

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 207 | Date June 3-9

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 136 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.

7 June: Turkish police have [detained](#) 72 people across 17 provinces over their alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement.

8 June: A Turkish court [arrested](#) six women and one man who had been detained for listening to religious sermons on the X platform, streamed by foreign-based individuals accused by Turkey of being members of Gülen movement.

## 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

6 June: A new [indictment](#) seeks a prison sentence of up to 15-and-a-half years for 12 people, eight of whom are in pretrial detention, for attempting to defy a government

ban on holding May Day demonstrations in central İstanbul.

7 June: The police [intervened](#) against the locals who protested the inclusion of Akasya, Aksaray and Saraykent neighborhoods in Antakya as "reserve areas" by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

4 June: A Turkish court has [fined](#) a 78-year-old former teacher for insulting a deputy minister, ordering the teacher to pay him TL 7,080 (\$220) as well as to cover his legal expenses.

4 June: Turkish prosecutors are seeking a [prison sentence](#) of up to 16 years for political communications expert Evren Barış Yavuz over a social media post accusing President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's in-laws of selling jet fuel to Israel.

6 June: An İstanbul court has summarily [banned](#) access to a report describing how a Turkish state lender allegedly gave 550 million lira (\$17 million) in loans to companies linked to a notorious crime boss with alleged ties to a former minister.

6 June: Ankara 3rd Criminal Judicature of Peace [blocked access](#) to the news reports that AKP member of Nurdağı Municipality Assembly and Chairman of the Planning and Urban Development Commission, contractor Yunus Kaya, was caught in Mersin while trying to flee abroad and that Seyfullah Ordueri, Legal Counsellor at the Ministry of Interior, had taken Kaya to Mersin, after his buildings collapsed in the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes.

7 June: Istanbul Criminal Judgeship of Peace decided to [block access](#) to the news covering the offence of sexual abuse by Şaben Bağrıaçık, a prosecutor working at the Istanbul Anatolian Chief Public Prosecutor's Office.

7 June: In the final hearing of the non-pecuniary damages lawsuit filed against journalist Furkan Karabay by Istanbul Justice Commission Chairman Bekir Altun on the grounds of defamation at Istanbul Anatolian 27th Civil Court of First Instance, the court [ruled](#) that the journalist should pay 12,500 TL non-pecuniary damages.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

7 June: The Association of Protestant Churches in Turkey has [released](#) its “2023 Rights Violations Monitoring Report,” highlighting a worrying rise in hate speech directed at Protestants, and the obstacles in establishing and maintaining places of worship.

## KURDISH MINORITY

3 June: Turkey’s Interior Ministry [announced](#) on Monday the removal of Mehmet Siddik Akış, democratically elected the co-mayor of Hakkari from office, due to an ongoing investigation and a separate trial on terrorism-linked charges.

4 June: Turkey’s pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) is holding protests in the southeastern city of Hakkari against the removal of the city’s mayor amid a widespread [ban on demonstrations](#) imposed by governor’s offices in 10 provinces in the predominantly Kurdish region.

4 June: DEM Party Spokesperson Ayşegül Doğan [banned](#) from leaving the country due to a ruling by the Diyarbakır 9th High Criminal Court dated 2020.

8 June: Turkish police [detained](#) five Kurdish politicians — former mayors and their deputies from the Ergani district of Turkey’s southeastern Diyarbakır city — on Saturday, in the latest episode of an ongoing crackdown on Kurdish politicians in the country.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

5 June: An ailing 84 years old retired imam, Halil Karakoç, was [denied](#) probation by the Menemen R Type Prison Administration.

5 June: A Turkish court has [ruled](#) to continue the pretrial detention of Mustafa Seçkin, a teacher who was arrested on alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement despite suffering from almost total vision loss as well as cardiac disease and hypertension.

6 June: Mehmet Ali Uçar, a prisoner in Menemen R Type Prison, who has a 100% visually impaired, was [not released](#) from prison despite the Forensic Medicine Institution's report stating that he ‘cannot stay in prison’.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

5 June: Forty women were [murdered](#) by men in Turkey in May, and 20 more died under suspicious circumstances, reported by the We Will Stop Femicide Platform.