

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 94 | April 4-10, 2022

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 70 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.

April 4: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no rights violation in the pretrial detention of Kurdish politician Figen Yüksekdağ in connection with a trial concerning deadly protest in southeastern Turkey in 2014.

April 6: [Veysel Tıkaç](#), an ailing former teacher imprisoned for alleged links to the Gülen movement, said in a letter to his family that his health had taken a turn for the worse in prison. Tıkaç suffers from chronic heart disease, diabetes and renal failure.

April 9: Reports indicated that a Diyarbakır prison [denied](#) parole to two eligible Kurdish inmates, citing “lack of good behavior.”

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

April 4: The police in İzmir briefly [detained](#) 16 people for attending Nevruz celebrations on March 20.

April 5: The police in Muğla [detained](#) 30 people who took part in Nevruz celebrations on March 20.

April 5: Mersin prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into 22 lawyers for holding a press conference about a sick prisoner.

April 8: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest held in support of two prisoners on hunger strike, detaining two people. The detainees were released the next day.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

April 5: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) columnist Ender İmrek on charges of insulting the president in an article in which he criticized the government.

April 5: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a lower court ruling sentencing a local newspaper to pay damages to an opposition MP constituted a violation of expression and media.

April 5: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) media workers Pakrat Estukyan, Cihan Doğan, Emran Emekçi, Mehmet Nimet Sevim and Ramazan Yurttapan on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda in a magazine issue.

April 5: Diyarbakır courts [ruled](#) to block access to three news websites.

April 5: An Aydın court [ruled](#) to acquit three people who were standing trial on charges of insulting the president.

April 5: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a prison administration's disciplinary penalty imposed on an inmate for staging a hunger strike was in violation of the inmate's right to freedom of expression.

April 6: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), Turkey's media watchdog, [imposed](#) monetary fines on Halk TV, KRT and TELE1 channels for reporting on child abuse allegations implicating a religious tutoring center in Erzurum.

April 6: The authorities [announced](#) that they probed 2,468 social media accounts in March.

April 6: An İstanbul court [confirmed](#) a halt of the trial in absentia of 26 suspects linked to the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in İstanbul and transfer it to Riyadh.

April 8: An Ardahan court [ruled](#) to block access to a web page used by the left-wing Umut newspaper.

April 9: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that Kurdish politician Leyla Güven's pretrial detention in 2018 violated her rights. Güven was arrested for calling Turkey's military operation against Syrian Kurdish militia an "invasion."

April 9: The Constitutional Court [rejected](#) the applications of journalists Murat Ağirel, Barış Pehlivan, Hülya Kılınç, Ferhat Çelik, Aydın Keser and Müyesser Yıldız who claimed rights violations over their imprisonment in connection with their coverage of the deaths of Turkish intelligence officers in Libya in 2020.

April 9: Reports indicated that an İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports about corruption allegations implicating a former trade minister.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

April 7: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the cancellation of the passport of Dilek Dünder, the wife of exiled journalist Can Dünder, constituted a rights violation.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

April 5: The American Bar Association (ABA) released a [statement](#) on the occasion of Lawyers' Day in Turkey, highlighting the arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of Turkish lawyers over their professional activities.

April 6: An İstanbul court [confirmed](#) a halt of the trial in absentia of 26 suspects linked to the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in İstanbul and transfer it to Riyadh.

KURDISH MINORITY

April 4: The police in Erzurum [detained](#) three members and executives of the HDP.

April 4: The Constitutional Court [found](#) no rights violation in the pretrial detention of Kurdish politician Figen Yüksekdağ in connection with a trial concerning deadly protest in southeastern Turkey in 2014.

April 5: The guards in a Bayburt prison verbally [threatened](#) inmates, confiscated their belongings during ward searches and prohibited them from writing letters in Kurdish.

April 5: Diyarbakır courts [ruled](#) to block access to three news websites, including one used by the pro-Kurdish Etkin news agency.

April 5: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit HDP executive Berna Çelik of terrorism charges. The prosecutor's office objected to the decision the same day.

April 9: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that Kurdish politician Leyla Güven's pretrial detention in 2018 violated her rights. Güven was arrested for calling Turkey's military operation against Syrian Kurdish militia an "invasion."

April 9: Reports indicated that a Diyarbakır prison [denied](#) parole to two eligible Kurdish inmates, citing "lack of goof behavior."

April 9: A racist mob in Karaman [attacked](#) a group of Kurdish university students performing a folkloric dance.

OTHER MINORITIES

April 10: Two Armenian minority schools in İstanbul were [vandalized](#) by unidentified individuals who spray painted racial symbols on their gates.

PRISON CONDITIONS

April 4: A Balıkesir prison [denied](#) video call rights to some of the inmates.

April 5: The guards in a Bayburt prison verbally [threatened](#) inmates, confiscated their belongings during ward searches and prohibited them from writing letters in Kurdish.

April 5: A Council of Europe (CoE) [report](#) revealed that Turkey had the second-highest incarceration rate among 47 member states as of January 2021, with 325 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. The report also found that Turkey had the sixth most crowded prisons in Europe, with 108 inmates per 100 available places.

April 5: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that a prison administration's disciplinary penalty imposed on an inmate for staging a hunger strike was in violation of the inmate's right to freedom of expression.

April 6: A Denizli prison [denied](#) political prisoners their right to weekly video call.

April 7: A prison administration in Kayseri [censored](#) a letter that a sick inmate wanted to send to a news website about her struggle.

April 7: A women's prison in Kocaeli [imposed](#) arbitrary disciplinary sanctions on inmates, denied them medical treatment and refused to carry out their requests for books and magazines.

April 8: A Kocaeli prison [denied](#) proper healthcare to Ahmet Dizlek, an inmate with stage four stomach cancer who underwent an operation late last year. Dizlek, whose stomach was completely removed five months ago, has not been taken to a hospital for a follow up examination.

April 9: The number of inmates in Turkish prisons, which have the capacity to safely hold 271,823 people, [reached](#) a record high of 314,512 as of the end of March, according to Justice Ministry data.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

April 7: Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a [report](#) which revealed that Greece uses migrant auxiliaries in its systematic migrant pushbacks to Turkey.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

April 4: The gendarmerie in Van physically [mistreated](#) a man named Yakup Avan whom they detained for alleged smuggling.

April 7: Family members of inmates in an Afyon prison [claimed](#) that prison authorities subjected prisoners to mistreatment and psychological abuse.

April 7: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison physically and verbally [assaulted](#) inmates.

April 8: The guards in a Muğla prison [mistreated](#) sick inmate Mehmet Salih Filiz who refused to undergo a strip-search during an involuntary transfer from another prison. Filiz was later placed in a one-person cell.

April 8: The police in İzmir verbally [threatened](#) a delivery worker with whom they got involved in an argument.

April 8: Municipal police officers in Van physically [assaulted](#) street vendors.

April 9: The guards in an Ağrı prison physically [assaulted](#) three inmates.

April 9: Prison officials in Diyarbakır [cut off](#) inmate İbrahim Ayaz's phone call with his family while he was talking about an incident of mistreatment he suffered.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS

April 6: Brazil's Supreme Court [rejected](#) Turkey's request for the extradition of a businessman due to his links to the Gülen movement, saying there is no guarantee the businessman will receive a fair trial if he is extradited.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

April 4: A survey conducted by a polling company [revealed](#) that domestic violence is the most serious problem faced by women in Turkey.

April 6: A gender-based violence [report](#) released by Bianet found that men killed at least 25 women and inflicted violence on at least 51 in March.