

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 63 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.

**January 3:** The Justice Ministry [issued](#) a circular note aimed at facilitating the release of sick prisoners. Rights groups welcomed the development as a positive first step. According to MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, 73 prisoners died behind bars across the country last year, with 34 of them being classified as suicide. The Human Rights Association (İHD) reported that as of April 2022 there were 1,517 sick prisoners behind bars, with 651 in critical condition.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

**January 8:** The police in Edirne [shot](#) dead former police officer Sedat Türkmen who was reportedly heading to the Greek border to seek asylum.

## 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

**January 3:** The Kars Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of seven days.

**January 4:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in favor of labor union activists Nureddin Şimşek, Deniz Topkan and Cihan Tüzün who received monetary fines for participating in a protest.

**January 4:** The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**January 5:** The police in Muş [intervened](#) in a funeral event, detaining 31 people.

**January 6:** The Tunceli Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of seven days.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**January 3:** İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into fashion designer Eda Taşpınar for allegedly provoking enmity among public, due to a social media post.

**January 3:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports covering allegations that the Ministry of Transportation had secretly awarded a lucrative contract to one of minister Adil Karaismailoğlu's friends.

**January 3:** A Sakarya court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports and an opinion column about allegations of corruption implicating prominent stock trader Nihat Özçelik and ruling party MP Zehra Taşkesenlioğlu.

**January 4:** The gendarmes in Rize briefly [detained](#) Gökmen Turna, a man working as a press and public relations officer for a district municipality, on charges of provoking hatred and enmity among the public.

**January 5:** An appeals court in İstanbul [upheld](#) the conviction of human rights defender Şebnem Korur Fincancı which was handed down to her in 2013 for insulting then-prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

**January 5:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to two news reports and a tweet about allegations that parliamentary Mustafa Şentop's son was unethically hired by a state university in İstanbul.

**January 6:** A Kütahya court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports about a femicide that took place in the province. The court made the decision upon a request filed by the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

**January 8:** Airport police in İstanbul [detained](#) journalist Gökhan Yavuzel.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**January 3:** The Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative court, [refused](#) to annul a 2021 presidential decree that withdrew the country from the İstanbul Convention on combating violence against women. With the ruling, the court recognized that the president has the power to unilaterally withdraw Turkey from international agreements.

**January 7:** The Adana Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize an investigation into police officers who were involved in a violent intervention in a protest march.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**January 5:** The police in Muş physically [assaulted](#) HDP executive Sedat Düşünmez whom they intercepted at a checkpoint as he was on his way to a demonstration.

**January 5:** The Constitutional Court [suspended](#) funding for the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) over its alleged ties to terrorism. The party also faces dissolution as the country's next parliamentary elections draw closer.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**January 5:** A trans woman named Ece E. was [killed](#) in İzmir by an unidentified assailant in what news reports said was a transphobic hate murder.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**January 3:** A Diyarbakır prison [refused](#) to dispatch petitions that inmate Seda Baykan wrote to the Justice Ministry as well as the parliamentary human rights committee about the rights violations that she was subjected to.

**January 3:** A Bolu prison [refused](#) to deliver textbooks that an inmate named Nurullah Yıldız needed to prepare for university entrance exams.

**January 3:** A Trabzon prison [denied](#) video calls to political prisoners.

**January 5:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that an Afyon prison violated inmate Rahmi Çağan's rights by censoring his letter to his family.

**January 6:** Reports [revealed](#) that an inmate named Vahyettin Sarı was being held in a one-person cell in an Ankara prison and that he did not have access to hot water.

**January 6:** A women's prison in Diyarbakır [denied](#) video calls to inmates.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**January 5:** Two soldiers in the border province of Van were [arrested](#) for allegedly raping an Afghan migrant as they were taking a group of migrants to the border to deport them.

**January 5:** Turkish citizens [lodged](#) a total of 20,802 asylum applications in Germany in the first 11 months of 2022, representing an increase of 216 percent compared to the same period of the previous year, according to official figures provided by the German federal government agency for asylum.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**January 2:** In a video that went viral on social media, special operations police in Diyarbakır were [seen](#) mistreating a man on the street. The authorities

announced that two officers were under investigation about the incident.

**January 3:** The Ankara Bar Association [disclosed](#) four reports that were drafted in 2022 about allegations of torture and ill-treatment in police custody in Ankara. The bar reports said that nearly all victims interviewed showed signs of torture and that they were subjected to brutal interrogation techniques aimed at extracting forced confessions. The bar administration had previously decided to keep the reports confidential, which had led to widespread public criticism as well as the resignation of several prominent human rights lawyers in protest.

**January 3:** The guards in an Antalya prison [strip-searched](#) inmate Dilan Yürüklü.

**January 3:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in favor of Fevzi Ayber, a man who was subjected to physical violence by the police during a protest in 2016, ordering the state to pay him damages.

**January 5:** The police in Muş physically [assaulted](#) HDP executive Sedat Düşünmez whom they intercepted at a checkpoint as he was on his way to a demonstration.

**January 5:** Special operations police in Mardin [mistreated](#) two people, one of them a minor.

**January 7:** The Adana Governor's Office [refused](#) to authorize an investigation into police officers who were involved in a violent intervention in a protest march.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**January 3:** The Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative court, [refused](#) to annul a 2021 presidential decree that withdrew the country from the İstanbul Convention on combating violence against women.

**January 4:** Men [killed](#) at least 19 women and inflicted violence on at least 65 in December, according to the monthly report released by Bianet.

**January 6:** A Kütahya court [ruled](#) to block access to at least three news reports about a femicide that took place in the province. The court made the decision upon a request filed by the Ministry of Family and Social Services.