

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 201 | Date 22 – 28 April

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 56 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.

23 April: Makbule Özer, an ailing 83-year-old Kurdish woman, was [jailed](#) for a second time on Monday after a medical report issued by Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine (ATK) said she was fit to remain in prison.

23 April: Turkish police on Monday [detained](#) 16 people in raids carried out across four cities, including Ankara, for alleged links to the Gülen movement, a faith-based group accused by the government of "terrorism".

24 April: Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, known for its unlawful operations, has ordered the [detention](#) of 13 former military students who are alleged to have ties with the Gülen movement on charges of communicating via payphones and landlines.

26 April: It is learned that Abdulalim Kaya (81, m), an ill prisoner in Elazığ R Type Prison, who has a 93% disability report issued by Siirt Education and Research Hospital, is [kept](#) in a single room although he cannot meet his vital needs on his own due to health problems.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunc](#), 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

23 April: The İstanbul Governor's Office has [declared](#) that Taksim Square will not be open for the upcoming May Day celebrations and an alternative location will be designated for the festivities.

24 April: The İstanbul Governor's Office has again [banned](#) a commemoration ceremony scheduled for 24th April in memory of the Armenians who were killed during a mass deportation in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, in a decision condemned as "an anti-democratic move" by the organizers.

26 April: Construction workers involved in the building of the İstanbul Finance Center, a complex housing the Central Bank among other facilities, staged a [protest](#) to demand their overdue wages. The demonstration was cut short as police prevented the unions from reading out a statement and proceeded to detain union leaders and workers.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

24 April: Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) deputy Levent Uysal has [filed](#) a complaint against BirGün journalist İsmail Arı, resulting in legal proceedings. The charges leveled against Arı include "insult, defamation, and using written or visual communication to insult" based on his news articles.

26 April: A public prosecutor in the retrial of seven journalists has [demanded](#) prison sentences for them on

terrorism-related charges due to their alleged links to the Gülen movement.

26 April: Emine Şenyaşar, who has been demanding justice for three of her family members murdered by people connected to a lawmaker from Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), [faces](#) a prison sentence for allegedly insulting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

26 April: Three out of nine Kurdish journalists who were [detained](#) earlier this week have been referred to court for arrest and subsequently arrested after testifying to a prosecutor on Friday, while six of them were released from custody under judicial supervision.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

April 27: It was alleged that some [refugees](#) held in Ayvacık GGM in Çanakkale sexually assaulted some other refugees in the GGM, that the meals given to refugees were not sufficient, nutritious and hygienic, that the rooms where refugees stayed did not comply with hygiene standards, that male and female refugees were forced to stay in the same rooms, that refugees were not provided with enough blankets and drinking water, and that some refugees were subjected to racist and discriminatory remarks by officers working in the GGM.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

26 April: Journalist Esra Solin Dal, who was arrested and sent to prison, was [subjected](#) to strip search in Istanbul Bakırköy Women's Prison.

27 April: It is learned that Üstat Tunç, a worker at Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in Mersin, was [subjected](#) to physical violence of Russian private security guards when he refused to press his card at the turnstiles installed in the construction site, and that he received a medical report from Aydıncık State Hospital documenting the physical violence.