

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 103 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.

13 February: The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention [ruled](#) that Air Force General Akin Öztürk, accused of being the top orchestrator of the 2016 coup attempt, was arbitrarily imprisoned, subjected to torture, and denied a fair trial, calling on Turkey to immediately release him and provide reparations, as the Turkish government's controversial coup narrative faces renewed scrutiny, with the UN [finding no evidence linking the top-blamed general to the coup](#).

15 February: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) 103 people across 39 provinces in the past week over alleged ties to the Gülen movement, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced, despite a landmark [ECtHR ruling](#) rejecting key evidence used in such prosecutions, as the government continues its decade-long crackdown on the movement.

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

10 February: Turkish police [detained](#) 18 women using physical force during a crackdown on the "Kadınlar Örgütülüğe Yürüyor" (Women Marching for Organization) protest organized by Tevgera Jinên Azad (TJA) in Van.

11 February: The Van Governor's Office [announced](#) a 15-day ban on all public gatherings, protests, press statements, marches, sit-ins, rallies, concerts, commemorations, and distribution of printed materials, along with restrictions on entry into the city, effective from February 11 to February 25, 2025.

12 February: The Gaziantep Governor's Office [announced](#) a 15-day ban on all public gatherings, protests, press statements, rallies, sit-ins, hunger strikes, commemorations, and distribution of printed materials, effective from February 13 to February 27, 2025.

15 February: Turkish police [detained](#) 127 people, including six journalists, after storming Van city hall at dawn with tear gas and rubber bullets, following the government's removal of Mayor Abdullah Zeydan and the appointment of a trustee.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

11 February: The news articles on the bribery and corruption allegations against Hüseyin Çam, former Mardin Kızıltepe District Governor and former Kızıltepe Municipality trustee, and the bureaucrats he worked with were [ordered](#) to be removed by Nevşehir Criminal Judicature of Peace.

14 February: Turkish authorities have [launched](#) an investigation into Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD) High Advisory Council President Ömer Aras on charges of "attempting to influence a fair trial" and "spreading false information" after he delivered a rare public criticism of the government, touching upon economic instability, judicial interference, and democratic backsliding.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

12 February: UN human rights special rapporteurs have [raised](#) serious concerns over Turkey's imprisonment and mistreatment of human rights lawyers, warning that charges against members of the Progressive Lawyers' Association (ÇHD) appear politically motivated and urging legal reforms to align Turkey's counterterrorism laws with international human rights standards.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

11 February: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the right to a fair trial for 120 judges and prosecutors in three separate cases, finding that judicial officials were unfairly dismissed or reassigned without due process, as part of broader concerns over judicial independence and post-2016 legal purges in the country.

11 February: The Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has [launched](#) an investigation into the Republican People's Party (CHP)'s 38th Ordinary Congress, where Özgür Özel was elected party leader, summoning former CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and Akif Hamzaçebi as witnesses.

13 February: Turkey's Justice Ministry is [seeking](#) to amend the Code of Civil Procedure to prevent government opponents living in exile from filing lawsuits through legal representatives, a move seen as targeting dissidents like former footballer Hakan Şükür, who has won defamation cases in Turkish courts despite living abroad, and raising concerns about further erosion of judicial independence amid Turkey's declining rule of law rankings.

13 February: An İstanbul court [ordered](#) the arrest of 10 senior municipal officials from the main opposition CHP on terrorism charges, targeting deputy mayors and city council members from nine district municipalities, amid an ongoing crackdown that previously saw two CHP mayors removed from office, with critics warning that the judicial

actions aim to discredit İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and weaken opposition ahead of future elections.

14 February: The European Parliament [passed](#) a resolution condemning the dismissal and arrest of opposition mayors in Turkey, calling for sanctions on officials responsible for appointing government trustees, citing democratic deterioration, and urging judicial reforms to abolish the trustee system and uphold ECtHR rulings.

15 February: The Turkish government [removed](#) pro-Kurdish DEM Party Mayor Abdullah Zeydan from office and appointed Governor Ozan Balcı as trustee, a new move undermining local democracy and disenfranchising Kurdish voters.

KURDISH MINORITY

12 February: Turkish police [detained](#) eight people in Ankara, including DEM Party Council member Pakize Sinemillioğlu and former BTS President Nazım Karakurt, on charges of terrorist propaganda based on their social media posts and participation in events.

12 February: In Manisa's Salihli district, Turkish police [detained](#) 18 people, including DEM Party co-mayoral candidate Cevdet Yıldız, on charges of terrorist propaganda, citing their participation in last year's Newroz celebrations.

OTHER MINORITIES

13 February: Turkish Jewish business leader İzzet Garih has [filed](#) a criminal complaint after receiving death threats and facing an attempted break-in at his company's headquarters, warning that he could meet the same fate as his father, Üzeyir Garih, who was murdered in 2001.

PRISON CONDITIONS

13 February: DEM Party lawmaker Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [condemned](#) overcrowded, unsanitary conditions and lack of adequate healthcare in Turkish prisons, highlighting critically ill inmates facing delayed treatment due to long hospital wait times and humiliating strip-search procedures, as 709 prisoners died in detention in 2024, according to Justice Ministry data.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

13 February: Iranian refugees in Turkey [face](#) deportation risks after the government took over asylum decisions from the UN, with activist Nahid Modarresi fearing arrest or execution if sent back to Iran, where homosexuality is punishable by death.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

10 February: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) Gülten Nene, a 42-year-old former public servant, who was diagnosed with breast cancer while in Mersin Prison, where she says inadequate medical care delayed her diagnosis by 10 months, leaving her in severe pain, as she awaits a decision on her appeal for release to seek urgent treatment.