

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 279 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.

29 April: Ahead of International Workers' Day, Turkish police [detained](#) 92 people in İstanbul, mostly linked to banned leftist groups, in a preemptive counterterrorism operation criticized for police violence and seen as part of a broader crackdown on dissent following the arrest of opposition mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

30 April: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) at least 218 people in nationwide operations over the past four days for alleged links to the Gülen movement, despite an ECtHR ruling that using ByLock does not justify 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.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

1 May: More than 400 people, including nine lawyers, were [detained](#) in İstanbul on International Workers' Day while attempting to march to Taksim Square despite a government ban, as authorities deployed over 52,000 police and shut down key transit points across the city.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

30 April: A Turkish court [gave](#) Swedish journalist Joakim Medin a suspended 11-month sentence for insulting President Erdoğan, but he remains jailed in Silivri pending trial on a second charge of terrorist group membership, which he denies, saying he was only doing journalism.

30 April: The social media account "Arşiv Unutmaz," which has nearly 1 million followers on X and is known for sharing past statements by politicians and media archives, was [blocked](#) on grounds of protecting national security and public order.

2 May: Turkey [dropped](#) to 159th out of 180 in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index by RSF, reflecting deepening state control, censorship, arrests, and violence against journalists, with 90% of national media under government influence and 37 journalists currently imprisoned.

2 May: British human rights lawyer Ben Keith has [filed](#) an expanded appeal at the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of jailed Turkish journalist Ali Ünal, alleging multiple rights violations including arbitrary detention and lack of a fair trial, as Turkey ranks 159th in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

28 April: UN Special Rapporteur Ben Saul has [warned](#) the ECtHR that Turkey's vague and retroactively applied counterterrorism laws violate international legality standards, urging strict enforcement of Article 7 in the upcoming *Yasak v. Türkiye* case.

29 April: Amnesty International's 2024–2025 report [highlights](#) Turkey's refusal to implement binding ECtHR rulings in the cases of Osman Kavala, Selahattin Demirtaş, and Yüksel Yalçınkaya, despite clear judgments ordering their release or acquittal.

KURDISH MINORITY

29 April: Pro-Kurdish DEM Party İzmir former co-chair Çınar Altan was [sentenced](#) to a total of 3 years and 4 months in prison on April 28, 2025, for aiding a terrorist organization and disseminating propaganda

PRISON CONDITIONS

29 April: At least 1,412 inmates, including 335 in critical condition, are [held](#) in Turkish prisons under harsh conditions that worsen their health, according to a Human Rights Association report urging urgent action amid lack of official data.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

2 May: Human Rights Watch has [called](#) on Turkey to halt the deportation of two Turkmen activists detained in Sinop, warning they face torture, disappearance, and imprisonment if returned to Turkmenistan, in violation of Turkey's international obligations.