

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 259 | Date 2-8 June

## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 79 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.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

3 June: Former history teacher Ramazan Aktaş, imprisoned in Turkey over alleged Gülen links, [died](#) of late-stage pancreatic cancer shortly after a delayed release, despite months of medical warnings and deteriorating health in overcrowded prison conditions.

## 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

4 June: The Beyoğlu District Governor's Office [banned](#) a press statement planned by the İHD İstanbul Branch LGBTI+ Commission for Pride Month on June 3, 2025,

along with all demonstrations and public events in the district for one day.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

4 June: Turkish journalist Tuğçe Yılmaz, editor at independent outlet Bianet, was released after being [detained](#) and questioned under Article 301 over an article referring to the 1915 Armenian killings as genocide.

4 June: Journalist Yeşim Tükel was [investigated](#) for distributing *Atılım* newspaper in İstanbul, accused of insulting the president over its content, and stated in her testimony that distributing a newspaper is not a crime.

4 June: Gıda Dedektifi ("Food Inspector"), a popular Turkish platform that analyzes food ingredients and labeling, had its website, 3 social media accounts, and 2 app platforms [blocked](#) by court order over its content on food products.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

4 June: Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has been [granted](#) new powers to review, censor, and order the destruction of Quran translations and religious texts it deems inappropriate, under a law criticized by scholars and rights groups as a violation of religious freedom and secular principles.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

2 June: UN human rights experts [condemned](#) criminal charges against the president and board members of the İstanbul Bar Association for calling for an investigation into the deaths of two Kurdish journalists in a suspected Turkish drone strike, warning the case undermines legal

independence and misuses terrorism laws to silence dissent.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

4 June: A coalition of Turkish political and civic leaders [issued](#) a declaration titled “Call for Justice,” stating that the 2017 constitutional amendments have effectively suspended the rule of law by concentrating power in the presidency and undermining judicial and legislative independence.

4 June: Turkish prosecutors have [charged](#) 12 people, including İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, over alleged vote manipulation at the CHP’s 2023 congress, seeking prison terms and political bans amid accusations the case is politically motivated.

5 June: Turkey’s Interior Ministry has [suspended](#) five more opposition CHP district mayors following their arrests on alleged financial crimes, bringing the total number of removed CHP mayors to 11 amid ongoing investigations and growing accusations of politically motivated repression.

5 June: Turkish prosecutors have [launched](#) an investigation into CHP leader Özgür Özel for allegedly insulting İstanbul Chief Prosecutor Akın Gürlek during a rally, following accusations that pro-government prosecutor Gürlek is targeting opposition figures.

## KURDISH MINORITY

4 June: Four members of the Arsîsa music group — Tuncay Taştan, Murat Koçak, Ayşe Güler, and Derya Kanpolat — were [detained](#) in Doğubayazıt, Ağrı, for performing a Kurdish song during a concert.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

5 June: The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) has [accused](#) authorities at Urfa No. 2 Prison in southeastern Turkey of systematically subjecting women and children visitors to degrading strip-searches and invasive physical contact, calling the practices unlawful and abusive.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

4 June: Human Rights Watch has [urged](#) Turkey to release Turkmen activist Umidajan Bekchanova, detained in

İstanbul and facing deportation to Turkmenistan, warning that her return would violate international law and expose her to persecution and torture.

## TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

2 June: Turkish refugee Orhan Artar and his three children, under UN protection, were [deported](#) from Rwanda to Turkey following pressure from Turkish authorities, leading to Artar's arrest in İstanbul over alleged Gülen movement links.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

4 June: In May, 21 women were [murdered](#) and 20 others died under suspicious circumstances in Turkey, according to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, which blames the government’s rollback of protections and judicial leniency for the ongoing violence against women.