

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR

Issue No. 285 | Date 1-7 December



ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 38 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.

4 December: Turkish police [detained](#) 12 people, including Trakya University students and graduates, in five provinces on allegations of involvement in the Gülen movement's so-called "current student structure," part of a years-long crackdown that has produced over 126,000 convictions and tens of thousands of ongoing investigations since 2016.

3 December: A former teacher, Venhar Can, was [jailed](#) in Edirne on renewed terrorism charges over alleged Gülen movement links despite pleading to care for her blind, mentally disabled 8-year-old son.

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 December: Sixteen TİP (Turkey Labor Party) student activists who protested fatal child labor under the MESEM vocational program were [arrested](#) in İstanbul on charges they deny, after a peaceful demonstration highlighting dozens of trainee deaths in a system widely criticized for endangering minors.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

2 December: Turkish journalist Furkan Karabay, detained for 201 days on charges including insulting the president and targeting counterterrorism officials over his critical reporting, was [convicted](#) and sentenced to four years and three months at his first hearing but immediately released due to time served.

5 December: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the arrest of YouTube journalist Hasan Köksoy and interview participant Halil Kürklü on charges of insulting President Erdoğan and inciting hatred after Kürklü recited a poem in a street interview Köksoy posted online.

5 December: Turkey [opened](#) 115,516 investigations for insulting public officials in 2024, issuing 14,458 convictions and 17,593 suspended sentences within a total of 1.17 million insult probes, highlighting the expansive use of Article 125 against speech critical of authorities.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

2 December: Turkish lawmakers [demanded](#) answers after a leaked Ukrainian inspection report alleged that evacuated Ukrainian orphans in an Antalya hotel suffered severe neglect and abuse, including two rapes resulting in

pregnancies, amid claims of inadequate oversight and prosecutors' closure of the case for lack of evidence.

3 December: Turkey's AKP–MHP alliance [voted down](#) an opposition proposal to broadcast jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's upcoming corruption trial live on TRT (National Broadcasting Channel), rejecting transparency demands in a politically charged case that could imprison Erdoğan's top rival for thousands of years.

5 December: Eleven people ordered released in the politically charged investigation targeting İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's municipality were [re-arrested](#) as they left prison after a prosecutor's objection, despite having no charges or indictment against them.

PRISON CONDITIONS

1 December: A 3-year-old boy living with his imprisoned mother convicted of alleged Gülen links was [blocked](#) from seeing his father during a prison visit in Ankara, highlighting ongoing rights concerns that now affect 822 children under age six living in Turkish prisons.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

4 December: Turkey [detained](#) Azerbaijani opposition figure and former MP Gültekin Hacıbeyli in İstanbul and moved to deport her as a "national security threat" at Baku's request over alleged coup support, despite her valid visa-free stay and her claim that the move aids repression of Azerbaijan's opposition.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

5 December: A senior CHP lawmaker [warned](#) that Turkey's women's rights and political representation are backsliding as the UN's 2025 report ranks the country 125th globally for women in parliament and 172nd for women in ministerial posts.