

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

**October 13:** Mithat Tanrıtanır, a HDP executive in İstanbul, [alleged](#) that he was briefly abducted on Oct. 7 by people who introduced themselves as police officers, and taken to a remote location where he was coerced into becoming an informant for the authorities.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

**October 12:** The police and the gendarmerie [blocked](#) protest marches organized by mineworkers in Manisa and Karaman, injuring one worker and briefly detaining another one.

**October 13:** Prosecutors in Tunceli [launched](#) a probe into mayor Fatih Mehmet Maçoğlu and 80 people over an environmental protest.

**October 13:** The Governor's Office in Tunceli [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days.

**October 14:** The police [raided](#) the İdil Cultural Center in İstanbul, detaining five members of the leftist music band Grup Yorum.

**October 14:** The police [blocked](#) a press statement held by a work safety union in Ankara, using excessive force and detaining eight people.

**October 15:** The police [raided](#) the headquarters of an İstanbul-based NGO for solidarity with the families of detainees, briefly detaining three members of the group.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**October 12:** Two of the four journalists who were arrested on last week after reporting on two Kurdish villagers allegedly tortured and thrown from a military

helicopter were [subjected](#) to ill-treatment in prison, according to their lawyer.

**October 13:** An İstanbul court of appeals [upheld](#) the prison sentences handed down to Sözcü journalists, executives and employees on terrorism-related charges.

**October 13:** An İstanbul court [sentenced](#) journalist Arafat Dayan to 5 years, 10 months in prison on multiple terrorism-related charges.

**October 13:** A lower court [resisted](#) a ruling by the Constitutional Court ordering the retrial of opposition politician and journalist Enis Berberoğlu, who was sentenced to imprisonment over a 2014 news report about Turkey's involvement in arms shipments to Islamist groups in Syria.

**October 13:** A district governor in İstanbul [banned](#) the performance of a Kurdish-language rendition of an Italian play at the state-owned Istanbul City Theatre, citing alleged terrorism propaganda.

**October 13:** Four executives of the BirGün newspaper who were put on trial for reporting on the tweets of a government whistleblower were [acquitted](#) of terrorism-related charges.

**October 13:** A quarterly media monitoring [report](#) released by Bianet said that at least four journalists were detained and 89 journalists stood trial between July and September 2020.

**October 13:** An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news reports on allegations implicating President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's lawyer, citing violation of personal rights.

**October 13:** Authorities [blocked](#) access to Armenian government websites amid the ongoing military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

**October 14:** An online freedom [report](#) released by Freedom House ranked Turkey in the 'not free' category, noting decline in the Internet freedom.

**October 14:** An İstanbul prosecutor [demanded](#) up to 35 years in prison for exiled journalist Can Dündar on espionage and terror charges. The court overseeing the case previously declared Dündar as "fugitive" and ruled for a confiscation of his property.

**October 14:** Tunceli prosecutors [indicted](#) journalist Özgür Boğatekin over a video and a comment he posted on Facebook in 2017.

**October 15:** Media watchdog RTÜK [imposed](#) a fine against the government-critical Halk TV broadcaster over the remarks of a guest about nationalist MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli who is an ally of the ruling AKP.

**October 15:** An İstanbul court [rejected](#) an appeal lodged by the Yeni Yaşam newspaper against an access block imposed on its online edition.

**October 16:** Media watchdog RTÜK [announced](#) that audio streaming service Spotify applied for a license for online broadcasting in Turkey, in compliance with new regulations recently imposed on online providers. A cabinet member in an interview [vowed](#) to proceed with the implementation of the new regulations and to severely penalize social media companies which resist. [Facebook](#), which last week told Turkish authorities that it would not comply with the legislation, will face an initial TL 10 million (\$1.3 million) fine in November for defying the rules. The penalties will increase as non-compliance continues.

**October 18** Some 2,500 academics worldwide [signed](#) a petition calling on Turkey to release Cihan Erdal, a researcher at Carleton University in Canada and an LGBT activist who was detained in İstanbul in September as part of a prosecution against widespread Kurdish protests in 2014.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**October 14:** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan verbally [targeted](#) prominent human rights defender Şebnem Korur Fincancı, calling her a "terrorist."

## JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

**October 13:** A lower court [resisted](#) a ruling by the Constitutional Court ordering the retrial of opposition politician and journalist Enis Berberoğlu, who was sentenced to imprisonment over a 2014 news report about Turkey's involvement in arms shipments to Islamist groups in Syria.

