

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 109 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.

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 ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

15 October: Police [detained](#) nine members of the Student Collectives in İstanbul's Kadıköy district during a protest demanding that KYK scholarships be raised to at least half the minimum wage and student loan debts be canceled, as they criticized government austerity measures and urged authorities to "cut costs from the palace, not universities."

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

14 October: Turkish journalist and environmental activist Hakan Tosun, 50, [died](#) from head injuries sustained in a violent assault in İstanbul's Esenyurt district, with police

launching an investigation into what colleagues believe was a targeted attack related to his environmental reporting.

14 October: Turkish academic and author Emrah Gülsunar was [arrested](#) and placed in pretrial detention over a social media poll asking whether seeking foreign help to overthrow a dictatorship could be legitimate, a post he said referred to Venezuela's political situation, not Turkey.

17 October: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) social media influencer Bekir Aslan, known as "Basel," to one year and six months in prison for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda in three X posts referencing leftist groups and protests.

18 October: RTÜK chairman Ebubekir Şahin [announced](#) that Turkey's broadcast regulator will take legal action against YouTube "street interview" channels accused of spreading pessimism and manipulating public opinion, a move critics say is part of a broader government effort to silence dissent and tighten control over independent media.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

14 October: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated Article 5 of the European Convention by unlawfully detaining 137 people over alleged Gülen movement links after the 2016 coup attempt, ordering compensation of €3,000 each for lack of sufficient grounds for their pretrial detention.

14 October: The European Court of Human Rights, referring to its 2023 Yalçinkaya judgment that condemned Turkey for convicting people over alleged Gülen movement links based on unfounded charges and insufficient evidence, has [notified](#) Ankara of 4,800 additional similar

cases—10,800 in total—highlighting a systemic problem that Turkey continues to ignore.

17 October: Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet) has again [sanctioned](#) imam Yusuf Kılıç for refusing to mobilize worshippers for President Erdoğan's 2023 rally, despite a court annulling an earlier penalty, highlighting ongoing political interference and disregard for judicial rulings within the institution.

KURDISH MINORITY

15 October: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey unlawfully detained Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk to suppress political pluralism, finding violations of her rights to liberty, security, and freedom of expression, and ordering the government to pay her €17,500 in compensation and costs.

16 October: A stone [attack](#) targeted the DEM Party's Toroslar district office in Mersin, causing material damage but no injuries; party officials condemned the incident as an assault on democratic will and coexistence, urging authorities to identify those behind the attack and to end divisive, hate-fueled rhetoric.

OTHER MINORITIES

14 October: Ahmet Canpolat, head of the Germany-based Dersim Culture and History Center, was detained for 11 hours and [deported](#) from İstanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport while traveling to attend his father's funeral, in what his association called a politically motivated act linked to his research on the 1937–38 Dersim massacre.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

16 October: A Turkish prosecutor has [dismissed](#) torture allegations by former lieutenant general İlhan Talu, who appeared visibly injured after his 2016 detention, citing "personnel shortage" and "the day's circumstances," despite forensic reports confirming trauma.

16 October: Turkish authorities have [imprisoned](#) 76-year-old Yusuf Çağlayan, a paralyzed and dementia-stricken man accused of Gülen movement links, drawing outrage from rights groups and lawmakers amid a surge in deaths of ailing inmates jailed on similar charges and ongoing criticism of Turkey's neglect of prisoners' health.

GENDER RIGHTS

15 October: Turkey's government is [preparing](#) a judicial reform bill criminalizing public promotion or depiction of gender identities "contrary to biological sex" and same-sex marriage ceremonies with prison terms of up to four years.

16 October: Turkey's ruling party AKP and its ally nationalist MHP, [voted](#) down a motion by the pro-Kurdish DEM Party to investigate the suspicious death of 21-year-old student Rojin Kabaiş, whose body was found in Lake Van last year and whose case resurfaced after a new forensic report revealed DNA from two men, fueling allegations of sexual assault, cover-up, and judicial negligence.