

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 18 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.

March 28: An Erzurum prison [denied](#) parole to journalist Abdulkadir Turay who was arrested in 2016 on terrorism-related charges, postponing Turay's release for three months.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

April 1: Gendarmes in Diyarbakır [shot dead](#) Mikail Ekinci, a 28-year-old murder suspect. Ekinci was reportedly killed while trying to escape arrest.

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.

April 1: [Zeki Oğuz](#), a Kurdish businessman, was reportedly abducted in İstanbul. His lawyer announced that they were told by a ruling party MP that Oğuz was held by the state.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

March 29: Gendarmes in Şanlıurfa [intervened](#) in a protest against plans to install solar panels in a rural area, detaining nine protesters.

March 30: The police in Antalya briefly [detained](#) 10 people as part of an investigation into a Newroz celebration held in the province.

March 31: The Siirt Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 10 days.

April 2: The Muş Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of five days.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

March 28: An Erzurum prison [denied](#) parole to journalist Abdulkadir Turay who was arrested in 2016 on terrorism-related charges, postponing Turay's release for three months.

March 28: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Alican Uludağ who stood trial on charges of insulting a high judiciary member in a news report he published.

March 28: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit activist Veli Saçılık who stood trial on charges of denigrating the state on social media.

March 28: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to acquit lawyer Celal Çelik who stood trial on charges of insulting the president on social media.

March 29: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) a group of Kurdish journalists who were detained in June 2022 on

terrorism charges. The indictment came 10 months after the journalists' detention.

March 30: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) a municipal employee on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda on social media. The person was arrested by a court the next day.

March 30: Van prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist Ruşen Takva due to his social media posts about a political party that joined the ruling coalition. Takva was summoned by the police for a questioning.

March 31: The police in İzmir [detained](#) 11 people on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda due to slogans chanted during Newroz celebrations.

March 31: Barış Çiftçi, an executive for the ruling party's youth organization in Kocaeli, verbally [threatened](#) local journalist Merve Dişli in a phone call due to a news report she published.

March 31: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to impose partial censorship on three news reports covering an International Court of Arbitration ruling that faulted Turkey over the sale of Iraqi petroleum. Another court [ruled](#) to block access to another news report covering the censorship.

March 31: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report and two opinion articles about allegations of extremism targeting a political party that formed an election alliance with the ruling party.

April 1: The Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK), Turkey's national telecommunications regulatory and inspection authority, [announced](#) new regulations that require social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to host user information inside the country and disclose it to prosecutors whenever requested. The new regulations also allow judges to impose bandwidth reductions of up to 90 percent.

April 1: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), the broadcasting regulator, [imposed](#) a monetary fine and a temporary broadcast ban on Show TV channel due to a series.

April 2: The police in Bolu briefly [detained](#) four Left Party members who distributed fliers.

April 2: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) investigations into social media users who criticized Turkey's election

authority over its decision allowing President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to run as a candidate for a third term as head of state.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

March 28: An Aydın court [rejected](#) request for a forensic medical examination in the case of Yılmaz Ekinçi, an inmate who in January 2023 died under suspicious circumstances in an Aydın prison.

March 30: Reports [claimed](#) that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan telephoned some members of the Constitutional Court earlier in March to account for their decision to remove a freeze on state funds allocated to the HDP.

KURDISH MINORITY

March 27: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) 25 local Kurdish politicians, including members of the HDP.

March 29: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) a group of Kurdish journalists who were detained in June 2022 on terrorism charges. The indictment came 10 months after the journalists' detention.

March 30: Reports [claimed](#) that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan telephoned some members of the Constitutional Court earlier in March to account for their decision to remove a freeze on state funds allocated to the HDP.

March 30: The police in Antalya briefly [detained](#) 10 people as part of an investigation into a Newroz celebration held in the province.

March 30: An İzmir court [ruled](#) to acquit local HDP executive Murat Tufan who was arrested on February 2023.

March 31: The police in İzmir [detained](#) 11 people on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda due to slogans chanted during Newroz celebrations.

April 1: Gendarmes in Diyarbakır [shot dead](#) Mikail Ekinçi, a 28-year-old murder suspect. Ekinçi was reportedly killed while trying to escape arrest.

PRISON CONDITIONS

March 29: An Aksaray prison [denied](#) treatment to inmates who contracted Covid-19.

March 30: A Denizli prison [obstructed](#) the treatment of sick inmate Ekim Polat.

March 30: A Malatya prison has reportedly been [offering](#) insufficient meals to inmates.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

March 28: The European Court of Human Rights [indicated](#) interim measures to the Greek government, saying that a seven Turkish asylum seekers who crossed from Turkey to Greece should not be removed. Rights groups had campaigned for the seven, fearing that they would become the victims of yet another incident of pushback.

March 28: Turkey's defense minister [announced](#) that some 60,000 Syrian refugees have voluntarily returned to Syria in the aftermath of the massive earthquakes of February. Following the earthquakes, several reports have indicated that Syrian refugees in disaster zones were subjected to increased hate speech, physical assaults and discrimination.

March 29: Eurostat data [showed](#) that a total of 49,720 Turkish citizens filed asylum applications in the European Union in 2022, representing a 145 percent increase compared to the previous year.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

March 28: An Aydın court [rejected](#) request for a forensic medical examination in the case of Yılmaz Ekinci, an inmate who in January 2023 died under suspicious circumstances in an Aydın prison.

March 29: The police in Diyarbakır physically [assaulted](#) a man named Şehmus Demir in a courthouse.

March 29: Gendarmes in Şanlıurfa [mistreated](#) nine people who were detained during a protest.

March 30: The mother of Ekim Polat, a sick inmate held in a Denizli prison, [announced](#) that her son was verbally threatened by prison guards.

March 30: The guards in a women's prison in Kayseri [mistreated](#) an inmate named Elif Atdemir.

April 2: The guards in an Antalya prison [mistreated](#) inmates Beyhan Gün and Şimal Deniz.