**October 13:** The lawyers of Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were [prevented](#) from seeing their client, on account of a 6-month lawyer ban imposed against Öcalan.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**October 12:** Two of the four journalists who were arrested on last week after reporting on two Kurdish villagers allegedly tortured and thrown from a military helicopter were [subjected](#) to ill-treatment in prison, according to their lawyer.

**October 12:** Kurdish political activists Hazal Taş and Ferit Yıldız were [detained](#) by the police in Antalya.

**October 13:** A district governor in İstanbul [banned](#) the performance of a Kurdish-language rendition of an Italian play at the state-owned Istanbul City Theatre, citing alleged terrorism propaganda.

**October 13:** Mithat Tanrıtanır, a HDP executive in İstanbul, [alleged](#) that he was briefly abducted on Oct. 7 by people who introduced themselves as police officers, and taken to a remote location where he was coerced into becoming an informant for the authorities.

**October 13:** Provincial HDP executives Değer Yorgun and Osman Metindir were [detained](#) as part of a terrorism-related investigation in Antalya. The two were released on probation on Oct. 16.

**October 14:** A Şanlıurfa court [ruled](#) to arrest local HDP politician İsmail Kaplan for allegedly spreading terrorist propaganda. Kaplan was initially detained on Oct 6.

**October 14:** A criminal investigation report [submitted](#) to the parliament demanded the lifting of the parliamentary immunities of five HDP MPs.

**October 14:** A court ruled to [arrest](#) six people, including a HDP provincial executive in Malatya, on terrorism-related charges, as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK).

**October 16:** An Ankara court [remanded](#) in custody Kurdish politicians Gültan Kışanak and Gülser Yıldırım as part of a prosecution over the widespread protests in Kurdish-majority cities back in 2014.

**October 18** Some 2,500 academics worldwide [signed](#) a petition calling on Turkey to release Cihan Erdal, a researcher at Carleton University in Canada and an LGBT activist who was detained in İstanbul in September as part of a prosecution against widespread Kurdish protests in 2014.

## MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

**October 13:** A lower court [resisted](#) a ruling by the Constitutional Court ordering the retrial of opposition politician and journalist Enis Berberoğlu, who was sentenced to imprisonment over a 2014 news report about Turkey's involvement in arms shipments to Islamist groups in Syria.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**October 18** Some 2,500 academics worldwide [signed](#) a petition calling on Turkey to release Cihan Erdal, a researcher at Carleton University in Canada and an LGBT activist who was detained in İstanbul in September as part of a prosecution against widespread Kurdish protests in 2014.

## PRISON CONDITIONS

**October 12:** A prisoner named Yunus Gökgöz who tested positive for Covid-19 [lost](#) his life behind bars after his treatment was belated.

**October 14:** A [news report](#) revealed the postmortem photos of former police officer Mustafa Kabakçioğlu who on August 29 was found dead in a quarantine cell in a prison in the northeastern province of Gümüşhane. According to the report, Kabakçioğlu was placed in a quarantine cell after showing symptoms of Covid-19. In his last petition to the prison administration, he complained about his health condition getting worse. While the authorities [claim](#) that Kabakçioğlu had asked in writing not to be hospitalized, they have not been able to produce his written demand. Serving a prison sentence for alleged ties to the Gülen movement, Kabakçioğlu was also excluded from an [early release law](#) enacted back in April 2020 to ease overcrowding in prisons, and he would have been released if the law did

not discriminate against political prisoners held behind bars over non-violent activities.

**October 15:** Six sick inmates in a Samsun prison were reportedly [denied](#) necessary treatment.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**October 12:** Turkmen activist Dursoltan Taganova was detained for a few days in a migrant detention center in Turkey. Rights groups [called on](#) the Turkish government to halt plans to deport Taganova, who, if deported to Turkmenistan, is likely to face severe political persecution over her peaceful criticism of the Turkmen government.

**October 13:** A 20-year-old Afghan migrant was reportedly [thrown](#) off a building by human traffickers in the eastern province of Van. The man was hospitalized.

**October 15:** Interior Minister Süleyman Soyly [claimed](#) that Turkey's cross-border military operations in Syria allowed for the voluntary return of more than 400,000 Syrian refugees. Last year, rights groups [raised](#) allegations that Turkish authorities were coercing Syrians into signing voluntary return forms.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**October 12:** Two of the four journalists who were arrested on last week after reporting on two Kurdish villagers allegedly tortured and thrown from a military helicopter were [subjected](#) to ill-treatment in prison, according to their lawyer.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**October 14:** A woman named Hatice Tusu was abducted and [killed](#) by a man despite a previous restraining order imposed against him.