

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 8 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.

21 October: Turkish authorities have [detained](#) 286 people and arrested 154 in a new nationwide crackdown on the alleged Gülen movement members during last month as Interior Minister announced, accusing them of social media activity, and the ByLock app, despite European Court rulings deeming such evidence insufficient for prosecution.

## 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

22 October: A Turkish court [convicted](#) three BirGün journalists of insulting a public official over a report about İstanbul's chief prosecutor.

22 October: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) journalist Asuman Aranca to a suspended 10-month prison term for publishing details from an expert report on the politically charged murder of far-right leader Sinan Ateş, a case exposing alleged political interference by ultra-nationalist party MHP figures and deep flaws in Turkey's justice system.

24 October: Turkish authorities have [launched](#) investigations into journalists reporting on the suspicious 2024 death of university student Rojin Kabaiş and blocked access to coverage of related protests, with several reporters facing charges or social media bans.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

22 October: Turkey has been [listed](#) in the "discrimination" category of the Religious Freedom in the World Report 2025 by Aid to the Church in Need, which accuses the country of systematically targeting certain religious groups amid a global rise in repression, hate crimes, and digital surveillance of believers.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

21 October: Turkey's Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç announced an [investigation](#) into CHP deputy group chair Ali Mahir Başarır for allegedly insulting President Erdoğan in a speech defending jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

23 October: Turkey's parliament is [set](#) to grant the Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK) authority to instantly freeze suspicious bank accounts without judicial oversight, amid a wave of politically charged corporate seizures.

25 October: Turkish authorities have [seized](#) opposition broadcaster TELE1 and placed it under the control of the state-run TMSF following the arrest of its editor-in-chief, Merdan Yanardağ, on espionage charges linked to jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, while also appointing trustees to [Can Holding](#) and its affiliated media companies as part of an expanding government-led confiscation campaign against independent and opposition media.

27 October: İstanbul Mayor and opposition leader Ekrem İmamoğlu was [re-arrested](#) on charges of “political espionage,” alongside journalist Merdan Yanardağ and former campaign manager Necati Özkan.

## KURDISH MINORITY

21 October: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) pro-Kurdish JINNEWS news director Öznur Değer to one year, two months and 15 days in prison on charges of “making continuous terrorist propaganda.”

23 October: A Turkish court has [acquitted](#) veteran Kurdish politician and former Mardin co-mayor Ahmet Türk of terrorism-related charges that led to his removal from office in 2024, ruling that his 2011 speech praising the Kurdish struggle fell within freedom of expression, as peace talks with the PKK continue and questions remain over whether he will be reinstated.

## OTHER MINORITIES

21 October: Alliance Defending Freedom International (ADF International) has [accused](#) Turkey of expelling over 200 foreign Christian workers and their families—around 350 people—by misusing national security codes.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

22 October: İstanbul Bar Association [urged](#) the government to end arbitrary detentions and parole denials as Turkey’s prison population reached 420,904—138 percent over capacity—amid widespread use of pretrial detention, systemic rights violations, and ongoing crackdowns on opposition figures, the Gülen movement, and Kurdish activists.

23 October: A new report by the Civil Society in the Penal System (CISST) shows that 822 [children](#) under six now live with their mothers in Turkey’s overcrowded prisons.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

24 October: Seventeen people, including 16 migrants and a smuggler, [drowned](#) when an inflatable boat sank off the Turkish resort town of Bodrum in the Aegean Sea, while two survivors were rescued, in one of the latest deadly incidents on the perilous migration route to Greece.