

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 234 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](#) 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

**June 14:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) activist Nursel Tanrıverdi while staging a sit-in to protest her summary removal from her public service job in the aftermath of a 2016 coup attempt.

**June 14:** The Osmaniye Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**June 15:** The police in Ankara briefly [detained](#) activists Nursel Tanrıverdi, Merve Demirel and Muhammet Yıldız while on their way to a meeting with parliamentarians.

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

**June 16:** The police in Ankara [blocked](#) a women's rights protest, briefly detaining 18 people.

**June 16:** The police in Ankara [blocked](#) a workers' protest, detaining six people.

**June 16:** The police in İzmir [blocked](#) a demonstration organized by students, briefly detaining four people.

**June 16:** The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**June 17:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) two people staging a sit-in to protest the attack on the HDP İzmir office. One of the detainees were arrested the next day by a court while the other was released under judicial supervision.

**June 17:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) two leftist activists for hanging a banner on a building about the attack on the HDP İzmir office.

**June 17:** The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**June 18:** The police in Rize briefly [detained](#) an activist who took part in environmental protests against the construction of a stone quarry on terrorism-related charges.

**June 18:** Amnesty International released a [briefing](#) in which it said that Turkey exploits measures prescribed by international watchdogs to combat money laundering and terrorism financing in a bid to target civil society organizations.

**June 19:** The police in Batman [blocked](#) a demonstration about the attack on the HDP İzmir office, briefly detaining 16 people.

**June 19:** The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a protest organized by a women's rights group, briefly detaining six people.

**June 19:** The police in Ankara [blocked](#) a demonstration about the attack on the HDP İzmir office, briefly detaining four people.

**June 19:** The Muş Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**June 20:** The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) two activists for graffiti painting walls about the attack on the HDP İzmir office.

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA**

**June 15:** An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) Turkish-German journalist Deniz Yücel on charges of insulting the president over an article he penned in 2016.

**June 15:** The European Court of Human Rights [faulted](#) Turkey over the conviction of Ömür Çağdaş Ersoy for insulting then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2012 and the dismissal of contractual public sector employee Selma Melike for clicking the "Like" button on Facebook posts.

**June 15:** An İstanbul court [acquitted](#) journalists Alican Uludağ and Olcay Büyüktaş Akça of the charge of disclosing the identity of a counterterrorism informant. The journalists stood trial over a news report about a deadly bomb attack in Ankara in 2015.

**June 16:** The police in Van [detained](#) journalist Lokman Gezgin on account of a previous prison sentence that he had received. Later in the same day Gezgin was sent to prison to serve his sentence.

**June 16:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about a media tycoon's ties to the government.

**June 17:** Ankara prosecutors [indicted](#) Ankara Bar Association executives over their criticism of homophobic statements made by the head of the Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet), seeking up to two years in jail for insulting a public official.

**June 17:** The police in Rize [detained](#) Mehmet Ali Sancaktutan on charges of insulting the president after he criticized the government's economic policies in a street interview that went viral on social media.

**June 17:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about public tenders granted to a company where a ruling party member is an executive.

**June 17:** An İstanbul administrative court [rejected](#) appeal against a district government decision to ban a Kurdish-language theater play on the grounds that the theater hall had links to terrorism.

**June 18:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports on unanswered parliamentary written questions about a paramilitary organization run by a pro-government figure.

**June 18:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports and tweets about a pro-government charity organization's alleged ties to radical armed groups in Syria.

**June 18:** Actor Levent Üzümcü [announced](#) that he was summoned by an İstanbul prosecutor for questioning over a tweet.

## **JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW**

**June 16:** The Constitutional Court [allowed](#) the Presidential Communications Directorate to access data of Turkish citizens in all public agencies.

**June 18:** The European Court of Human Rights [requested](#) a statement from Turkey regarding the cases of 256 people including judges and prosecutors who were jailed over links to the Gülen movement.

## **KURDISH MINORITY**

**June 15:** The Interior Ministry [removed](#) from office Necla Tamriş, a district co-mayor in Diyarbakır as well as district council members Bahar Karakaş Uluğ, Nursel Akbal, Ruken Bekalp, Emine Kaya and Sevican Yaşar.

**June 15:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to release under judicial control former Kars mayor Ayhan Bilgen, along with three other defendants in a trial over a series of protests in predominantly Kurdish cities in 2014.

**June 16:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) nine HDP youth members. Eight of the detainees were released on June 20 while one was arrested by a court.

**June 16:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) local HDP executive Serhat Aktumar.

**June 16:** The police in Adana [detained](#) local HDP member Muhammet Erkis.

**June 17:** An gunman in İzmir [attacked](#) the HDP provincial office in what appears to be a racially motivated act of terrorism, killing party employee Deniz Poyraz. The HDP accused the police of failing to intervene swiftly.

**June 17:** An İstanbul administrative court [rejected](#) appeal against a district government decision to ban a Kurdish-language theater play on the grounds that the theater hall had links to terrorism.

**June 18:** A rapporteur at the Constitutional Court [completed](#) their examination of an indictment seeking the closure of the pro-Kurdish HDP and asked for its acceptance by the court.

**June 20:** The police in Ağrı [detained](#) local HDP member Coşkun Çetres.

## MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

**June 17:** Media reports [revealed](#) that Onur Gencer, a 27-year-old man who carried out a deadly armed attack on the HDP provincial office in İzmir, had previously posted photos of himself on social media in which he is seen holding automatic weapons in the Syrian provinces of Manbij and Aleppo where the Turkish military conducted cross-border operations and seized swathes of land from Kurdish militias.

## MISTREATMENT OF CITIZENS ABROAD

**June 19:** Kyrgyz officials failed to locate and find Turkish-Kyrgyz educator Orhan İnandı three weeks into his disappearance in Bishkek. An official from the German Foreign Ministry [revealed](#) that the federal government contacted Kyrgyz authorities earlier this month regarding the situation of İnandı who is allegedly being held against his will in the Turkish Embassy in Bishkek.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**June 18:** Pro-Kurdish opposition party HDP [asked](#) the parliament to debate the situation of sick inmates in prisons, citing Justice Ministry data that 2,300 have died behind bars since 2009. According to [statistics](#) published by the Human Rights Association (İHD), there are currently 1,605 sick prisoners in Turkish prisons.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**June 16:** The guards at a Batman prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates for not standing up during a regular head count.

**June 18:** Plainclothes police officers in İstanbul [detained](#) two men name Erdoğan Turgut and Baran Kırgın while talking about the attack on the HDP İzmir office, and took them to a police station where they were battered.

**June 18:** The police in Şanlıurfa [inflicted](#) violence on Abdullah Basiyan during a house raid.

**June 20:** Newly released video footage [showed](#) police officers battering a man named Birol Yıldırım shortly before his death at an İstanbul police station on June 5.