

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 24 | November 30-December 6, 2020

ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

December 1: İstanbul prosecutors [rejected](#) a request for paralyzed prisoner Abdullah Turan's release, in disregard of an official medical report which found him unfit to remain behind bars.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

December 1: Security forces in Hakkari [shot dead](#) 16-year-old Özcan Erbaş. The local Governor's Office said the victim was hit by a "warning shot."

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

November 30: [Bahtiyar Fırat](#), a Kurdish man who went missing upon arrival in İstanbul in October turned up in custody in an İstanbul police station after 45 days of disappearance. Family members reported seeing marks of torture on Fırat during their meeting.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

December 2: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

December 3: A fine amounting to TL 140,000 (€ 15,000) was [imposed](#) on 45 HDP politicians and supporters for violating social distancing rules during a demonstration held to protest the arrest of local HDP politicians in Osmaniye.

December 3: The Van Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

December 4: A Bitlis court [sentenced](#) Kurdish writer Gulgeş Deryaspi to 6 years, 3 months in prison for

alleged membership in a terrorist organization, over her participation in protest marches and demonstrations.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

November 30: The International Press Institute published a [report](#) which found that at least 130 hearings involving journalists as defendants were held and 22 journalists had been arrested in 2020 as of November, while 30 new investigations or lawsuits were filed against journalists in the first eight months of 2020.

November 30: Ankara prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into CHP MP Ali Mahir Başarır over remarks on a TV show criticizing Turkey's sale of a military tank factory to Qatar.

November 30: Authorities [banned](#) a book by Austrian writer Christine Nöstlinger titled "Die Ilse ist Weg" (The Ilse is gone) on the grounds that it promotes immorality.

December 1: A German citizen was detained in Turkey at the beginning of November and is now [prohibited](#) from leaving the country pending a court date for allegedly insulting the Turkish state.

December 1: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Velat Öztekin to 1 year, 6 months, 22 days in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda. Öztekin is a former employee of the now-closed Kurdish-language Azadiya Welat newspaper.

December 1: Nilüfer Aydan, a 80-year-old actress [appeared](#) at her first hearing before an İstanbul court for a case in which she is facing more than eight years in prison on charges of insulting the president.

December 1: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news articles about the resignation of former Finance

Minister Berat Albayrak, citing violation of personal rights.

December 2: The Constitutional Court ruled that no rights violation took place in the re-imprisonment of journalist and author [Ahmet Altan](#), after reviewing his individual application. Altan has been held behind bars on account of his publications since September 2016 and his application at the European Court of Human Rights has been pending before the Strasbourg court since January 2017.

December 2: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Dicle Müftüoğlu to 1 year, 3 months in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda, over a report featuring the picture of a Kurdish militant in Syria.

December 2: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to sentence university students Roza Kahya and Pelin Şahin to 1 year in prison and 10 months in prison respectively on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda, for hanging a banner in the university campus protesting Turkey's military incursion into northwestern Syria.

December 2: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Ender İmrek of insult charges which he faced over an article he wrote about First Lady Emine Erdoğan's luxury handbag.

December 2: [Taylan Kulaçoğlu](#), a popular anti-government Twitter was released from jail. Kulaçoğlu was arrested in May after being targeted by pro-government media circles.

December 2: Media regulator RTÜK [imposed](#) an administrative fine and a broadcast ban of five episodes against a program by the Habertürk TV over the remarks of Ali Mahir Başarır criticizing Turkey's sale of a military tank factory to Qatar.

December 2: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to a column by journalist Yalçın Bayer and blog entries, citing violation of personal rights.

December 2: A Malatya court [ruled](#) to block access to a news story by the BirGün newspaper about university executives, citing violation of personal rights.

December 3: The authorities [imposed](#) fines for a second time, this time TL 30 million (€ 3.15 million) each on social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Periscope and TikTok for failing to comply with a new social media law that tightens control

over social media by requiring platforms to name a representative in Turkey. If the companies continue to refuse to comply, private businesses and individuals in Turkey will be prohibited in January from giving ads to them. In addition, the authorities will be able to reduce the platforms' Internet bandwidth by as much as 90 percent in the following months. Online streaming platform Netflix [announced](#) that it would open an office in İstanbul by the second half of 2021.

December 3: The police in Muğla [detained](#) Kasım Çağlı, a local leftist labor union executive, for allegedly insulting the president on social media.

