

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 97 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.

17 September: Turkish prosecutors [detained](#) 31 people in two operations this week over alleged Gülen movement ties in the military—21 in Konya-led raids across 17 provinces and 10 navy officers in Ankara—relying on “payphone investigations” that presume guilt from call sequences without content evidence, part of a years-long purge that has seen over 126,000 convictions since 2016.

## 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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

17 September: Turkey [ranked](#) third among EU candidate countries in press freedom violations in the first half of 2025, with 64 incidents affecting 157 journalists and outlets—mostly arrests, detentions, and convictions on

charges like “insulting the president” or “terrorism”—amid police violence during protests over İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu’s detention and continued censorship by regulator RTÜK, according to MFRR.

18 September: Turkey’s broadcasting watchdog RTÜK [fined](#) Netflix, Prime Video, Disney XD, MUBI, and HBO Max 3 percent of their ad revenue and ordered the removal of selected films for “obscenity” and undermining family values under the “Year of the Family” campaign, amid criticism that the council’s sanctions overwhelmingly target opposition media and censor LGBTQ+ visibility.

19 September: Turkey’s Interior Ministry [filed](#) a criminal complaint against singer-songwriter Mabel Matiz over alleged obscenity in his song “Perperişan,” seeking its removal from streaming platforms under Article 226 of the penal code, amid parallel probes into a TV drama and music groups as part of the government’s “Year of the Family” campaign.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

17 September: Hasan Mutlu, CHP mayor of İstanbul’s Bayrampaşa district, was [arrested](#) with 25 others in a corruption probe critics call politically motivated, making him the 12th CHP mayor jailed since the 2024 local elections and part of a wider crackdown that has seen over 500 party-linked figures detained.

18 September: In the case of ‘detained minor girls’ where 15 minor girls were arbitrarily detained, an İstanbul Court [sentenced](#) 11 defendants to over six years for membership and eight to just over three years for aiding the Gülen movement, basing its verdict on non-criminal activities such as studying together, tutoring children, living in

shared apartments, and family support to students, while acquitting 19 others.

19 September: The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, at its September 15–17 meeting, [renewed](#) calls for Turkey to immediately release Selahattin Demirtaş and Osman Kavala in line with binding ECtHR judgments, stressing that their politically motivated detentions violate the European Convention on Human Rights and undermine the rule of law.

## **KURDISH MINORITY**

18 September: In Mersin's Akdeniz district, journalists from pro-kurdish Jinnews, Mezopotamya Agency, and PİRHA covering a public march were [assaulted](#) by police, with some subjected to violence and their cameras rendered unusable; the Mersin Women Journalists Association and the Dicle Fırat Journalists Association condemned the attack, announcing they would file a criminal complaint against those responsible.

## **TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

16 September: Turkish MP Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [said](#) 70-year-old prisoner Hüseyin Parlak [died](#) in Manisa Alaşehir Prison due to severe neglect, alleging he was held in a windowless cell during extreme heat, repeatedly sent back from hospital without proper tests, and only admitted to intensive care when near death, while authorities have yet to issue an official explanation.

## **TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION**

17 September: Turkish authorities have [opened](#) criminal investigations into dissidents identified from social media photos of a June 25 demonstration in Copenhagen, using police intelligence tools to profile participants and sending the data to prosecutors across Turkey, in a move highlighting Ankara's extraterritorial crackdown on alleged Gülen movement supporters despite the ECtHR's rulings against such prosecutions.