

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

October 19: [Barış Avıalan](#), an ex-colonel jailed for life on coup-related charges died of heart failure behind bars despite a medical report for his urgent release.

October 19: Antalya prosecutors [ordered](#) the detention of 23 people who they suspected of finding jobs for former public sector employees collectively removed from public service after a failed coup in July 2016.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

October 20: The family members of a man named [Bahtiyar Fırat](#) alleged that he was abducted by the National Intelligence Organization (MİT).

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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

October 20: The Governor's Office in Van [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days, citing public health and public order reasons.

October 23: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) local journalist Sezgin Kartal to 18 months, 22 days in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda, over his attendance in several demonstrations held to protest a terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda.

October 23: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) three leftist activists who held a demonstration in favor of recent mine worker protests.

October 23: The Governor's Office in Konya [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

October 23: The Governor's Office in Siirt [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

October 24: The Governor's Office in Antalya [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 3 days.

October 25: The police [attacked](#) a demonstration held in İstanbul by youth organizations, detaining at least 55 people, including journalist Fatoş Erdoğan.

October 25: The police violently [detained](#) representatives of community centers (Halkevleri) in Ankara who were trying to submit a report to the Ministry of National Education. The police also blocked demonstrations held by the members of the same organization in İzmir, Eskişehir, Adana, Antalya and Kocaeli. At least [50 people](#) were detained.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

October 19: An Ankara prosecutor [demanded](#) up to 4 years in prison for Kurdish politician Figen Yüksekdağ, for allegedly insulting the president.

October 19: Denizli prosecutors [demanded](#) up to 5 years in prison for local leftist politician Ercan Çelik over his social media posts commemorating prominent leftist activists of the 1960s. Çelik was detained in August.

October 19: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to a news story about a public tender which was reportedly granted to the cousin of First Lady Emine Erdoğan.

October 19: A Şanlıurfa court [ruled](#) to block access to news articles about a local ruling party member who reportedly continued to take part in party meetings after resigning due to a scandal.

October 19: İstanbul prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into actor Nejat İşler over a tweet he posted

about the July 2016 coup attempt, for allegedly “praising crime and criminals.”

October 19: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories about a pro-government construction company being exempted from taxes in a public tender.

October 19: Authorities [decided](#) to block access to news stories about a convicted swindler who was seen coming out of a prosecutor’s room in the İzmir courthouse.

October 20: The police in Kocaeli [detained](#) Fevzi Yaşar, a local politician, over his social media posts.

October 20: The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the freedom of expression of academics İbrahim Kaboğlu and Baskın Oran who faced insults and death threats over a minority rights report that they drafted.

October 20: A freedom of expression platform [reported](#) that a set of new legal restrictions on social media which took effect in October led to a spike in access block decisions by authorities, warning about a potential rise in self-censorship. The platform said that over 100 such decisions were delivered within a month.

October 21: A Kocaeli court ruled to [release](#) local journalists Faruk Bostan and Bülent Karagöz who were arrested for reporting an allegation of rape involving members of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

October 21: Authorities [excluded](#) journalists from the first hearing of the trial regarding the 2015 murder of prominent Kurdish human rights lawyer Tahir Elçi. The court overseeing the trial rejected to hear a petition by Tahir Elçi’s wife.

October 21: A court [sentenced](#) writer Ersan Pekin to five months in prison for alleged obscenity in a book he wrote.

October 22: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Sabiha Temizkan to 1 year, 3 months in prison for allegedly disseminating terrorist propaganda, over a tweet she posted in 2014 to report a development from the ongoing clashes in Iraq.

October 22: A court [sentenced](#) Ferit Kilis, a local leftist politician in Adana, to 5 years, 9 months in prison over his social media posts about left-wing activist Mustafa

Koçak who lost his life due to a hunger strike he went on behind bars.

October 22: The police in Edirne [detained](#) a university student for allegedly insulting the president.

October 22: An İstanbul court [rejected](#) an appeal lodged by exiled journalist Can Dündar, whose assets were confiscated as part of a trial he faces over his reporting of the Turkish intelligence trucks carrying weapons to Syria.

October 22: Media regulator RTÜK [imposed](#) an administrative fine against TV5 broadcaster over the remarks of a guests criticizing the government.

October 23: An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Hayri Tunç to 2 years in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda. Tunç stood trial for posting on social media pictures he took while following up on news.

October 23: A Hatay court [sentenced](#) local journalist Sezgin Kartal to 18 months, 22 days in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda, over his attendance in several demonstrations held to protest a terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda.

October 23: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) Erdal Yılmaz over his social media posts criticizing Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu. Yılmaz faces insult and terror charges.

October 23: A freedom of expression [report](#) released by Opposition MP and human rights defender Sezgin Tanrıku said that 29 journalists, publishers and writers were convicted while a total of 57 journalists faced investigations in the first nine months of 2020.

October 23: A Van court [ruled](#) to block access to the pro-Kurdish Jinnews, Etkin Haber and Politez Haber websites as well as the online edition of the Yeni Demokrasi newspaper.

October 23: An Afyonkarahisar court [ruled](#) to block access to news articles about the remarks of a politician who was dismissed from the ruling AKP.

