

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 82 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.

17 March: A court in İstanbul [ordered](#) the rearrest of four defendants including Zeki Doruk, owner of Tatbak and Hakmar, on charges of terrorism financing and membership in an armed organization for allegedly providing financial aid to families of individuals jailed or dismissed over Gülen movement links, overturning their release after a prosecutor's appeal.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

16 March: The Constitutional Court of Turkey [ruled](#) that the 2016 killing of Sürmi İnce by soldier Ali Dalgıran in Yüksekova did not violate the right to life, finding it resulted from negligence rather than intent.

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

16 March: A court in Gaziantep [ordered](#) the arrest of labor union leader Mehmet Türkmén after a speech supporting protesting carpet workers over unpaid wages, on charges including inciting public hostility and spreading misleading information.

17 March: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment by using disproportionate force against Ceyda Sungur during the 2013 Gezi Park protests and failing to ensure effective accountability.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

19 March: Freedom House [reported](#) that Turkey has seen a sharp two-decade decline in freedoms under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, earning the lowest score for due process and remaining the only European country classified as "Not Free."

22 March: Journalist İsmail Arı from BirGün was [detained](#) in Turkey on charges of "spreading false information," amid ongoing concerns over press freedom and the criminalization of journalism.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

17 March: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of 93 individuals accused of Gülen movement links, finding that arrests lacked reasonable suspicion and that courts used insufficient and

generalized reasoning to justify and prolong pretrial detention.

17 March: Prosecutors in Bolu [filed](#) an indictment seeking up to three years in prison for jailed Republican People's Party (CHP) mayor Tanju Özcan on blackmail charges involving a municipal employee, alongside three co-defendants, with the trial set to begin soon.

KURDISH MINORITY

18 March: Police in Cizre [detained](#) a 15-year-old boy for wearing a "Kurdistan" T-shirt and he later filed a complaint alleging ill-treatment, while facing charges of insulting and resisting a public official.

PRISON CONDITIONS

19 March: A prison board in Karabük has for the eighth time [delayed](#) the conditional release of Kurdish inmate Adem Oktay, citing lack of remorse despite him having served the required term, raising concerns over arbitrary and politicized parole practices in Turkey.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

16 March: The İzmir Bar Association [said](#) it will challenge a decision not to prosecute in the case of Michael Adufu, who died after detention in İzmir, citing unresolved questions over officials' responsibility and his access to medical care.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

18 March: Former teacher Nermin Varol, previously treated for cancer, is being [held](#) in an overcrowded prison in Ankara after a conviction over alleged Gülen links, with relatives warning that the conditions pose serious health risks.