

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue No. 313 | Date 15-21 June

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 313 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 19 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.

15 June: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the pretrial detention of Rümeyza Şanal, who was jailed with her 9-month-old infant despite informing the court of the baby's medical condition and need for breastfeeding.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

19 June: Former police officer Durmuş Zorlu, imprisoned over alleged links to the Gülen movement, [died](#) of a heart attack in İzmir's Kırıklar Prison after being re-arrested earlier this year to serve a terrorism-related sentence.

18 June: A Turkish court [acquitted](#) Specialist Sgt. Hakan Alkan over the 2009 death of 18-month-old Mehmet Uytun, who was fatally struck by a tear gas canister while sitting on his home's balcony in southeastern Turkey.

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.

19 June: Erhan Karaal, an executive at an İstanbul municipality company and a defendant in the case against Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, was [found](#) alive after being abducted, bound and severely beaten, with prosecutors detaining eight suspects as the investigation continues.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

16 June: Private school teachers and public school teacher candidates in Turkey [began](#) a hunger strike in Ankara after police detained protesters demanding better working conditions, fair public school recruitment and the abolition of oral interviews in teacher appointments.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

17 June: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of veteran journalist Tuncer Çetinkaya by keeping him in pretrial detention for nearly two years without sufficient justification.

19 June: A Turkish court [handed](#) activist Yunus Kılıç an 11-month suspended prison sentence for allegedly insulting

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by chanting a slogan during a pro-Palestine rally in İstanbul.

19 June: Turkish authorities [revoked](#) the press card of journalist İsmail Arı while he was jailed, reportedly citing a criminal record that official documents show does not exist.

19 June: Turkey has [blocked](#) access to the global online petition platform Change.org under a court order.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

17 June: Turkish authorities [detained](#) human rights defender Mehmet Acettin, co-owner of the Etkin News Agency (ETHA), on accusations of financing a terrorist organization as part of an investigation targeting left-wing media figures.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

16 June: The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe [renewed](#) its call for the immediate release of Selahattin Demirtaş, Figen Yüksekdağ and Osman Kavala, citing Turkey's continued failure to implement binding judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

17 June: Turkish police [detained](#) 15 people, including Seferihisar Deputy Mayor İbrahim Gökhan Pehlivan in İzmir, in a bribery investigation, while authorities also suspended Silivri Mayor Bora Balcıoğlu in İstanbul following his arrest in a separate corruption case.

19 June: Turkey's parliament has [received](#) requests to lift the legislative immunity of 12 opposition lawmakers, including CHP leader Özgür Özel, amid escalating legal pressure on opposition figures.

19 June: Turkish authorities [detained](#) opposition CHP mayors Ali Ercan Akpolat in İstanbul and Mustafa Turgut in Mersin in new corruption investigations as the party faces a deepening leadership crisis following a court-imposed leadership change.

PRISON CONDITIONS

15 June: A report by the Vicdan Foundation [found](#) that nearly four in five children under 6 living with their mothers in Turkish prisons show signs of developmental

delay and more than 81 percent suffer psychological harm due to prison conditions.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

16 June: A new report by the Migrant Refugee Solidarity Network [says](#) Syrian migrant women, children and LGBTQ+ people in İstanbul face increasing barriers to healthcare, education and legal protection amid growing fears of deportation and pressure to return to Syria.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

18 June: A social media campaign is [calling](#) for the emergency release of 74-year-old critically ill prisoner Abdullah Tırpan, who is imprisoned over alleged links to the Gülen movement despite severe health conditions and warnings that his life is at imminent risk.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

18 June: Berlin's domestic intelligence agency [says](#) Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MİT) conducts intelligence activities in the German capital, including collecting information from pro-government members of the Turkish diaspora on alleged supporters of the Gülen movement.