October 23: A Van court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports about prosecutors in charge of the investigation into the torture of two Kurdish villagers who were repeatedly thrown from a military helicopter.

October 23: Journalists Alican Uludağ and Duygu Güvenç who stood trial over their articles about the imprisonment of American pastor Andrew Brunson were [acquitted](#) of the charge of “publicly denigrating the nation and the state.”

October 24: A court [sentenced](#) journalist Memduh Bayraktaroğlu to 380 days in prison citing verbatim the insults of a pro-government pundit on a TV show.

October 24: Diyarbakır prosecutors [indicted](#) Hülya Oruç, the wife of imprisoned journalist Aziz Oruç, over her social media posts raising allegations about negligence in prisons amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Oruç now faces charges of “provoking hatred and enmity among public.”

October 24: The police briefly [detained](#) İsmail Demirbaş in Antalya after he criticized President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a street interview.

October 24: Main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) [alleged](#) that a court ruled to block the publication of a book that the party drafted about the Gülen movement.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

October 19: The Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) [decided](#) to disbar 11 judges and prosecutors over alleged links to the Gülen movement. Two of them were later [detained](#) on the same accusation.

October 21: Authorities [excluded](#) journalists from the first hearing of the trial regarding the 2015 murder of prominent Kurdish human rights lawyer Tahir Elçi. The court overseeing the trial rejected to hear a petition by Tahir Elçi’s wife.

October 23: An İstanbul court [defied](#) a Constitutional Court order to retry former MP and journalist Enis Berberoğlu, marking the second incident where the Constitutional Court’s decision on Berberoğlu was disregarded by lower courts.

October 24: The Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in a [statement](#) urged Turkey to “stop harassing the opposition” and to “take meaningful steps to improve standards in the field of democracy, rule of law and human rights.”

KURDISH MINORITY

October 19: Former Mardin co-mayor Ahmet Türk was [released](#) on probation. The Kurdish politician was among dozens who were arrested in early October as part of an investigation into a 2014 wave of protests in the Kurdish-majority cities.

October 21: The police in Maraş [detained](#) local HDP executives Bahir Horoz, Hacı Uzun and Dursun Bahça, along with three other party members.

October 22: Two provincial and two district co-chairs of the HDP were [detained](#) in Diyarbakır by the counterterrorism police.

October 23: Erdal Çakar, a local HDP politician in Muş, was briefly [detained](#).

October 23: An Antalya court [sentenced](#) former HDP executive Nihat Akkaya to 10 months in prison for alleged terrorist propaganda.

October 23: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) Zuhâl Tekiner, a former deputy district co-mayor, to over 9 years in prison for terrorism-related charges.

October 23: A Van court [ruled](#) to block access to the pro-Kurdish Jinnews website. The judgment marked the 11th access block imposed on the website since its foundation in September 2017.

October 24: Abdullah Ekelik and Gönül Öztürk, HDP district co-chairs in Ağrı, were [detained](#) on terrorism-related charges.

MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

October 20: In a [letter](#) addressed to the European Parliament President David Sassoli, 68 members of the European Parliament called for an end of Turkey’s military occupation in northern Syria as well as urged Turkey to cease its support for groups responsible for systematic human rights violations.

OTHER MINORITIES

October 19: Five people [claimed](#) to be targeted by a homophobic attack in Ankara.

October 22: The Minister of Transport [admitted](#) in a response to a written parliamentary question that the authorities have been charging disabled citizens for train

tickets in violation of the law which grants them the right to free travel.

PRISON CONDITIONS

October 19: [Barış Avıalan](#), an ex-colonel jailed for life on coup-related charges died of heart failure behind bars despite a medical report for his urgent release.

October 22: Prison officials in Denizli [cut off](#) prisoner İsmet Özçelik's phone and written communications with his family members. Özçelik was brought to Turkey from Malaysia in 2017 through an extrajudicial intelligence operation and imprisoned in Denizli over alleged links to the Gülen movement.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

October 20: [Muhammed El Halid](#), a 20-year-old Syrian refugee, was found shot in the head with a firearm in Gazianep. El Halid succumbed to his injuries two days later.

October 22: Syrian refugee child Vail el-Mansur was [stabbed](#) to death by his peers from the neighborhood.

October 22: Authorities in Kırşehir reportedly [discriminate](#) against refugee children, isolating them in a single school.

October 23: [Muhammed Dip Hurih](#), a Syrian refugee, was shot dead by his neighbors over a parking dispute in Gaziantep.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

October 20: [Mehmet Eren](#), a former teacher previously imprisoned in Turkey, gave an interview to the media in which he revealed details of the torture he was subjected to while in prison.

October 20: The family of [Serkan Tumay](#), a prisoner who passed away behind bars in Kırıkkale, alleged that he died due to [injuries](#) inflicted by continuous assault and torture by prison guards.

October 20: The police in Diyarbakır allegedly [used](#) police dogs against Faris Türk and his family members during a house raid to detain him.

October 22: Ali Özmen, a prisoner in İzmir, was reportedly [battered](#) by a group of guards in the Şakran prison.

October 24: A district police executive in Mardin reportedly [battered](#) three detainees in custody in a room without CCTV cameras.