

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 22 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 February: Turkish prosecutors have [detained](#) 16 people on terrorism financing charges for allegedly providing humanitarian aid to families of individuals jailed or dismissed over alleged links to the Gülen movement, as part of the ongoing post-2016 crackdown.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

24 February: A Geneva-based rights group [announced](#) that the UN Human Rights Committee has registered and communicated to Turkey a complaint over the 2018 death of jailed teacher Gülsu, who reportedly died in Mersin prison after being denied life-saving lupus medication during the post-coup crackdown on the Gülen movement.

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

26 February: Turkish prosecutors have [indicted](#) four pro-Palestinian activists for “publicly disseminating misleading information” after they alleged strip-searches and torture in custody following their protest at a forum attended by President Erdoğan, while separate charges of insulting the president and unlawful assembly remain pending and a court has imposed a media access ban on coverage of the allegations.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

1 March: The Turkish Journalists’ Union [called](#) for the immediate release of three journalists detained over footage filmed near İncirlik Air Base amid escalating regional tensions, as authorities cited alleged violations of restricted military zone laws and press freedom groups condemned the move as unjustified interference with journalistic work.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

26 February: A Turkish court has [acquitted](#) Aydın Mayor Özlem Çerçioğlu of bid-rigging charges six months after she defected from the CHP to the ruling AKP, amid opposition claims that mounting prosecutions and arrests of mayors are pressuring defections following the 2024 local election losses suffered by the government.

26 February: Turkey’s Constitutional Court president [said](#) the court lacks authority to enforce ECtHR rulings, as Ankara faces ongoing criticism from the Council of Europe for failing to implement judgments in high-profile cases

such as Selahattin Demirtaş and Osman Kavala, while Turkey continues to account for the largest share of pending applications before the Strasbourg court.

26 February: A Turkish prosecutor accused in court testimony and rights complaints of overseeing or witnessing torture, including in cases involving detainee deaths after the 2016 coup attempt, has been [appointed](#) deputy justice minister by presidential decree.

28 February: Turkish gendarmes [detained](#) Bolu Mayor Tanju Özcan from the main opposition CHP over alleged extortion involving supermarket chains and a municipality-linked entity, in a probe targeting 13 suspects, as his lawyer denied wrongdoing and the opposition described the move as part of a broader crackdown on opposition-run municipalities.

OTHER MINORITIES

27 February: The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has [urged](#) the State Department to place Turkey on its Special Watch List, citing the continued targeting of foreign-born Protestants and broader restrictions on religious communities, including entry bans, deportations and obstacles to places of worship and clergy activities.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

26 February: A Uyghur man holding a long-term Turkish residence permit has been [placed](#) in administrative detention and faces possible deportation to China, sparking concern within Turkey's large Uyghur diaspora amid longstanding fears over a pending extradition treaty.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

23 February: Turkish authorities have [refused](#) to suspend the more than seven-year prison sentence of 89-year-old inmate Erol Şengök, convicted over alleged Gülen movement links despite serious health problems, as rights advocates denounce the decision as inhumane.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

25 February: A Kosovo court has again [sentenced](#) former intelligence chief Driton Gashi to over four years in prison for abusing his authority in the 2018 illegal deportation of six Turkish nationals linked to the Gülen movement to

Turkey, ruling that the operation violated human rights standards and exposed them to a real risk of torture.