

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 105 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.

3 April: A Turkish mother, Hatice Tekcan, was [jailed](#) to serve a six-year, three-month sentence over alleged Gülen movement links, despite a European Court of Human Rights ruling that Turkey violated the principle of no punishment without law and that use of the publicly available ByLock messaging app does not constitute a crime.

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 EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

31 March: A Turkish prosecutor is [seeking](#) up to 19.5 years in prison for journalist Alican Uludağ over 22 social media

posts on charges including insulting the president and spreading disinformation.

2 April: Turkish prosecutors have [indicted](#) journalist Mehmet Murat Yıldırım for allegedly insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan based on his reporting and social media posts, with a first hearing set for September 8, under Article 299 of the penal code that carries up to four years in prison.

3 April: Justice Minister Akın Gürlek [said](#) Turkey plans to require social media users to log in with national ID numbers within about three months, adding that the government has reached an agreement with platforms on mandatory identity verification.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

1 April: A Turkish court has [ordered](#) the pretrial detention of activist Esra Işık for allegedly obstructing officials during a land survey tied to a contested coal mine expansion in Muğla, where villagers are pursuing ongoing legal challenges against expropriation and environmental impact.

1 April: Five UN special rapporteurs have [urged](#) Turkey to stop using broadly defined counterterrorism laws to prosecute human rights defenders and lawyers, citing cases against members of the Human Rights Association (İHD) and calling for legal reforms to prevent the criminalization of legitimate rights advocacy.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

31 March: Two years after Turkey's 2024 local elections, a municipal workers' union reports that 85 opposition-held municipalities have [changed](#) control through trustee

appointments, removals, arrests and council shifts, affecting over 8.8 million voters.

3 April: Turkey's Constitutional Court has again [ruled](#) that jailed city planner Tayfun Kahraman's rights were violated after a lower court refused to implement its earlier retrial decision, highlighting ongoing concerns over judicial compliance and the rule of law.

4 April: A Turkish court has [arrested](#) Bursa Mayor Mustafa Bozbey, a mayor from the main opposition CHP, on corruption-related charges amid broader tensions over pressure on opposition-run municipalities.

KURDISH MINORITY

30 March: Turkish authorities have [blocked](#) access to the X accounts of several pro-Kurdish media outlets, journalists and civil society groups without official explanation, in a move criticized as part of broader digital censorship amid ongoing pressure on Kurdish-linked expression.

PRISON CONDITIONS

3 April: An opposition lawmaker [said](#) Turkey's family minister referred to 891 children under age six living in prison with their mothers as "terrorists' children," highlighting concerns over the treatment of minors affected by post-2016 crackdown-related detentions.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

1 April: Nineteen Afghan migrants, including a baby, [died](#) when an inflatable boat sank off the coast of Bodrum in Turkey's Muğla province after taking on water during an attempted high-speed escape.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

30 March: Two Kurdish construction workers have [filed](#) a criminal complaint alleging police beat and mistreated them during detention after attending Nevruz celebrations in İstanbul, supported by medical reports documenting their injuries.

GENDER RIGHTS

2 April: An international human rights report [says](#) Turkish authorities are using broadly defined "obscenity" and "indecent" laws, particularly Penal Code Articles 225 and

226, to restrict LGBTQ+ expression and activism, warning that proposed amendments could further expand criminal liability for activities deemed contrary to "biological sex" or "general morality."