

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 90 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 24: 60 people including 5 children were [detained](#) by physical violence after DEM Party 1st Youth Assembly Congress in Diyarbakır and Diyarbakır Public Prosecutor's Office initiated an investigation on the congress.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 18: Turkey's Information and Communications Technologies Authority (BTK) has [banned](#) access to 16 VPN providers that are frequently used to circumvent government censorship.

December 18: The Istanbul 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) at least 6 news articles about businessman Turgay Ciner between 1997 and 2023 to be blocked from access, deleted and not to be associated with the name of the requestor in search engines on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 18: The photography exhibition of METU Amateur Photography Society (AFT), which was planned to be held on December 18-22, was "[postponed](#)" one day before the exhibition under the name of "postponement" without any justification.

December 19: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's broadcasting regulator, has [imposed](#) a total of 570 sanctions on TV stations since the beginning of the year.

December 19: The Ministry of Family and Social Services has [complained](#) to The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) about this week's episode of the TV series 'Judgment', which depicts abuse in child care institutions.

December 19: Journalist Sıddık Güler was [arrested](#) and sent to prison after his conviction on terrorism-related charges was upheld by the Supreme Court of Appeals.

December 20: Access to at least 4,427 URLs consisting of X, formerly Twitter, accounts and tweets were [restricted](#) in 2022 in Turkey.

December 20: At least 2 news articles about the relocation of Boğaziçi University's research center TETAM (Tele-Communication and Informatics Technologies Application and Research Center) upon the decision taken by the "trustee" administration of the university were [blocked](#) from access by the Istanbul 3rd Criminal

Judgeship of Peace upon the request of Boğaziçi University Rectorate, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 20: An imam, Mesut Adabağlı, in eastern Turkey has been [suspended](#) due to his criticism of Turkish government policy on Israel's war against Hamas.

December 21: Turkey's academic freedom has sharply [declined](#) in the last decade, putting Turkey in 166th place out of 179 countries as of December 2022.

December 21: It was ruled that 3 contents on the Engelliweb website were blocked and deleted by the decision of [the Istanbul 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace](#) and [the Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace](#) on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 21: Istanbul 5th Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) the blocking and deletion of at least 3 social media content, including discussion programs broadcast on television channels, in which the name of MIT President İbrahim Kalın was mentioned, on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 21: At least 6 news articles about President Erdoğan's lawyer were [ordered](#) to be blocked and deleted by the Istanbul 6th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 22: A new report released jointly by several international NGOs [details](#) the worsening press freedom environment in Turkey, accusing the government of instrumentalizing the recently passed "disinformation law" to harass and silence journalists.

December 22: Rapper Şehinşah was [detained](#) again for a song (" Sayın Türk") he released seven years ago.

December 22: At least 3 news articles about the "Swamp" operation, which was brought to the agenda by organized crime leader Sedat Peker and announced as the biggest drug operation in the history of the Republic, were [blocked](#) from access by the decision of the Association of Access Providers on the grounds that they contained the same content as the news that had previously been sanctioned by a judge's decision.

December 22: The Istanbul 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) the blocking and deletion of 4 contents on the Engelliweb website on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 22: Istanbul 3rd Criminal Judgeship of Peace [ordered](#) the blocking of access to and deletion of at least 3 news articles mentioning former Presidential lawyer Mustafa Doğan İnal on the grounds of violation of personal rights.

December 24: Ekşi Sözlük (eksisozluk1999.com) was [blocked](#) from access by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority on December 24, 2023. The access block imposed by the ICTA was approved by the Ankara 7th Criminal Judgeship of Peace on the grounds of protecting national security and public order.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 18: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has [notified](#) Ankara of 1,000 applications in its docket for convictions of Gülen movement membership over the use of the ByLock smartphone application, following a landmark ruling in September that found the use of the application not to constitute a reliable piece of evidence or a criminal offense.

December 19: Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals on Tuesday upheld sentences [handed](#) down to 430 of 469 defendants, most of whom were sentenced to life in prison in 2020, for leading a coup attempt from an airbase near Ankara in 2016.

December 22: Kerem Gülay, an academic from Turkey's Koç University, [said](#) judges and prosecutors who are responsible for the mass incarceration of people for Gülen movement membership over the use of the ByLock smartphone application could be charged with crimes against humanity if they travel outside the country.

OTHER MINORITIES

December 19: George Aslan, a Syriac deputy from the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM), has [faced](#) hostile remarks from the far right for using his mother tongue to wish people a happy Christmas during a speech in parliament

December 20: The administration of the İstanbul-based Boğaziçi University has [banned](#) the screening of a movie about the families of LGBT children on the university campus.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 21: Cumali Aslanhan, a teacher who was stopped by the police on a robbery report, was [subjected](#) to physical violence of the police officers in the police car on the grounds of not presenting his ID card and was wounded in several parts of his body.

December 21: Prisoners in Samsun Bafra T Type Closed Prison were [forced](#) to be searched inside their mouths, their social rights were restricted and books sent to them were not given.

December 21: 7 prisoners in Menemen T Type Closed Prison were [sentenced](#) to 'deprivation of visitation rights' for 10 months each.

December 23: A person named Aydın Demir was [subjected](#) to physical and verbal violence of the police officers in Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood of Kadıköy district of Istanbul, for asking the reason of identity check.