

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 325 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.

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

6 March: Turkish prosecutors [indicted](#) 11 students from Middle East Technical University for participating in protests in Ankara against the March 2025 detention of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, charging them with joining unlawful demonstrations and refusing to disperse.

8 March: Six people were [detained](#) in Istanbul after women gathered on Siraselviler Street for the 24th Feminist Night March on International Women's Day despite a one-day protest ban imposed by local authorities.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

2 March: Turkish prosecutors [launched](#) a criminal investigation into 168 public figures who signed a manifesto defending secularism, following a complaint by the Education Ministry alleging the text incited hatred and insulted state institutions.

6 March: An İstanbul court [handed](#) suspended prison sentences of one year, three months and 18 days to TÜSİAD chairman Orhan Turan and advisory council head Ömer Arif Aras for “publicly spreading misleading information” over speeches criticizing government policies.

7 March: Turkish prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into pop singer Hande Yener over allegations that she joined anti-government chants during two concerts in May 2025, following a complaint filed through the Presidency's Communication Center (CİMER).

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

2 March: Turkish prosecutors [opened](#) an investigation into two journalists and six relatives of earthquake victims over their criticism of court-appointed experts whose reports led to the release of suspects in trials related to deadly building collapses after the 2023 earthquakes.

3 March: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the arrest of Bolu Mayor Tanju Özcan from the opposition CHP on misconduct and extortion allegations linked to donations to a municipality-affiliated foundation, after which the Interior Ministry suspended him from office pending trial.

7 March: Turkey's Council of State [overturned](#) a lower court ruling reinstating an academic dismissed for signing the 2016 “Academics for Peace” petition, refusing to follow

a 2019 Constitutional Court judgment that found the dismissal violated freedom of expression.

PRISON CONDITIONS

9 March: The release of several political prisoners in Eskişehir has been [delayed](#) after prison administrative boards postponed their conditional release on grounds such as “lack of remorse” and the continuation of “organizational attitudes,” despite many having completed their parole eligibility and suffering from serious health problems.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

4 March: A seriously ill Turkish teacher imprisoned over alleged Gülen movement links was [returned](#) to prison despite doctors saying she needed emergency surgery and life-saving treatment, according to her family.

6 March: Turkish prosecutors [opened](#) an investigation after a 19-year-old detainee alleged that police officers beat and sexually assaulted him while in custody at a police station in Istanbul’s Kadıköy district.

6 March: A Turkish forensic medicine panel has again [ruled](#) that imprisoned former military officer Mehmet Gürler, who has advanced multiple sclerosis and is wheelchair-bound, is unfit to remain in prison, but authorities have not suspended his life sentence.