

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 2 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.

## ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

13 March: Ömer Alaca, a former imam dismissed under post-2016 coup emergency decrees, [died](#) of stage-four colon cancer after spending 502 days in prison in Van, where he said he was denied timely release despite developing the illness in custody.

## 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

13 March: A court in Kocaeli [handed](#) a suspended fine to CHP youth official Özlem Ünal for allegedly insulting a

police officer during protests sparked by the detention of Ekrem İmamoğlu in March 2025.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

11 March: Kurdish filmmaker Rojhilat Aksoy [is on trial](#) in Diyarbakır for allegedly insulting the Turkish nation after screening the animated documentary Aurora's Sunrise about the Armenian genocide.

12 March: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Enver Aysever to 10 months in prison for "inciting hatred and enmity" over remarks criticizing right-wing ideology but ordered his release after suspending the sentence.

12 March: Turkish prosecutors have [opened](#) an investigation into the X account of the "Presidential Candidate Office" that publishes messages from jailed İstanbul mayor and CHP presidential candidate Ekrem İmamoğlu, on allegations of insulting the president and spreading misleading information.

12 March: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalists Nazlı Ilıcak and Ahmet Altan to reduced prison terms in their third retrial for allegedly aiding the Gülen movement without membership over media commentary linked to the 2016 coup attempt.

12 March: A Turkish appeals court [upheld](#) prison sentences of two years and one month for Recep Adıgüzel and Berkant Fitoz for unlawfully obtaining and sharing personal data after livestreaming police officers while reporting an illegally parked car allegedly belonging to AKP lawmaker Meliha Akyol in Yalova.

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

10 March: Turkish prosecutors have [launched](#) an investigation into CHP leader Özgür Özel for allegedly insulting judges after he criticized the panel presiding over the corruption trial of jailed Ekrem İmamoğlu, who faces charges carrying a potential sentence of up to 2,430 years in prison.

12 March: A court in İstanbul [placed](#) Nurullah Efe Ankut, leader of the HKP, under house arrest on charges of insulting Recep Tayyip Erdoğan following remarks he made to the press after a court hearing.

13 March: Authorities in Turkey [detained](#) Ömer Günel, the CHP mayor of Kuşadası, along with five others in a bribery and misconduct investigation coordinated by the İstanbul prosecutor's office, in the latest legal action targeting opposition-run municipalities following the 2024 local elections.

## KURDISH MINORITY

10 March: Turkish prosecutors [indicted](#) Kurdish journalist Nedim Oruç on terrorism-related charges over his reporting and social media posts after he was detained while covering demonstrations in Cizre.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

9 March: Fourteen Afghan migrants, including women and children, [died](#) after a boat carrying irregular migrants collided with a Turkish coast guard vessel near Finike in Antalya, while 15 others reached shore and were detained as authorities launched an investigation into the incident.

12 March: Two Turkmen activists, Alisher Sakhatov and Abdulla Orusov, [remain](#) missing after being released from a deportation center despite a Constitutional Court of Turkey ruling suspending their deportation, raising fears they may have been unlawfully deported.