

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 35 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.

7 January: Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals overturned the prison sentence of Leyla Arslan, who is currently pregnant and still [held](#) in Edirne Prison, ruling that the trial court failed to justify imposing a sentence above the statutory minimum.

11 January: Turkish authorities [detained](#) 77 people nationwide in the past two weeks, with 43 jailed pending trial, in operations targeting alleged links to the Gülen movement, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said.

## 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

8 January: At least 50 people were [detained](#) by police during an Istanbul protest organized by the Demokratik Kurumlar Platformu at Şişhane Square against attacks on the Kurdish neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqoud and Ashrafiye in Aleppo after authorities intervened citing "illegal slogans."

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

7 January: Turkish prosecutors [launched](#) a criminal investigation under the disinformation law into shopkeeper Murat Kırçı over a social media video criticizing economic conditions and addressing Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek.

8 January: Turkey [blocked](#) 26 X accounts linked to the left-wing People's Houses Association on national security and public order grounds without official notification, the Freedom of Expression Association reported.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

8 January: A former Turkish official, Tayhan Şimşek, who reported alleged corruption at the state-run company TURAŞ under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, was [detained](#) ahead of his trial on charges related to personal data, raising renewed concerns over whistleblower protection and accountability in Turkey.

9 January: A Turkish court [acquitted](#) Istanbul Bar Association President İbrahim Kaboğlu and 10 executive board members of terrorism-related charges, ruling that a statement calling for an investigation into the killing of journalists Nazım Daştan and Cihan Bilgin did not meet the legal threshold for conviction.

## KURDISH MINORITY

7 January: A court in southeastern Turkey [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Perihan Kaya to more than 18 months in prison on terrorism-related charges in a retrial, convicting her in absentia of membership in a terrorist organization, the press freedom watchdog Expression Interrupted reported.

9 January: Turkish authorities [blocked](#) access in Turkey to the X accounts of the pro-Kurdish Mezopotamya News Agency and Jin News Agency on national security and public order grounds, the Freedom of Expression Association reported.

9 January: A forged report submitted by the Turkish Gendarmerie in the investigation into the killing of a Kurdish man, Seyithan Durdu, shot by gendarmes on December 28, 2024 in Van's Saray district, has [exposed](#) multiple alleged irregularities in the case, including evidence tampering and pressure on the victim's wife.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

9 January: Turkish opposition lawmaker Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu [said](#) inmates at Erzurum Dumlu No. 2 Prison are subjected to systematic abuse including threats, denial of hot water and arbitrary disciplinary penalties.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

6 January: Two Uyghur couples and a 1-month-old baby were [placed](#) in administrative detention at removal centers in Turkey and now face possible deportation to China after being detained in Istanbul, despite having long-term residence permits.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

6 January: Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine [ruled](#) that 72-year-old inmate Abdullah Tırpan can remain imprisoned despite serious health problems, prompting family concerns that the decision endangers his life.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

8 January: Nearly nine in 10 women working in Turkey's film and television industry [report](#) experiencing harassment, violence, discrimination or other serious

workplace violations, according to a new survey-based report by the Cinema Workers' Union (SİNE-SEN).