

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

December 17: The Constitutional Court rejected a request for the release of [Mustafa Özcan Çay](#), an imprisoned former staff colonel convicted on coup charges, despite his inability to perform even the most basic tasks such as eating, drinking and using the bathroom without assistance due to advanced stage multiple sclerosis (MS).

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

December 16: The [Turkey Tribunal](#), a civil society-led symbolic international tribunal to review and render judgment on Turkey's human rights record, held a [webinar](#) to discuss enforced disappearances in Turkey, with the participation of Belgian lawyer Johan Heymans, Human Rights Watch Turkey researcher Emma Sinclair-Webb and rights defender Eren Keskin from the Turkey-based Human Rights Association (İHD). The event also featured a testimony by Mustafa Tunç, the father of former public sector worker Yusuf Bilge Tunç who has been missing since August 2019.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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

December 16: The police in Şanlıurfa detained [Emine Şenyavaş](#) and Ferit Şenyavaş while staging a sit-in protest. The two were released on Dec. 18.

December 16: The Hakkari Governor's Office [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

December 17: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a panel discussion organized by the HDP, detaining four people.

December 17: Ruling AKP [drafted](#) a bill allowing the government to remove and replace NGO executive over "ties to terrorism."

December 17: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) four members of the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) while distributing government-critical flyers.

December 18: The police in İstanbul violently [blocked](#) a press briefing by the HDP, battering politicians Sezai Temelli and Ferhat Encü and detaining a number of people.

December 18: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a commemoration event, detaining at least 16 people.

December 18: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) four members of the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) while distributing government-critical flyers. Four other TİP members who were detained on Dec. 17 were released after their questioning.

December 20: The police in Batman [detained](#) four people for participating in protests in Kurdish-majority cities in 2014.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

December 14: Former TV executive [Hidayet Karaca](#) completed his sixth year in prison. Karaca was convicted of aggravated life over the content of a TV show and his case has been pending before the European Court of Human Rights for five years.

December 14: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories citing a report by German Focus magazine about President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's personal wealth.

December 15: An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) up to 10-and-a-half years in prison for opposition politician Canan Kaftancıoğlu over her social media commentary about presidential aide Fahrettin Altun.

December 15: The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) published its [annual global survey](#) which found that Turkey, which locked up 37 journalists in 2020, was the second worst jailer of journalists of the year after China.

December 15: Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a [statement](#) criticizing media watchdog RTÜK for imposing punitive and disproportionate sanctions against independent television and radio channels that broadcast commentary and news coverage critical of the government and contributing to increasing censorship in the country.

December 15: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories about a financial transaction by national mail company PTT.

December 16: YouTube released a [statement](#) announcing that it will appoint local representative to Turkey in compliance with a controversial social media law requiring companies to share user data and comply with content removal requests by the government. The announcement came after the company, along with Twitter, Facebook and others were slapped with a monetary fine for the second time.

December 16: Government-critical newspaper [Sözcü](#) announced that it was levied a tax fine of TL 14.5 million (€ 1.55 million) for the year 2018 over what the newspaper referred to as “baseless accusations by the ruling AKP government.”

December 16: Opposition MP Özgür Özel [claimed](#) that since 2014, a total of 903 minors appeared in court on charges of insulting the president.

December 17: Amnesty International released a [briefing](#) in which it criticized Turkey for the authorities’ crackdown on online freedom of expression under the pretext of the Covid-19 pandemic.

December 17: An Antalya court [ruled](#) to block access to a news story about a mobbing allegation in a local hospital.

December 18: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to over 400 news stories about Sezgin Baran Korkmaz, a

businessman close to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan whose accounts were confiscated.

December 18: A Denizli court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories about a ruling AKP MP from Denizli who reportedly had a local municipality cover for his personal restaurant bill.

December 19: The police in Şırnak [detained](#) journalist Zeynep Durgut and three of her colleagues.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

December 14: Journalist Müyesser Yıldız [claimed](#) that the head of a panel of judges hearing a trial concerning involvement in a failed 2016 coup in Turkey had a phone call with an aide of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan before the start of the proceedings.

December 15: The European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) that Turkey violated the rights of a former civil servant dismissed after a failed coup in July 2016.

December 16: A court [gave](#) custody of a 10-year-old boy to his abusive father, whose assaults on the child were documented by six separate reports.

December 16: The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) released a joint [report](#) documenting a range of human rights violations in the “Gezi Park” trial.

December 17: The Constitutional Court rejected a request for the release of [Mustafa Özcan Çay](#), an imprisoned former staff colonel convicted on coup charges, despite his inability to perform even the most basic tasks such as eating, drinking and using the bathroom without assistance due to advanced stage multiple sclerosis (MS).

December 19: The Turkish Court of Accounts (Sayıştay) [removed](#) from its official website audit reports for the year 2019 which revealed irregularities in some of the provincial and district municipalities run by the ruling AKP.

KURDISH MINORITY

December 14: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) former local district co-mayor Rojda Nazlier to nine years in prison on terrorism-related charges.

December 15: The police in Şanlıurfa [detained](#) local HDP executive Ömer Karadağ on terrorism-related charges. On Dec. 18, Karadağ was arrested after appearing before a court.

December 15: Two people were [physically assaulted](#) in Manisa for speaking in Kurdish on the phone.

December 15: The police in Şanlıurfa briefly [detained](#) local HDP politician Hülya Biçen.

December 16: A group of HDP members and journalists were physically [attacked](#) by a mob near the HDP provincial headquarters in Diyarbakır.

December 16: [Devlet Bahçeli](#), the leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) once again called for the closure of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), using genocidal language.

December 17: The police in İstanbul [blocked](#) a panel discussion organized by the HDP, detaining four people.

December 18: The police in İstanbul violently [blocked](#) a press briefing by the HDP, battering politicians Sezai Temelli and Ferhat Encü and detaining a number of people.

December 20: The police in Batman [detained](#) four people for participating in protests in Kurdish-majority cities in 2014.

MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

December 20: The Syrian government [claimed](#) that Turkey and Turkey-backed militant factions were cutting water supply to Kurdish-held areas in northeast Syria. Turkey denied the allegation.

PRISON CONDITIONS

December 14: A [report](#) claimed that Turkish government employs some 60,000 inmates in low-security prisons in revenue-generating jobs for wages lower than the minimum wage, turning prisons into enterprises.

December 16: Reports on the media [said](#) prison administrations in Afyon and Elazığ were denying inmates necessary medication and medical treatment.

December 19: A number of women [came forward](#) throughout the week to talk about their experiences in

videos shared on social media, revealing unlawful strip-searches they were subjected to in prison.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

December 16: Prison guards in Diyarbakır allegedly battered inmate [Tarık Kar](#) for refusing a strip-search. Kar went on a hunger strike to protest physical violence by guards and denial of medication that he needs to take regularly.

December 17: Amnesty International released an [open letter](#) addressed to the Turkish Minister of Justice, calling for an investigation into torture allegations in a Diyarbakır prison.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

December 16: A domestic violence hotline set up by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services [received](#) 336,564 calls in 2018, with an average of nearly 1,000 calls a day.

December 19: A number of women [came forward](#) throughout the week to talk about their experiences in videos shared on social media, revealing unlawful strip-searches they were subjected to in prison.