

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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November 15: The European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights heard Johan Vande Lanotte, a Belgian professor of law, present the findings of the [Turkey Tribunal](#), a people's tribunal which in September convened to review Turkey's human rights record. Vande Lanotte explained the court's opinion which found among others, systematic use of torture and state-linked enforced disappearances which could amount to crimes against humanity.

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 131 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.

November 15: Reports revealed that İhsan Yıldız, a former teacher imprisoned over alleged links to the Gülen movement, [died](#) on October 29 of cancer after being belatedly released from prison.

November 17: The authorities [arrested](#) Esra Aşçı, the mother of a 16-month-old boy, due to her conviction over alleged links to the Gülen movement. The law on execution of sentences stipulates that execution of the prison sentences is delayed for women who are pregnant or have given birth within the last year and a half.

November 18: Turkish authorities [released](#) an Israeli couple that was arrested last week on espionage

charges, for allegedly taking pictures of the president's house from a touristic tower in İstanbul.

November 21: Reports [revealed](#) that the authorities continue the imprisonment of more than 65 political prisoners who are eligible for parole after spending 30 years behind bars.

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

November 15: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) eight people, including journalist Ali Arslan Dadük, to 10 months' imprisonment over a commemoration event in 2015.

November 15: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to arrest four out of seven pro-Kurdish NGO and labor union executives who were detained on November 8 while releasing three others.

November 15: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) two people holding a demonstration about sick prisoners.

November 16: An İzmir court [handed down](#) prison sentences to three people over their participation in 2014 protests against an ISIS assault on the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane.

November 16: An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) prison sentences for a group of lawyers from the Progressive Lawyers' Association (ÇHD) who are standing trial on terrorism-related charges.

November 16: A Mersin court [ruled](#) to acquit 17 people who were put on trial for holding a demonstration against a nuclear power plant.

November 17: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) six members and executives of the HDP as part of an investigation into a rally held in the province on November 7.

November 18: The Tunceli Governor's Office [banned](#) a planned awareness event about violence against women.

November 19: Tunceli prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into individuals who distributed leaflets inviting people to a commemoration event.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

November 15: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) journalist Ali Arslan Dadük to 10 months in prison due to his presence at a commemoration event in 2015 for coverage.

November 15: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) a person, identified with initials H.B., on charges of insulting the president. The detainee was arrested the same day after appearing before a court.

November 15: The police in Mersin briefly [detained](#) local journalist Burak Şefkat.

November 16: Senior bank manager Hakan Dağlı was [fired](#) from his job at a state-owned bank after he posted on his WhatsApp profile a meme about the Turkish Central Bank having run out of money.

November 16: A district municipality in Ankara [canceled](#) singer Mem Ararat's concert after finding out that he was singing in Kurdish.

November 16: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Fatih Tezcan to one-and-a-half years on charges of insulting the memory of Atatürk, the founder of the republic.

November 17: The police in Adana [detained](#) Turkish-Armenian human rights activist Natali Avazyan on

charges of insulting the president in a 2014 social media message.

November 17: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) socialist activist Berfin Polat on terrorism charges due to her social media messages. Polat was arrested by a court the same day.

November 17: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkish authorities violated freedom of expression by blocking the distribution of the Atılım newspaper in prisons.

November 17: An Erzurum court [ruled](#) to acquit Kurdish journalist Dindar Karataş of terrorism charges.

November 17: A quarterly report released by the Expression Interrupted project [found](#) that 102 journalists appeared at hearings in their trials and 10 of them were sentenced to a total of 39 years, 11 months in prison from July to September.

November 18: A Van court [acquitted](#) journalist Oktay Candemir of terrorism charges. Candemir stood trial over his social media messages.

November 19: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) journalist Emrullah Acar on terrorism charges.

November 19: A Mardin court [sentenced](#) local politician Nazım Kök to 11 months, 20 days in prison on charges of insulting the president on social media.

November 19: Plainclothes police officers in Van [raided](#) the house of Jinnews reporter Hikmet Tunç on the grounds that there was a bomb call.

November 19: The Boğaziçi University security [denied](#) academic Can Candan access to the campus. Candan was invited to join a lecture. He was previously fired from his job at the university by the controversial government-appointed rector.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

November 17: The police in Adana [detained](#) Turkish-Armenian human rights activist Natali Avazyan on charges of insulting the president in a 2014 social media message.

November 19: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit physician and Turkish Medical Association (TTB)

honorary board member Şeyhmus Gökalp of terrorism charges. Gökalp spent 80 days in pre-trial detention.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

November 16: An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) prison sentences for a group of lawyers from the Progressive Lawyers' Association (ÇHD) who are standing trial on terrorism-related charges.

November 17: HDP MPs Serpil Kemalbay Pekgözegü and Murat Çepni [claimed](#) in a press conference that there is organized spoliation of evidence in the investigation into the deadly armed terror attack that claimed the life of HDP employee Deniz Poyraz in the party's İzmir office.

