

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 103 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.

25 March: Turkish prosecutors [ordered](#) the detention of nine people for allegedly using the ByLock messaging app despite [ECtHR rulings](#) because authorities continue to treat its use as evidence of terrorism-related membership without individualized proof.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

24 March: A critically ill 70-year-old Kurdish prisoner, Mehmet Edip Taşar, [died](#) in hospital after authorities repeatedly denied his release despite severe health conditions, raising concerns over failure to suspend sentences for seriously ill inmates.

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

24 March: Turkish police [detained](#) 170 people in raids linked to Nevruz celebrations over the past week on allegations of PKK propaganda, highlighting continued criminalization of Kurdish expression despite ongoing peace initiative efforts.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

23 March: Turkish authorities have [investigated](#) at least 70 journalists under the 2022 disinformation law because its broad and vague provisions allow prosecutors to criminalize critical reporting as “false information,” leading to detentions, arrests and prosecutions.

26 March: Turkish authorities [reblocked](#) KHK TV’s YouTube and X accounts just months after a Constitutional Court ruling ordering their restoration.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

3 March: Prosecutors in Istanbul have [sought up](#) to 35 years in prison for jailed Beyoğlu Mayor İnan Güney on corruption-related charges and requested merging his case with the broader trial against İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

24 March: A Turkish appeals court [dropped](#) cases against public officials over the 2014 Soma mining disaster that killed 301 miners, citing the statute of limitations, effectively ending accountability proceedings against state authorities despite earlier findings of oversight failures.

25 March: Three land registry officials were [arrested](#) in Turkey for allegedly unlawfully accessing Justice Minister Akin Gürlek's property records, in a politically sensitive investigation following opposition claims about his wealth.

25 March: Lawyers for Osman Kavala [told](#) the European Court of Human Rights that Turkey continues to detain him based on previously discredited evidence despite earlier rulings ordering his release, as the case was heard by the court's Grand Chamber.

27 March: Turkish authorities [detained](#) Uşak Mayor Özkan Yalım and 10 others in a bribery investigation, part of an expanding legal crackdown targeting opposition CHP-run municipalities.

KURDISH MINORITY

27 March: Turkey's Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that security forces violated the right to life and human dignity of Hacı Lokman Birlik, a Kurdish man killed in 2015 whose body was dragged behind an armored vehicle, in a case highlighting longstanding impunity concerns.

PRISON CONDITIONS

23 March: A CİSST report [revealed](#) worsening prison overcrowding in Turkey, with nearly 900 young children living behind bars with their mothers because of rising incarceration rates and limited alternatives to detention.

26 March: Bar associations in Turkey [warned](#) that the Justice Ministry's new e-Avukat video call system risks violating confidentiality and fair trial rights because calls may be visually monitored and replace essential private, in-person lawyer-client meetings.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

26 March: The Human Rights Association [called](#) for the release of a 74-year-old seriously ill inmate, Mehmet Emin Çam, because his life-threatening conditions have worsened in prison despite repeated refusals to suspend his sentence based on disputed medical assessments.

27 March: Authorities in Turkey [kept](#) a severely ill prisoner, Mehmet Gürler, with advanced multiple sclerosis behind bars despite two forensic medical reports deeming him unfit for detention, after a prosecutor rejected his release citing public safety concerns.

GENDER RIGHTS

25 March: Turkey's Health Ministry [dismissed](#) a transgender doctor despite a court-ordered reinstatement because of alleged "immorality" and social media activity, raising concerns over discrimination and disregard for judicial rulings.