

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 45 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.

14 April: Türkan Alemdar, a 32-year-old mother of two, was [imprisoned](#) in Eskişehir province with her 19-month-old son to serve a 7.5-year sentence over alleged Gülen movement ties, based on activities such as ByLock messaging app use and attending a 2014 protests, despite ECtHR rulings deeming such evidence insufficient for terrorism charges.

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

16 April: University students who joined protests against the detention of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu are [facing](#) threats of eviction from state-run KYK dormitories, with some already forcibly removed and others under

disciplinary investigation, despite legal precedent affirming that peaceful protest participation cannot justify cutting scholarships or housing.

17 April: Two high school students were [detained](#) in Bursa province after participating in a press statement demanding the release of arrested peers, with police targeting them over speeches made near their schools.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

14 April: A Turkish court [ordered](#) access blocked to popular independent news accounts BPT (over 1 million followers), Boşuna Tıklama (over 1 million followers), and Zam Haber (around 800,000 followers) on X, following a request from the presidency's Directorate of Communications citing national security.

16 April: Investigative journalist Bahadır Özgür [received](#) a three-month suspended sentence under Turkey's controversial Article 301 for allegedly insulting the state during a 2022 book fair panel on mob boss Sedat Peker's claims.

17 April: Bluesky [restricted](#) access to 72 accounts and one post in Turkey following court orders and likely government pressure, signaling a departure from its free-speech stance amid Ankara's escalating crackdown on digital platforms and ongoing decline in press freedom.

17 April: Turkish prosecutors [detained](#) pro-government journalist Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı for spreading alleged disinformation after he claimed the government would seize control of the CHP and raid two of its municipalities.

17 April: Exiled Turkish journalist Cevheri Güven, living under 24/7 police protection in Germany due to threats allegedly linked to Turkey's intelligence service, [says](#) he

remains committed to exposing corruption and state abuse despite ongoing harassment, surveillance, and algorithmic suppression of his YouTube content.

18 April: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) journalist Furkan Karabay to a two-year suspended prison term for allegedly insulting President Erdoğan and his children in a YouTube interview referencing offshore wealth claims.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

17 April: Human rights lawyer Selçuk Kozağaçlı, a renowned defender of politically persecuted clients and recipient of the 2019 Lawyer for Lawyers Award, was [re-arrested](#) just 24 hours after his release from prison following a prosecutor's objection and a controversial prison board reversal.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

17 April: Twelve officials, including Deputy Mayor Ali Rıza Yılmaz, were [detained](#) in a bid-rigging probe targeting İstanbul's opposition-run Beşiktaş Municipality, marking another wave in the government's widening crackdown on the CHP following its major electoral gains and the controversial arrest of Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

19 April: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) former Devrek mayor Çetin Bozkurt and seven others in a corruption probe, part of a wider crackdown that has seen at least 26 people held this week and multiple CHP-run municipalities targeted.

KURDISH MINORITY

15 April: Kurdish journalist Hayri Demir was [sentenced](#) to nearly three years in prison for 'disseminating terrorist propaganda' through his reporting and social media posts, based on evidence including materials from his work in northern Syria; the verdict came during the eighth hearing of a trial that began nearly eight years ago.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

14 April: Chronically ill student Esila Ayık, arrested in İstanbul for holding a protest sign calling President Erdoğan a "dictator," has been [denied](#) access to her essential medication in prison, raising serious concerns about her health.

15 April: The Council of Europe's CPT [conducted](#) an ad hoc visit to Turkey from April 7–11 to investigate allegations of mistreatment during mass detentions following İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's March 19 arrest and growing concerns over police abuse, prison conditions, and politically motivated repression.

16 April: Despite a medical board's recommendation for sentence suspension due to her stage 3 cancer diagnosis, Turkish prison authorities have [not transferred](#) inmate Gülten Nene—convicted over alleged Gülen ties—for mandatory evaluation by the state-run Council of Forensic Medicine (ATK), exposing persistent neglect of seriously ill prisoners in Turkey's justice system.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

14 April: A pre-match banner promoting natural childbirth displayed by Sivasspor players as part of a Health Ministry campaign [sparked](#) nationwide backlash from women's rights groups and opposition figures, who condemned it as a sexist intrusion into women's reproductive autonomy.