

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 70 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.

7 May: Turkish authorities [detained](#) 32 people across multiple provinces over alleged links to the Gülen movement, including nine individuals previously convicted based on ByLock use despite the [ECtHR's Yalçınkaya judgment](#) finding that the app's use alone was insufficient to justify terrorism convictions.

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.

6 May: Turkey's top appeals court [dropped](#) the long-running Dargeçit JİTEM case concerning the enforced disappearance of eight people, including three children, in the 1990s after ruling that the statute of limitations had expired, ending one of the most closely followed

accountability cases linked to alleged abuses by security forces in the Kurdish Southeast.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

8 May: Turkish police [detained](#) 6 students after a scuffle during a concert at Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in Ankara, with students claiming the incident was used to target the university's long-standing spring festival.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

4 May: Journalist Süleyman Topbaş, the Aydın provincial representative of the Internet Journalists Federation, was allegedly [assaulted](#) in central Aydın by a group claiming ties to the far-right Grey Wolves while he was with his wife, prompting a police investigation.

7 May: Turkish prosecutors [launched](#) a criminal investigation into jailed Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) deputy co-chair Sezin Uçar over allegations that she insulted Justice Minister Akın Gürlek in a newspaper article criticizing his appointment and the government's handling of democratic institutions and court rulings.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

5 May: The ECtHR's Grand Chamber [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of Şaban Yasak by convicting him of terrorism over alleged Gülen links based on lawful past activities without proving criminal intent, while also finding that his years-long detention in severely overcrowded prison conditions amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment, further confirming after the landmark [Yalçınkaya judgment](#) that Turkey's post-coup convictions based on alleged Gülen links violate

fundamental principles of criminal law and individualized criminal responsibility.

5 May: The father of a journalist who reported on alleged links between an AKP official and a suspect in the disappearance case of student Gülistan Doku was [suspended](#) from his public sector job following an online targeting campaign by a pro-government media figure who disclosed the family's personal information on social media.

7 May: Turkey's Human Rights Association (İHD) [called](#) on the government to revise the widely used terrorism membership provision under Article 314 of the Penal Code and establish effective retrial mechanisms for convictions that conflict with ECtHR case law following the Grand Chamber's *Yasak* judgment.

8 May: Former Turkish prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, ex-culture minister Ertuğrul Günay and opposition politician Mustafa Yeneroğlu [called](#) for retrials and legal remedies for thousands convicted in Turkey's post-coup crackdown following the ECtHR's *Yasak v. Türkiye* judgment, which found that convictions based on lawful past activities violated fundamental legal principles.

PRISON CONDITIONS

8 May: Three-quarters of the 4,256 human rights complaints submitted to the Turkish Parliament over the past year [came](#) from prisoners, with complaints largely concerning healthcare access, ill-treatment, solitary confinement and prison overcrowding, as Turkey's prison population surpassed 412,000 despite growing concerns over the conditions of sick inmates.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

8 May: Turkish coast guard teams [rescued](#) 43 migrants from a half-sunken boat off the coast of İzmir's Foça district while a 9-year-old child was found dead, and one suspected human smuggler was arrested in connection with the incident.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

5 May: Detained trade union leader Mehmet Türkmen was allegedly [subjected](#) to ill-treatment and placed in solitary confinement in a Gaziantep prison after speaking out about severe detention conditions and the lack of medical care

for sick prisoners, including inmates reportedly denied medication and timely hospital access.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

6 May: At least 26 women were [murdered](#) by men and 23 others died under suspicious circumstances in Turkey in April, amid ongoing criticism over the rollback of protections for women following Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.