

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 56 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.

12 July: Deniz Gündoğdu, a housewife previously sentenced to 6 years and 3 months over alleged Gülen links, was [arrested](#) with her 16-month-old daughter in Edirne despite a Court of Cassation ruling overturning her conviction, prompting criticism over the incarceration of infants.

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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

9 July: YouTube has [blocked](#) all three trailers of the internationally acclaimed film “Exodus” in Turkey at the government’s request, due to its critical portrayal of post-2016 repression under President Erdoğan, including themes of surveillance, torture, and forced exile.

11 July: A 16-year-old boy in İstanbul was [arrested](#) for allegedly insulting President Erdoğan and inciting hatred in a social media post, under Article 299 of the Turkish Penal Code.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

8 July: Selahattin Okçuoğlu, a member of Turkey’s Human Rights Association, was [sentenced](#) to 1 year and 3 months in prison for “making terrorist propaganda” over two social media posts, with the verdict deferred under a provision suspending enforcement unless a new offense is committed.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

8 July: A presidential motion has been [submitted](#) to the Turkish Parliament seeking to lift the immunity of 61 CHP lawmakers, including party leader Özgür Özel, amid an escalating crackdown on the opposition following their 2024 local election victory.

8 July: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) again that Turkey violated Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş’s rights by holding him in politically motivated pretrial detention for over four years without sufficient legal justification, ordering compensation and finding breaches of Articles 5 and 18 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

9 July: A crackdown on Turkey’s main opposition CHP has [intensified](#) since its March 2024 election victory, with 16 mayors jailed, one under house arrest, and investigations targeting 17 municipalities, prompting widespread protests and allegations of politically motivated repression by the ruling AKP.

10 July: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the right to a fair trial in three post-coup dismissal cases—Yıldırım, Şimşek, and Akarsu—ordering a total of €8,250 in compensation due to Turkish courts' failure to assess individual circumstances, provide adequate reasoning, and ensure timely proceedings.

PRISON CONDITIONS

7 July: DEM Party MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [reported](#) severe rights violations in Gaziantep prisons, where inmates—many of them students detained in May over alleged Gülen movement links—face overcrowding, poor hygiene, extreme heat, and disruptions during exams.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

7 July: A 70-year-old inmate in Tokat, Ömer Yaman, [lost](#) vision in his left eye after being denied cataract treatment for refusing an oral cavity search.

8 July: Former AKP MP İlhan İşbilen, previously sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment over alleged Gülen movement links, [collapsed](#) during a retrial in Ankara after the Court of Cassation overturned the verdict, but the lower court [reissued](#) the same sentence and sent him to prison despite his serious health issues.

8 July: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the continued imprisonment of Ayşe Barım, a television manager charged over her alleged role in the 2013 Gezi Park protests, despite serious health issues and international concern, with her next hearing set for October 1.

10 July: Mehmet Murat Çalık, the jailed CHP mayor of Istanbul's Beylikdüzü district, was hospitalized and admitted to intensive care amid suspected cancer recurrence, underwent an angiography and biopsy, but was later [returned](#) to prison despite medical recommendations for release.