mistreated](#) sick inmate Abdulhalim Kirtay.

September 10: The Diyarbakır Bar Association [filed](#) criminal complaints about the physical and psychological abuse of underage inmates by guards at a Diyarbakır prison, based on interviews with minors held in juvenile detention centers.

September 10: The police in Adana [tortured](#) three people who were in custody.

September 12: The guards in a Denizli prison physically [assaulted](#) inmate Ekim Polat after Polat reported a previous incident of torture to prosecutors.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

September 8: Men killed at least 34 women and inflicted violence on 61 others in August, according to a monthly gender-based violence [report](#) released by the Bianet news website.