

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 49 people over alleged links to the Gülen movement. Since 2017, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) has issued 26 [opinions](#) concerning arbitrary detentions based on alleged membership in the Gülen movement, in which it has expressed grave concern that the widespread or systematic imprisonment of individuals linked 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.

22 December : Turkey [arrested](#) 1,601 people in 2025 and released 1,524 under judicial supervision in operations targeting alleged links to the Gülen movement, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said, despite the non-implementation by Türkiye of the European Court of Human Rights' pilot judgment in [Yalçınkaya v. Türkiye](#) and more than 6,000 similar rulings.

23 December: Turkish authorities [detained](#) seven people in four provinces on accusations of distributing financial aid to families of individuals imprisoned or dismissed over alleged links to the Gülen movement.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

24 December: A neighborhood watchman fatally [beat](#) 67-year-old retired man İzzet Karataş during a traffic dispute, an incident that comes amid documented cases of alleged abuse and ill-treatment by watchmen, including findings in a 2020 [report](#) by Human Rights Watch on excessive force and impunity.

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

23 December: Police [detained](#) 27 people in İzmir during morning home raids carried out over protests and activities calling for the closure of so-called "well-type" prisons and opposing long-standing isolation practices in Turkish prisons.

28 December: A Turkish court [arrested](#) Bilge Kaan Sarbat, a Kadıköy Youth Branch executive of the Republican People's Party, after he was detained along with 20 others during a CHP protest in Istanbul against the 2026 minimum wage, with Sarbat the only detainee placed in pretrial detention.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

22 December: Turkish authorities [arrested](#) journalist Zihni Çakır after a social media post in which he criticized Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç over his December meeting with Fenerbahçe chairman Sadettin Saran, questioning the handling and public perception of a subsequent drug-related investigation.

24 December: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the blocking of 177 news reports and social media posts related to allegations involving Deputy Culture and Tourism Minister Batuhan

Mumcu and his wife, citing national security and public order, according to the Freedom of Expression Association.

26 December: A Turkish court released journalist Barış Terkoğlu under judicial supervision after his brief [detention](#) over a YouTube report involving a prosecutor, as authorities seized his phone.

26 December: Turkey's broadcasting regulator Radio and Television Supreme Council [imposed](#) 99 sanctions in 2025 totaling about \$5.3 million—mostly targeting critical news and political commentary on outlets such as Sözcü TV, Tele 1 and Halk TV—prompting press freedom groups to denounce the penalties as politically motivated.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

23 December: Turkish prosecutors [detained](#) 22 officials from İstanbul's CHP-run Şile Municipality on charges including bribery, tender rigging and abuse of office, following the earlier arrest and suspension of Mayor Özgür Kabadayı, in an investigation announced by the İstanbul Anadolu Chief Public Prosecutor's Office amid similar cases targeting opposition municipalities.

KURDISH MINORITY

23 December: Attackers [carried](#) out what Amedspor and political representatives described as a hate crime targeting Kurdish people by assaulting Amedspor supporters, including women and children, outside Bodrum District Stadium ahead of the Bodrumspor-Amedspor match, injuring at least one woman.

26 December: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) academic Berfin Azdal to more than six years in prison for alleged membership in a terrorist organization in a case tied to an investigation into the People's Democratic Congress, with prosecutors citing lawful political activities as evidence.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

26 December: Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine [ruled](#) that jailed Beylikdüzü mayor Murat Çalık, detained in the March 19 crackdown targeting İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, can remain in prison despite serious cancer-related health risks.