December 3: An Ankara court [ordered](#) CHP MP Özgür Özel to pay TL 15,000 (€ 1,580) in damages to Defense Minister Hulusi Akar for insulting him, over his remarks against Akar during a parliamentary session.

December 4: The police in Adana [detained](#) three individuals for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

December 4: İstanbul prosecutors [indicted](#) comedians Pınar Fidan and Özgür Tosun over remarks in a stand-up show, demanding the comedians' imprisonment.

December 4: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to the new URL of the Jinnews website.

December 4: An Antalya court [ruled](#) to block access to the Gazete Yolculuk newspaper's online edition.

December 5: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) two Russian journalists on charges of unauthorized filming of a drone manufacturing facility.

December 5: The police in İzmir [detained](#) local union executive Ünal Kaymak over his social media comments.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

December 1: An İstanbul appeals court [ruled](#) to uphold the prison sentences previously handed down to human rights defenders Taner Kılıç, Günel Kurşun, İdil Eser and Özlem Dalkıran on terrorism-related charges.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 2: The Constitutional Court ruled that no rights violation took place in the re-imprisonment of journalist and author [Ahmet Altan](#), after reviewing his individual application. Altan has been held behind bars

on account of his publications since September 2016 and his application at the European Court of Human Rights has been pending before the court since January 2017.

December 3: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) [expelled](#) 13 judges and prosecutors from the legal profession over alleged links to the Gülen movement.

KURDISH MINORITY

November 30: Guards in a Kocaeli prison [raided](#) the wards of Kurdish politicians after they launched a hunger strike to protest prison conditions, confiscating their books, notes and pens.

December 1: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) 20 local Kurdish politician, including Berivan Kutlu, the former district co-mayor of Cizre who was ousted by the Interior Ministry and local HDP executive Sekvan Kılınç.

December 1: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Velat Öztekin to 1 year, 6 months, 22 days in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda. Öztekin is a former employee of the now-closed Kurdish-language Azadiya Welat newspaper.

December 1: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) local HDP officials Emine Kaya, Resul Sadak and Suna Güneş.

December 1: The police in Denizli briefly [detained](#) five local HDP politicians and activists.

December 2: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) journalist Dicle Müftüoğlu to 1 year, 3 months in prison on charges of disseminating terrorist propaganda, over a report featuring the picture of a Kurdish militant in Syria.

December 2: An İstanbul court ruled to arrest Şişli deputy mayor [Cihan Yavuz](#) who was detained on Oct. 26 as part of an investigation into Kurdish political groups.

December 2: The Interior Ministry [removed](#) from office three members of the Şırnak city council who were detained on Dec. 1.

December 3: A fine amounting to TL 140.000 (€ 15.000) was [imposed](#) on 45 HDP politicians and supporters for violating social distancing rules during a demonstration held to protest the arrest of local HDP politicians in Osmaniye.

December 4: A Bitlis court [sentenced](#) Kurdish writer Gulgeş Deryaspi to 6 years, 3 months in prison for

alleged membership in a terrorist organization, over her participation in protest marches and demonstrations.

December 4: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to the new URL of the Jinnews website.

MISTREATMENT OF CITIZENS ABROAD

December 2: German authorities have taken action to deport [Mustafa Kaşka](#), a Turkish asylum seeker who faces an arrest warrant in Turkey over his links to the Gülen movement.

OTHER MINORITIES

December 2: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) nine trans women and sealed off their buildings, citing prostitution and violation of Covid-19 measures.

PRISON CONDITIONS

November 30: Guards in a Kocaeli prison [raided](#) the wards of Kurdish politicians after they launched a hunger strike to protest prison conditions, confiscating their books, notes and pens.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 1: The municipal police in İstanbul [used](#) excessive force against a minor while confiscating his portable sale counter. In a statement to the press afterwards, the underage individual said that one officer choked him during the incident.

December 4: The guards in a Diyarbakır prison [tortured](#) prisoner Mehmet Sıdık Meşe and threatened him with death not to reveal the torture.

December 4: The guards in a Rize prison [battered](#) prisoner Serhat Karsu and confiscated his belongings.

December 6: [Video footage](#) circulating on Turkish social media showed a shop owner being beaten by the police after arguing over a fine.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

December 2: A monthly [report](#) by a women's rights groups found that 29 women in Turkey were victims of fatal domestic violence in November while Bianet's monitoring [report](#) put the number at 31.