

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 30 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.

25 April: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the release of the last two jailed defendants in ‘**The Case of Detained Minor Girls**’ leaving no remaining detainees and highlighting the arbitrariness of the charges and the use of unfounded terrorism accusations and pretrial detention as intimidation tactics against individuals, as previously [noted](#) by the 8 UN Special rapporteurs.

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

22 April: A Turkish textile worker, N.K., was [arrested](#) and jailed on charges of insulting President Erdoğan and attempted assault after throwing his phone toward a stage and displaying protest banners criticizing the

government’s economic policies during a hospital opening in İstanbul.

22 April: Ankara Governor’s Office [rejected](#) the main opposition Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) request to march from the 1st Parliament building to Anıtkabir for the April 23 National Sovereignty and Children’s Day.

24 April: Four people were [detained](#) in İstanbul for allegedly chanting “Erdoğan without a diploma” while walking on the street, along with one person who shared the incident on social media; all five were released by a criminal court under house arrest and a travel ban.

26 April: Police in Ankara [detained](#) at least 30 people, including students, a journalist, and a lawyer, during a protest against the arrest of Erdoğan’s political rival, with rights groups condemning the excessive force, mistreatment, and denial of legal counsel reported by detainees.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

22 April: A Turkish court [fined](#) veteran actor İlyas Salman 7,000 lira for insulting President Erdoğan in a 2022 interview, convicting him under Article 299 of the Penal Code.

23 April: Swedish journalist Joakim Medin, [arrested](#) in Turkey in March, has been charged with insulting President Erdoğan and alleged PKK-related terrorism offenses, facing up to 12 years in prison if convicted.

24 April: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) journalist Özlem Gürses to a suspended term of one year and three months for allegedly insulting the Turkish Armed Forces during a YouTube broadcast about Syria, after briefly detaining her and placing her under house arrest for 52 days.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

24 April: As part of the investigation into the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, lawyer Serkan Günel, representing detained Murat Ongun, was [detained](#) on charges of "attempting to influence the judiciary" and "violating the confidentiality of the investigation," with lawyers Kazım Yiğit Akalın and Yiğit Gökçehan also facing detention orders.

26 April: Turkish authorities [detained](#) 47 people, including senior municipal officials and the brother-in-law of jailed opposition leader Ekrem İmamoğlu, in a sweep targeting İstanbul's opposition-run municipality, drawing accusations of political repression and judicial abuse.

KURDISH MINORITY

24 April: Pro-Kurdish JINNEWS reporter Rabia Önver were [interrogated](#) at the Van Police Department as part of an investigation opened against her for "inciting hatred and enmity" over her social media posts.

24 April: DEM Party Assembly member Muhsin Aydoğdu was [detained](#) by plainclothes police in front of his family home in Urfa and taken to the Urfa Police Department, reportedly as part of a Diyarbakır-based investigation on "terrorist propaganda," with witnesses accusing police of forcibly abducting him without showing a detention warrant.

PRISON CONDITIONS

24 April: DEM Party deputy Gülcan Kaçmaz Sayyigit [condemned](#) the deaths of 709 inmates in Turkish prisons in 2024, blaming political inaction and the Council of Forensic Medicine's biased reports, and called the ongoing failure to release seriously ill prisoners a violation of the right to life.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

24 April: A report by Syrians for Truth & Justice [documented](#) systemic abuse against Syrian refugees in Turkish deportation centers in 2024, including beatings, denial of food and medical care, coerced "voluntary" returns, at least five deaths linked to mistreatment, and EU-funded detention infrastructure.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

22 April: A witness [testified](#) at the Antalya 3rd High Criminal Court that former teacher Eyüp Birinci showed signs of severe torture, including internal bleeding and sexual assault, during his 2016 detention for alleged Gülen links, with three police officers and a doctor now standing trial for the abuse and cover-up.

23 April: Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine [ruled](#) that 72-year-old Alzheimer's patient İbrahim Güngör is fit to stay in prison despite his severe mental and physical decline, prompting renewed criticism of the authorities' systematic disregard for ailing inmates' health.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

24 April: Kyrgyz teacher Azamat Nurmat Uulu, who traveled to Turkey with students for a math competition, has gone missing after reportedly being [detained](#) at İstanbul Airport, raising fears of ongoing transnational repression against individuals formerly linked to the Gülen movement.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

25 April: Turkish Health Minister Kemal Memişoğlu [defended](#) a new regulation banning non-medically necessary Caesarean sections — surgical births — in private hospitals, facing backlash from opposition and rights groups over concerns of government interference in reproductive choices.