

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 58 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.

25 February: A newly published report by the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security [confirms](#) that Turkish authorities continue to detain, prosecute, and socially exclude individuals accused of ties to the Gülen movement, despite international legal rulings discrediting the evidence used in such cases.

## 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

27 February: The Van Governor's Office has [imposed](#) a 15-day ban on all public gatherings, protests, events, and related entries into the province from February 26 to March 12, 2025.

27 February: Gendarmerie forces [blocked](#) mine workers' march in Ankara's Nallıhan district as they protested the privatization of the Çayırhan Thermal Power Plant and Mine.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

26 February: Turkey has been [ranked](#) among the top 10 countries with the sharpest decline in freedoms over the past decade, dropping 22 points since 2014 and remaining classified as "Not Free" in the *Freedom in the World 2025* report by Freedom House.

27 February: A Turkish court has [sentenced](#) journalist Nevşin Mengü to a suspended 15-month prison term for allegedly disseminating "terrorist propaganda" in a YouTube interview with former PYD leader Salih Muslim.

28 February: Turkish businessman Cem Köksal, former CEO of Zorlu Holding, was [barred](#) from traveling abroad after being detained over an internal email emphasizing the company's secular stance on Ramadan celebrations.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

27 February: Unknown assailants [attacked](#) the Rıza Tanrıverdi Cemevi in Adıyaman with pepper spray while worshippers were inside.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

24 February: Turkey's Interior Ministry has [removed](#) Kağızman Mayor Mehmet Alkan from office after he was sentenced to over six years in prison for alleged membership in a terrorist organization, appointing the district governor as trustee.

26 February: A total of 21 summaries of proceedings seeking to lift the parliamentary immunity of four opposition MPs—CHP’s Cemal Enginyurt, DEM Party’s Öznur Bartın and Vezir Coşkun Parlak, and TİP leader Erkan Baş—were [submitted](#) to the Turkish Parliament.

## KURDISH MINORITY

25 February: Turkish author, director, and journalist Ruhi Karadağ has been [sentenced](#) to a 15-month suspended prison term for allegedly disseminating terrorist propaganda in his 2013 book on the failed peace talks with the PKK.

26 February: Three Kurdish journalists in Turkey, Abdurrahman Gök, Oktay Candemir, and Ruşen Takva, have had their X accounts [blocked](#) following a government request citing “national security” concerns.

26 February: Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism has [banned](#) the film *Oy’una Geldik*, directed by previously detained pro-Kurdish filmmaker Kazım Öz, under Article 4 of Law No. 5224 on the Evaluation, Classification, and Support of Cinema Films.

1 March: The outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) has [declared](#) a ceasefire with Turkey following a call from jailed leader Abdullah Öcalan to disband, though the PKK demands improved conditions for Öcalan before fully implementing his appeal.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

27 February: A new report by the Human Rights Association’s (İHD) İstanbul branch has [documented](#) severe overcrowding, medical neglect, and mistreatment in Marmara region prisons in 2024, detailing 1,099 cases of ill-treatment, 769 medical complaints, and 1,105 violations of communication rights, while also drawing attention to the plight of children living with incarcerated mothers.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

27 February: Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) [reported](#) that 12 people, including four fighters, six civilian workers, and two shepherds, were killed in Turkish airstrikes targeting a military position and civilian sites in Al-Shaddadi.

## GENDER RIGHTS

28 February: Turkey’s Justice Ministry has [proposed](#) a draft bill that would restrict gender transition procedures and criminalize public expressions of LGBTQ+ identity, raising the minimum age for transition to 21 and introducing prison sentences for acts deemed “contrary to biological sex”.