

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 309 | Date 18-24 May

As a human rights advocacy organization, we closely monitor human rights violations in Turkey. As part of this effort, we publish a weekly bulletin documenting the human rights violations that occur throughout the week. In addition, we regularly share up-to-date statistics and categorized sources related to these cases. The Turkey Rights Monitor report has been published consistently for 309 consecutive weeks and is being shared with institutions, organizations, and relevant stakeholders engaged in human rights. You can access updated information and statistics via our website: <https://turkeyrightsmonitor.com/>

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 27 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

19 May: Turkey's Constitutional Court [ruled](#) that authorities violated teacher Gökhan Açıkkollu's right to life and the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment after he died in police custody in 2016, finding that the state failed both to protect him and to effectively investigate allegations of abuse.

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

20 May: A Turkish court [handed](#) suspended sentences to three Boğaziçi University students for water-based protest graffiti after İmamoğlu's detention, despite the affected institutions saying they suffered no damage and did not wish to file complaints.

25 May: Turkish riot police [used](#) tear gas and water cannon to disperse an İzmir rally called by ousted CHP leader Özgür Özel after a court ruling removed him from the party leadership.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

18 May: Turkish journalist Yelis Ayaz was [jailed](#) under Turkey's disinformation law after reporting allegations that an AKP lawmaker's son brought a weapon to school, in another case raising press freedom concerns over the prosecution of journalists for disputed information.

19 May: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the rearrest of local journalist Mehmet Yetim one day after his release from pretrial detention, following a prosecutor's appeal in a case brought under Turkey's disinformation law over a corrected social media post about a school knife attack.

20 May: Turkish journalist Şule Aydın was [questioned](#) as a suspect in an espionage-related investigation based on an evidence-free email complaint accusing her of foreign intelligence links and criminalizing her critical journalism and satirical political commentary.

21 May: Turkish prosecutors are [investigating](#) two BirGün editors for allegedly insulting President Erdoğan over an article that directly quoted a student group criticizing pressure on university students.

26 May: Turkish authorities [blocked](#) access to 93 social media accounts and launched investigations over alleged “provocative” posts after a controversial court ruling removed the CHP leadership.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

25 May: UN special rapporteurs [expressed](#) concern that the prosecution of trans rights defender Defne Güzel over May 17 Association materials appeared linked to her LGBTI+ advocacy.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

18 May: A businessman [tried](#) alongside İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu said in court that his earlier testimony under Turkey’s effective remorse provisions was false and prosecutor-directed, raising further concerns over the credibility of evidence in the politically charged İstanbul Municipality case.

21 May: A Turkish appeals court [annulled](#) the CHP’s 2023 congress, temporarily removing Özgür Özel and the current party administration while reinstating former chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, in a major judicial intervention that deepened concerns over pressure on Turkey’s main opposition party.

25 May: Nine CHP members were [arrested](#) in an investigation into alleged irregularities at the party’s 2023 congress, deepening the legal and political crisis triggered by a court ruling that annulled the congress.

KURDISH MINORITY

22 May: Turkish authorities have [rearrested](#) two Kurdish minors and are seeking a third over alleged terrorism propaganda during Newroz celebrations in İstanbul, in cases of the continued criminalization of nonviolent Kurdish symbols, songs and expression.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

21 May: Iranian asylum seeker Seyedmahdi Mahdian was [found](#) dead in Eskişehir 10 months after suffering severe

brain injuries in an allegedly unrecorded workplace accident, following reported failures to access medical care, home support or compensation due to his informal employment, lack of insurance and unresolved protection status.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

18 May: A Turkish hospital [reported](#) that 73-year-old Abdullah Tırpan, convicted over alleged Gülen movement links and unable to speak since February, can remain in prison despite multiple serious health problems, following a similar finding by Turkey’s forensic medicine authority.

22 May: Turkish authorities are [blocking](#) the release of critically ill inmate Mehmet Parlak, convicted over alleged Gülen movement links, through disputed prison evaluations and contradictory reports despite his severe kidney condition and eligibility for supervised release, opposition lawmaker Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu said.