

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 182 | Date December 11-17, 2023

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 1 person 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.

December 12: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has once again [faulted](#) Turkey over the arrest and pretrial detention of 366 people following a failed coup in Turkey in 2016 due to their alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

December 13: Mehmet Güvcin, a prisoner in Şırnak T Type Closed Prison, [died](#) in Diyarbakır hospital.

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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 11: Webmaster forum and freelancer platform R10.net was [blocked](#) by the Samsun 3rd Criminal

Judgeship of Peace. The websites wmaraci.com and webmasterforum.com.tr, which offer similar content, were also blocked with the same decision.

December 12: Ferit Kilis was [sentenced](#) to 5 years and 9 months in prison for his social media posts about the death fasts in prisons and sent to Adana Kürkcüler Prison.

December 12: Republican People's Party (CHP) Bolu Mayor Tanju Özcan [went](#) to Bolu Afghanistan Youth Social, Cultural and Solidarity Association and had the police officers remove the signboard of the association.

December 14: Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a nongovernmental organization focusing on safeguarding the right to freedom of information, [has](#) said Turkey uses repeated imprisonment of journalists as a technique to intimidate them, putting the number of journalists jailed in the country during the course of 2023 at 43.

December 14: An Ankara court has [blocked](#) access to an alternative website for Ekşi Sözlük, one of the country's most popular social media websites, which had been launched to circumvent an access ban on the platform's main website.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

December 12: Syrian human rights defender Ahmed Katie was [arrested](#) by the court on December 12, 2023 on charges of espionage following his statement to the prosecutor's office at Istanbul Çağlayan Courthouse.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 11: A Turkish forensic expert has admitted to accepting bribes and submitted a list of 53 judges and prosecutors who he said had also accepted bribes amid

allegations of rampant corruption in the country's judiciary sparked by a letter from the İstanbul chief public prosecutor in October.

December 15: The latest statistics released by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [showed](#) that pending cases filed against Turkey represent 33.2 percent of the court's entire caseload.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 12: DEM Party Co-Chair Tuncer Bakırhan, who started his speech at the budget talks in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with a greeting in Kurdish, was [told](#) by GNAT Speaker Numan Kurtulmuş: "Mr. Bakırhan, as the GNAT, we would like you to explain what you said in Turkish. This is the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Turkish will be spoken here, and since our official language is Turkish, we expect it to be spoken in Turkish. On behalf of our friends, we ask you to explain it in Turkish." It is also stated in the news reports that Tuncer Bakırhan's Kurdish remarks were censored in the minutes.

December 12: Democratic Regions Party (DBP) District Co-Chair Remziye Bayhan was [detained](#) in a house raid in Nusaybin district of Mardin.

OTHER MINORITIES

December 14: A Turkish women's volleyball team was [attacked](#) by spectators during a game in Adana, leaving one player requiring stitches to her knee.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 12: Books and blankets of some prisoners in Şırnak T Type Prison were [seized](#) by the wardens.

December 12: Ferit Kilis, former Yüreğir district chair of Labor Party (EMEP), who is being held in Adana Kürkcüler Prison, [was](#) not able to access his heart medication for 4 months due to supply problems.

December 12: On December 12, 2023, a person named İ. K. and his family members were [subjected](#) to torture and ill-treatment of the police.

December 12: A bus driver named Ayhan G. was [subjected](#) to physical violence of a police officer named A. Y. with whom he had a quarrel in Istanbul.