

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 242 | Date 3-9 February

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 51 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.

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 ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

7 February: Turkish police [detained](#) three people during a February 6 earthquake commemoration in Hatay after protesters clashed with security forces blocking access to the official ceremony site.

8 February: Turkish authorities [denied](#) the main opposition CHP a permit for a pro-Palestinian march in İstanbul, sparking criticism over double standards as the ruling AKP recently held a similar rally at the same location.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

4 February: Turkish actor Melisa Sözen was [questioned](#) by İstanbul police for alleged “terrorist propaganda” over her role as a Kurdish militant in the French series *The Bureau*, due to her costume resembling YPG attire.

7 February: Social media platform X has [blocked](#) access to 42 accounts belonging to Turkish journalists, activists, and exiled media organizations following an Ankara court order citing ‘national security’.

7 February: Access to journalist Metin Cihan's X account, which has 500,000 followers, has been [blocked](#) in Turkey on the grounds of posing a threat to national security and public order after he criticized Turkey's trade with Israel, sharing evidence to support his claims.

8 February: Turkish authorities [arrested](#) JINNEWS reporter Öznur Değer for “disseminating terrorist propaganda” over social media posts about two Kurdish journalists killed in a drone strike, with reports of police brutality during her detention.

9 February: Three BirGün journalists, Uğur Koç, Berkant Gültekin, and Yaşar Gökdemir, were briefly [detained](#) under anti-terror laws over a story about İstanbul's chief prosecutor Akın Gürlek, sparking condemnation from opposition leaders.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

7 February: Former Human Rights Association (İHD) Central Executive Board member Adnan Vural was [sentenced](#) to 1 year, 6 months, and 22 days in prison for “terrorist propaganda” while being acquitted of “membership in a terrorist organization” by the Ankara 2nd High Criminal Court.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

3 February: A new law [passed](#) by the Turkish parliament grants the State Inspection Council (DDK), under President Erdoğan's authority, the power to suspend or remove public officials and military officers based on audits, raising concerns over potential political purges.

5 February: Turkish prosecutors are [seeking](#) up to seven years in prison and a political ban for İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu over his criticism of judicial authorities, accusing him of "insult," "threat," and "targeting individuals fighting terrorism".

5 February: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into CHP lawmaker Cemal Enginyurt for allegedly insulting and threatening President Erdoğan during a parliamentary speech, with the probe initiated ex officio.

8 February: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) nine defendants to life in prison for "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order" in the retrial of public officials linked to the 2007 assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, with pro-government judge Akın Gürlek controversially tying the case to the Gülen movement in the post-2016 period. (*For the facts of Dink murder* <https://dinkcaseandfacts.com/>)

KURDISH MINORITY

7 February: Pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Nusaybin former Co-Chair Ziyet Algan, along with Mithat Yıldız and Lokman Aslan, were [detained](#) during house raids in Mardin.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

3 February: Z.D., a 25-year-old woman arrested in 2020, said she still [suffers](#) from the trauma of a strip-search during police custody, where she was forced to undress and squat in a glass-walled room with male officers nearby.

5 February: Turkish prison authorities [delayed](#) the parole of Figen Çapkur, a 51-year-old teacher convicted of alleged Gülen movement links, despite completing the required prison time, citing an unsatisfactory parole interview and a prosecutor's decision to extend her detention by four months.

6 February: İbrahim Güngör, a 72-year-old Alzheimer's patient, [remains](#) in prison despite severe health issues,

including advanced Alzheimer's, diabetes, prostate problems.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

5 February: According to 2024 report, Turkey [intensified](#) its transnational repression by orchestrating the abduction of UN-protected Turkish nationals in Kenya, seizing Gülen-linked schools in Kyrgyzstan and Burkina Faso, conducting covert surveillance in the US, Germany, and France, and targeting exiled journalists and activists through diplomatic pressure and forced renditions

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

4 February: In January, 33 women were [murdered](#) and 32 died under suspicious circumstances in Turkey, with 13 killed by husbands or boyfriends and 13 by other relatives, according to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform.