

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 270 | Date 18-24 August

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 4 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.

22 August: A Turkish homemaker has been [imprisoned](#) in Kırıkkale to serve over seven years for alleged Gülen movement ties based on routine activities like charity donations and student fundraisers, underscoring the persistence of sweeping prosecutions nearly a decade after the 2016 coup attempt.

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

21 August: İsmail Çelik, arrested on July 25 for allegedly insulting the president by chanting “Murderer Israel, collaborator Erdoğan” during a protest at the IDEF 2025 defense fair, has had his detention [extended](#) and now faces

a prison disciplinary probe over his social media posts criticizing Turkey’s stance on Gaza.

22 August: Police in Ankara [blocked](#) a march by the United Public Workers Confederation to the presidential palace after civil servant wage talks collapsed, sending the dispute covering 6.5 million workers to an arbitration board amid protests, strikes and union demands for major pay hikes against soaring inflation.

22 August: In İstanbul’s Ümraniye district, three residents of Topağacı neighborhood were [detained](#) as locals resisted forced evictions under an urban renewal project, protesting power, water and gas cuts with marches and phone lights while vowing to defend their homes.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

18 August: The social media account of the Etkin News Agency (ETHA), a left-wing pro-Kurdish outlet reporting on labor rights, women’s movements, Kurdish issues, and government crackdowns on dissent, has been [blocked](#) in Turkey on grounds of protecting national security and public order.

20 August: The European Commission [voiced](#) concern over threats to press freedom in the Turkish Cypriot community after disputed reports of Turkey seeking the extradition of veteran journalist Şener Levent.

20 August: Turkey has [blocked](#) the Instagram account of leading LGBTQ+ group Kaos GL, following earlier bans on its X account and website.

25 August: Turkish journalist Ufuk Şanlı, recently re-arrested on allegations of aiding exiled reporter Cevheri Güven, has [launched](#) a hunger strike protesting prosecutorial abuses and delays in his case, highlighting

Turkey's ongoing crackdown on journalists linked to the Gülen movement.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

19 August: Beyoğlu Mayor İnan Güney from the CHP has been [removed](#) from office as part of what critics call a government crackdown on opposition mayors under the guise of a corruption probe.

19 August: After lawyer Bilge Ocakcioğlu was beaten and pepper-sprayed by police during protests over İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's arrest, Governor Davut Gül [denied](#) permission to investigate the officers, a decision her lawyers appealed as a violation of the ban on ill-treatment and the duty to conduct an effective inquiry.

KURDISH MINORITY

21 August: During a Turkish parliamentary commission meeting on national solidarity and democracy, a Peace Mother was [warned](#) not to speak Kurdish, prompting condemnation from rights groups and Kurdish politicians who said the ban undermines reconciliation efforts and violates freedom of expression.

PRISON CONDITIONS

22 August: Rights groups and inmates have [intensified](#) criticism of Turkey's high-security "pit-type" prisons, citing overcrowding, lack of sunlight, medical neglect and isolation — conditions they say amount to torture — as protests escalate with hunger strikes and a death fast demanding their closure.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

18 August: At least four migrants [drowned](#) and two were rescued after a dinghy capsized off İzmir's Karaburun coast, with Turkish authorities continuing search operations for others missing.

25 August: Amnesty International has [launched](#) an urgent action campaign urging Turkish authorities to reinstate the temporary protection status of Syrian refugee Ahmad Aabo, whose legal rights were revoked after his HIV diagnosis, leaving him without access to essential medical care and at serious risk.

25 August: Turkish authorities have [labeled](#) Azerbaijani graduate student and activist Nanaxaanım Babazade a "foreign terrorist fighter" for joining a peaceful cafeteria protest at İstanbul University, detaining and allegedly mistreating her.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

25 August: In Mardin's Artuklu district, 19-year-old Şeyhmus Sebuktekin, who filed a complaint after being [beaten](#) and detained by nightwatchmen, was jailed for "resisting law enforcement" while the officers were released.