

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR

Issue No. 292 | Date 19-25 January



ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 8 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.

24 January: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) a man to seven-and-a-half years in prison for allegedly transferring money to families of people jailed over purported links to the Gülen movement, a verdict critics say exemplifies Turkey's post-2016 practice of criminalizing humanitarian assistance to relatives of detainees accused of ties to the movement.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#), 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

20 January: Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç [said](#) prosecutors have launched investigations into 356 people protesting clashes in Syria involving the Kurdish-led Syrian

Democratic Forces, with 35 arrests, 45 releases under judicial supervision, and dozens still in custody, as protests spread across Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast.

23 January: The Diyarbakır Governor's Office [banned](#) all assemblies, marches, press statements and related protest activities across the province and restricted entry and exit of people and vehicles deemed to be coming for demonstrations for four days between January 23 and 26, 2026.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

21 January: French journalist Raphaël Boukandoura was [released](#) after being detained in İstanbul while covering a pro-Kurdish protest for *Libération*, after being taken into custody on Monday and briefly transferred to a migrant detention center while facing possible deportation.

21 January: Many journalists' and media outlets' social media accounts reporting on developments in Syria were [blocked](#) on grounds of national security and public order and rendered inaccessible in Turkey by X, including accounts belonging to MP Kamuran Tanhan, former MP Ferhat Encü, and Amedspor supporter groups.

23 January: A Turkish court [ordered](#) journalist Furkan Karabay to be placed under house arrest pending trial over accusations of disseminating misleading information linked to his reporting for Medyascope on the indictment of jailed İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

23 January: Five journalists — Heval Önkol, Pelşin Çetinkaya, Kesira Önel, Ferhat Akıncı and Muhammed Ali Yılmaz — who were [detained](#) while covering a pro-Rojava protest in Nusaybin, Mardin, on January 21 were released after giving statements to prosecutors.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

23 January: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) Ahmet Özer, the CHP mayor of İstanbul's Esenyurt district, to more than six years in prison on terrorism charges over alleged links to the PKK, in a case prosecutors tied to an alleged opposition "urban consensus" strategy ahead of local elections.

İstanbul and Ankara over femicide, impunity, and violence against women.

KURDISH MINORITY

22 January: The International Press Institute [urged](#) Turkish authorities to release Kurdish journalist Nedim Oruç, a reporter for Ajansa Welat, who was arrested on terrorism-related charges over his reporting while covering protests in Şırnak.

23 January: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) Kurdish journalist Serdar Altan to one-and-a-half years in prison for allegedly disseminating terrorist propaganda based on social media posts, reinstating a conviction previously overturned for violating freedom of expression.

PRISON CONDITIONS

21 January: The European Court of Human Rights [held](#) that Turkey's blanket restrictions on prisoners' weekend visits and telephone calls, which prevented regular contact with their school-age children, and the uploading of a prisoner's private correspondence to the UYAP system without adequate safeguards were neither necessary nor proportionate, thus violating Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and warranting compensation.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

20 January: Turkish authorities [barred](#) Uyghur man Erkin Hamut from re-entering Turkey after a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia by enforcing an undisclosed security ban at İstanbul's Sabiha Gökçen Airport, despite his long-term residence permit, lack of criminal record, and years of lawful residence.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

25 January: Police in İstanbul [detained](#) three Uzbek suspects after the mutilated body of a 37-year-old Uzbek woman was found in a trash bin in Şişli, an incident that triggered mass protests by women's rights groups in