

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 37 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.

**August 26:** The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [found](#) grave rights violations in the cases of Alettin Duman and Tamer Tıbık, two Turkish nationals who in September 2016 were detained in Malaysia and forcibly rendered to Turkey due to their links to the Gülen movement. The WGAD called on the Turkish government to urgently and unconditionally release the two individuals.

## 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

**August 22:** The police in Ordu [intervened](#) in a funeral held for a deceased leftist militant, detaining at least 10 people.

**August 22:** The İstanbul police [detained](#) 16 people protesting the demolition of their houses.

**August 23:** The police in Artvin briefly [detained](#) three people over their participation in an environmental protest.

**August 23:** The Muğla Governor's Office [banned](#) a music festival that was scheduled for early September.

**August 24:** The police in Ordu intervened in a funeral held for a deceased leftist militant, detaining nine people.

**August 24:** The Mersin Governor's Office [banned](#) a concert organized by the Human Rights Association (İHD) on the occasion of the International Day of Peace.

**August 26:** The Constitutional Court [found](#) inadmissible appeals rejected by Mücella Yapıcı, Tayfun Kahraman and Can Atalay who were sentenced to life in prison on charges related to the Gezi Park protests of 2013.

**August 26:** The government-appointed rector of Boğaziçi University, Naci İnci, [suspended](#) 16 academics over their participation in protests against his appointment.

**August 27:** The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a protest vigil about sick prisoners, briefly detaining 10 people.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**August 23:** The police in Ankara [detained](#) six people over their social media messages.

**August 23:** The Press Advertising Agency (BİK), the state body responsible for regulating publicly funded advertisements in the media, permanently [canceled](#) the leftist Evrensel newspaper's license to publish public ads.

**August 23:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to three news reports on corruption allegations implicating a tax court judge.

**August 24:** A Kahramanmaraş court [ruled](#) to block access to four news reports and two tweets about allegations that forged court orders were sent to news websites for the removal of certain news reports.

**August 25:** Customs police in İstanbul detained, questioned and [deported](#) Greek journalist Evangelos Areteos upon his arrival from Brussels.

**August 25:** The police in İstanbul [detained](#) pop singer Gülşen Bayraktar Çolakoğlu over her remarks that allegedly insulted the graduates of the religious imam-hatip schools in Turkey. The singer was later arrested by a court on charges of inciting hatred or enmity among the public.

**August 25:** Prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into journalist İbrahim Varlı over a social media message that he posted in 2020.

**August 25:** An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to an opinion piece about the president's economic policies.

**August 25:** An Aydın court [ruled](#) to block access to a news report about a local district governor who banned travels into an out of a village that has been the scene of protests against the construction of a geothermic power plant.

**August 26:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a blog page about a former prime minister.

**August 26:** Balıkesir prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into opposition politicians Ali Mahir Başarır, Mehmet Tüm, Murat Akbaş and Erkan Baş as well as journalist Yavuz Selim Demirağ on charges of insulting the president in remarks they made at a book fair.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**August 24:** The authorities [confiscated](#) a villa belonging to Sedat Peker, a notorious mob boss in exile who has been revealing murky relations between the government and the mafia.

**August 25:** The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that the right to a fair trial was violated in the cases of two applicants who were sentenced to life imprisonment based on

statements they had given without the presence of a lawyer.

**August 28:** The Constitutional Court [found](#) unlawful the confiscation of assets belonging to an individual for having been a board member of an educational institution that was shut down due to its affiliation with the Gülen movement.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**August 23:** The houses belonging to members of the Alevi minority in a village in Balıkesir were reportedly [spray painted](#) with racist symbols and threatening messages.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**August 27:** A prison administration in Van [denied](#) treatment and medication to inmates who tested positive for Covid-19.

**August 28:** [Hasan Karapınar](#), an end-stage cancer patient who was released from an İstanbul prison two months ago, revealed to the media that the prison administration denied him treatment for five months during his incarceration.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**August 24:** The government's migration agency [announced](#) that Turkey has deported more than 72,000 migrants so far this year.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**August 22:** The mother of inmate Emir Karakum [announced](#) that her son was tortured in a Samsun prison.

**August 22:** The guards in an Ankara prison physically [assaulted](#) inmate Hakan Tunç for displacing his bed.

**August 25:** The guards in a Konya prison [strip-searched](#) 13 inmates who were transferred from another prison. The inmates were later placed in one-person cells for resisting the practice.

**August 25:** The guards in a Kahramanmaraş prison [mistreated](#) inmate Rıdvan Kaya.

**August 27:** Village guards in Mardin physically [assaulted](#) and injured five villagers over an argument.

## **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

**August 24:** An opposition party deputy [claimed](#) that Turkey's drone strikes in northern Syria killed eight children this month.

**August 26:** The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [found](#) grave rights violations in the cases of Alettin Duman and Tamer Tıbık, two Turkish nationals who in September 2016 were detained in Malaysia and forcibly rendered to Turkey, urging the Turkish government to immediately and unconditionally release them.