November 18: Lawyers in the Netherlands, Norway and Belgium [staged](#) demonstrations in front of Turkish diplomatic missions to demand the release of their jailed colleagues in Turkey.

KURDISH MINORITY

November 15: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to arrest four out of seven pro-Kurdish NGO and labor union executives who were detained on November 8 while releasing three others. The court also ordered the arrest of 10 pro-Kurdish politicians who were detained last week.

November 16: A district municipality in Ankara [canceled](#) singer Mem Ararat's concert after finding out that he was singing in Kurdish.

November 17: The police in Tekirdağ [detained](#) six members and executives of the HDP as part of an investigation into a rally held in the province on November 7. The detainees were released the next day.

November 17: HDP MPs Serpil Kemalbay Pekgözegü and Murat Çepni [claimed](#) in a press conference that there is organized spoliation of evidence in the investigation into the deadly armed terror attack that claimed the life of HDP employee Deniz Poyraz in the party's İzmir office.

November 17: An Erzurum court [ruled](#) to acquit Kurdish journalist Dindar Karataş of terrorism charges.

November 18: The police in Edirne [detained](#) HDP politician Hüseyin Yuka who was pushed back by Greek

border forces after attempting to cross the border to seek asylum.

November 18: An Osmaniye court [acquitted](#) local HDP politicians Kadriye Tören and Ali Coşkun who stood trial on terrorism charges.

November 18: An Ankara court [sentenced](#) inmate Necla Yıldız to seven years, six months in prison on terrorism charges for participating in a prison hunger strike to protest the isolation of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

November 19: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) journalist Emrullah Acar, a reporter for the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya news agency, on terrorism charges.

November 19: Plainclothes police officers in Van [raided](#) the house of Jinnews reporter Hikmet Tunç on the grounds that there was a bomb call.

OTHER MINORITIES

November 15: Hüseyin Besli, a former MP from the ruling party, [targeted](#) main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's Alevi heritage in a newspaper column, saying Kurds and Alevis were "compulsive liars."

PRISON CONDITIONS

November 15: Cihat Özdemir, an inmate in a Kırıkkale prison, [announced](#) in a letter that his treatment for cancer was delayed for seven months by the prison administration for no reason.

November 15: The Ankara Bar Association released a [statement](#) on the ongoing ban on contact visitation in Turkish prisons. The statement said that the continuation of the Covid-19 restrictions despite their elimination elsewhere is a serious human rights violation.

November 15: The Human Rights Association (İHD) [released](#) a report on conditions in a Mersin prison, noting inhuman and degrading treatment, including strip searches.

November 16: A Bolu prison [deprived](#) inmate Civan Boltan of medical treatment.

November 16: An Ağrı prison [denied](#) regular medication to sick inmate Rıdvan Yusufoglu.

November 16: The guards in a Balıkesir prison [confiscated](#) the material used by inmate Mehmet Boğatekin to draw cartoons.

November 17: An İstanbul prison [launched](#) a disciplinary investigation into inmates for allegedly dancing a folk dance and confiscated the books of some of them.

November 17: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkish authorities violated freedom of expression by blocking the distribution of the Atılım newspaper in prisons.

November 20: A Tokat prison [denied](#) treatment to inmates Cebrail Vural, Hüsnü Aşkan and Ömer Yaman.

November 20: An Adana prison [denied](#) hospitalization to inmates who refused to undergo mouth searches.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

November 17: In Mersin, a 13-year-old Syrian refugee child [died](#) at a factory where she was working.

November 17: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) Syrian singer Omar Souleyman on terrorism charges. Souleyman was questioned about his alleged ties to Kurdish militants. He was released on November 19.

November 18: The police in Edirne [detained](#) HDP politician Hüseyin Yuka who was pushed back by Greek border forces after attempting to cross the border to seek asylum.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

November 15: The police in Mardin physically [assaulted](#) three people who were in custody.

November 16: The police in Yalova physically [assaulted](#) three minors who were detained for not refusing to obey a stop order.

November 18: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) in favor of three applicants who claimed that they had faced torture and inhuman treatment at the hands of the police in 2016.

November 20: The police in Diyarbakır heavily [mistreated](#) a person while detaining him on the street. Video footage of the incident showed the person being

kicked while lying rear handcuffed on the ground by someone who is allegedly a plainclothes police officer.

November 21: The guards in an İstanbul prison physically [assaulted](#) inmates during a ward search conducted at night.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

November 17: Ahead of INTERPOL's upcoming general assembly meeting to be hosted by Turkey, 64 NGOs and individuals [released](#) a joint declaration calling for steps to ensure the agency's compliance with international human rights standards. In recent years, Ankara has [made](#) several documented attempts to instrumentalize INTERPOL to harass dissidents living abroad. US Senator Roger Wicker [said](#) that the Turkish government is planning to use the upcoming meeting to mislead the international community.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

November 17: A new [study](#) revealed that almost 60 percent of Turks have witnessed violence against women in their immediate environment.

November 19: The Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative court, [rejected](#) appeals requesting the cancellation of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's executive decree withdrawing Turkey from the Istanbul Convention.