

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 152 people over alleged links to the Gülen movement. In October 2020, a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [opinion](#) said that widespread or systematic imprisonment of individuals with alleged links 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.

April 20: [Abdülazim Özdemir](#), a 49-year-old engineer who was diagnosed with liver cancer during his 24-month incarceration, died after a belated release from prison. Özdemir was jailed on terrorism related charges over his alleged links to the Gülen movement.

April 23: Gümüşhane prosecutors [dropped](#) the investigation in the case of former police chief Mustafa Kabakçioğlu who was found dead in a prison quarantine cell after showing symptoms of Covid-19.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunç](#) and [Hüseyin Galip Küçüközyiğit](#), former public sector workers who were sacked from their jobs by decree-laws during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who were reported missing respectively as of August 6, 2019 and December 29, 2020, in what appear to be the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

April 19: The police in Batman [detained](#) 13 people for attending Newroz celebrations. The detainees were released on probation on April 23.

April 19: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a worker's protest, detaining five people.

April 19: The İstanbul Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 30 days.

April 19: The Trabzon Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of seven days.

April 19: An İstanbul prosecutor [indicted](#) 97 students who took part in Boğaziçi University protests.

April 20: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) two people holding a protest to call for the release of a sick prisoner.

April 20: The Siirt Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

April 21: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a workers' protest, briefly detaining at least 30 people.

April 21: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) two people holding a protest to call for the release of a sick prisoner.

April 22: The police in İstanbul [intervened](#) in a press briefing held on the occasion of the upcoming International Workers' Day, briefly detaining 41 people.

April 25: The gendarmes in Rize [detained](#) 15 environmental activists protesting against the construction of a quarry.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

April 19: An İstanbul court [handed down](#) a suspended prison sentence of 10 months to journalist Erol Mütercimler over his remarks on a TV program.

April 20: Van prosecutors [indicted](#) freelance journalist Ruşen Takva, seeking a prison sentence of up to 18 years for attending the release of a press statement by the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP).

April 20: Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published its [2021 World Press Freedom Index](#) in which Turkey was ranked 153rd out of 180 countries.

April 20: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Mezopotamya news agency, the 31th such ban on the pro-Kurdish outlet.

April 21: Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into opposition MP Engin Altay on charges of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

April 21: President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [filed](#) an appeal against a recent ruling by an İstanbul court to acquit veteran actors Müjdat Gezen and Metin Akpınar of charges of insulting him.

April 21: The Information Technologies and Communication Authority (BTK) [banned](#) access to JinNews, the 24th such ban imposed on the pro-Kurdish agency since its establishment in 2017.

April 21: RTÜK, the official media regulator, [imposed](#) monetary sanctions on KRT TV and Halk TV broadcaster over the remarks of guests criticizing the government.

April 22: A Balıkesir court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about the son of a former ruling party deputy who was summoned to testify in 2014 for allegedly receiving weed in a box.

April 22: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) seven left-wing activists who were handing out fliers about the upcoming International Labor Day as well as eight others hanging a banner.

April 25: The police in Konya [detained](#) a person for allegedly insulting Atatürk, the founder of the republic.

KURDISH MINORITY

April 20: Van prosecutors [indicted](#) freelance journalist Ruşen Takva, seeking a prison sentence of up to 18 years for attending the release of a press statement by the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP).

April 20: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to a web address used by the Mezopotamya news agency, the 31th such ban on the pro-Kurdish outlet.

April 21: The Information Technologies and Communication Authority (BTK) [banned](#) access to JinNews, the 24th such ban imposed on the pro-Kurdish agency since its establishment in 2017.

April 21: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to web pages used by Umut Gazetesi and Yeni Demokrasi news websites.

April 22: Statistics released by the Ministry of Health [demonstrated](#) that predominantly Kurdish provinces have the lowest Covid-19 vaccination rates in the country.

PRISON CONDITIONS

April 22: Opposition MP Züleyha Gülüm [claimed](#) in a written parliamentary question to Justice Minister Abdülhamit Gül that prison parole boards discriminate against political prisoners who are eligible for parole.

April 23: Gümüşhane prosecutors [dropped](#) the investigation in the case of former police chief Mustafa Kabakçioğlu who was found dead in a prison quarantine cell after showing symptoms of Covid-19.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

April 20: A Somali restaurant and its employees were [attacked](#) by a mob in Ankara after they were targeted by anti-migrant reporting by the Sözcü newspaper.

April 21: A hospital in İstanbul has [refused](#) to discharge the newborn baby of a refugee family for the past four months because the family has been unable to pay the hospital bill.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

April 21: The police in İstanbul verbally threatened and physically [assaulted](#) a person who was released on

probation after being detained for attending Boğaziçi University protests and who was visiting the police station as part of the judicial supervision.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

April 21: A Deutsche Welle report [revealed](#) that Turkish police departments are giving incorrect and conflicting information to women who request assistance and protection against violent and abusive partners.