

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 149 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 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

29 May: Turkish police [detained](#) 18 people in İstanbul's Taksim Square on Wednesday during a silent "standing man" protest marking the 12th anniversary of the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations, a mass civil movement against authoritarianism that remains a powerful symbol of dissent in Turkey.

29 May: In Diyarbakır, at least four people, including CHP Diyarbakır Deputy Provincial Chair Remzi Sürek and Bağlar District Chair Çiğdem Özturan, were [detained](#) by police for hanging a banner reading "Azadi/Free

İmamoğlu" on the city's historic walls; the banners were confiscated.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

28 May: Turkey's media watchdog RTÜK has [imposed](#) a 10-day broadcast blackout on pro-opposition Sözcü TV starting June 1, citing incitement of public unrest in its coverage of protests following the arrest of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

29 May: Turkish authorities have [blocked](#) access to 454 Grup Yorum videos on YouTube, including the group's official channel, citing national security and public order concerns; founded in 1985, Grup Yorum is a folk protest band known for its politically charged lyrics and longstanding opposition to the Turkish government.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

30 May: First Epözdemir, a board member of the İstanbul Bar Association, was [released](#) pending trial after being held for 127 days on charges of terrorist organization membership and propaganda, stemming from a broader investigation into the bar's leadership over a social media post calling for accountability in the deaths of two Kurdish journalists.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

29 May: A Turkish court has [accepted](#) an indictment seeking prison terms up to 15 years and political bans for 26 members of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), including the party's İstanbul provincial chair Özgür Çelik, over their alleged involvement in a courthouse protest earlier this year.

31 May: Turkish authorities have [issued](#) detention warrants for 47 officials linked to İstanbul's opposition-led municipality, escalating a series of corruption investigations widely criticized as politically motivated efforts to undermine the main opposition party and its jailed mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu.

31 May: A new expert report has [exonerated](#) two AKP-linked businessmen from blame in a 2023 earthquake building collapse that killed 35 people, sparking outrage from victims' families.

KURDISH MINORITY

26 May: A man wearing a white cap [attacked](#) the Çanakkale office of the Pro-Kurdish DEM Party with stones during a meeting, causing property damage but no injuries.

PRISON CONDITIONS

30 May: Turkey's new prison reform bill, part of the 10th Judicial Reform Package, has [drawn](#) sharp criticism from opposition lawmakers for excluding political prisoners and potentially deepening public distrust in the judiciary, despite provisions aimed at easing overcrowding and expanding house arrest eligibility.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

28 May: Turkey's Constitutional Court has [ruled](#) that authorities violated their duty to investigate credible torture allegations by Zabit Kişi, a former teacher convicted over alleged links to the Gülen movement, who was abducted from Kazakhstan and held incommunicado for 108 days, ordering renewed prosecution and compensation of 190,000 lira for the state's failure to uphold human rights standards.