

# TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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## ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

**August 19:** Burcu Durak, a member of the leftist ESP party was briefly [abducted](#) in Ankara by a group of people who introduced themselves as police officers.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

**August 20:** The governor's office in Şırnak [issued](#) a 15-day ban on all outdoor gatherings.

**August 22:** Activists Acun Karadağ, Alev Şahin, Armağan Özbaş, Mahmut Konuk, Mehmet Dersulu and Nazan Bozkurt, who were known for their protests to raise awareness for Turkey's tens of thousands of former public sector workers summarily dismissed in the aftermath of a failed coup in July 2016, were [arrested](#) for alleged membership in a terrorist group.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

**August 17:** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [filed](#) a lawsuit against main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu over the latter's allegations that Erdoğan and his inner circle keeps billions in offshore bank accounts.

**August 18:** A court [ruled](#) to censor news articles on Defense Minister Hulusi Akar's visit to the grave of the founder of an outlawed Islamist group.

**August 19:** Şaban Önen, a local journalist in Bursa, was reportedly [assaulted](#) by a group of people close to the mayor.

**August 19:** A court [ruled](#) to block access to new reports about the rape of a woman by a national wrestler, based on "the right to be forgotten."

**August 19:** Turkey's media watchdog RTÜK [fined](#) five broadcasters for a number of reasons including "depicting homosexual relationships as normal."

**August 19:** A news website [claimed](#) that US tech giant Google was preparing to open a representation in Turkey in compliance with the government's recent law for stricter control of social media and online platforms. Google [denied](#) the allegation.

**August 19:** A Swiss news website [said](#) that the Swiss authorities were faced with an increased number of requests from the Turkish government against social media posts that Turkey considers as "defamatory" or "sympathetic to terrorist groups."

**August 20:** Journalist Mevlüt Öztaş, who was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in prison and was not released until the final stage of the disease, [died](#) two months after his release.

**August 21:** Erkan Akkuş, a former anchorman at the now-closed Bugün TV, was [detained](#) in Kocaeli, upon a warrant that has been outstanding since 2016. He was arrested on Aug. 24.

**August 22:** The Ministry of Family and Social Policies reportedly [urged](#) Turkey's official media watchdog RTÜK to take action against a new Netflix movie, which tells the story of a Muslim girl who removes her headscarf to take part in a dancing competition.

**August 22:** TV director Fatih Terzioğlu, who was diagnosed with stomach cancer during his 21-month incarceration, [died](#) following his release from prison in mid-July.

## KURDISH MINORITY

**August 18:** A [report](#) released by the pro-Kurdish HDP said the Turkish government has removed 51 out of 63 of its elected mayors over the last year, replacing them with pro-government trustees.

**August 19:** Two HDP city councilors were [detained](#) in house raids in Siirt.

**August 22:** An expert report published regarding the death of Kemal Kurkut, a young Kurdish man who was shot dead by the police in Diyarbakır in 2017, [said](#) that Kurkut's killing was 'inexcusable' as there was no evidence that Kurkut was a member of a terrorist organization and that he was not a threat at the scene of the shooting.

## MISTREATMENT OF CITIZENS ABROAD

**August 22:** Leaked classified documents [revealed](#) that Turkey's diplomatic and consular missions in Greece have been conducting widespread espionage on Turkish citizens who fled to Greece due to political persecution.

## OTHER MINORITIES

**August 18:** An on-call doctor in İstanbul allegedly [refused](#) to examine and treat a LGBTI+ patient and insulted him/her.

## REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

**August 17:** Six Syrian refugees [were](#) the victims of a racist armed assault in İstanbul and one of them, the 21-year-old Abdulkadir Davud, lost his life after being shot.

**August 18:** A total of 167 migrants [were](#) rescued from the back of a truck in Samsun where they were suffocating. Reports said the migrants were to be deported by Turkey.

## TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

**August 20:** Death fasting lawyer Aytaç Ünsal, who has been hospitalized after a deterioration in his health condition while in prison, [said](#) in a letter that security officers eat at his door, filling his ward with the smell of the food.

**August 20:** Two civilians, one of them 15 years old, [were](#) subjected to physical violence by gendarmerie forces in the eastern province of Van.

**August 20:** A man named Mehmet Çelik was [beaten up](#) by neighborhood guards in Adana after he refused to submit his identification.

**August 20:** A street vendor named Arif Gülmez was reportedly [assaulted](#) by municipal police in İstanbul.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

**August 18:** An 18-year-old woman who was repeatedly raped by a specialist sergeant in Turkey's Southeast [died](#) in a hospital after attempting to commit suicide. The military officer was [detained](#) the next day.

**August 19:** İstanbul police were [seen](#) using excessive violence against a woman in a video. The officers reportedly detained the woman for 'failing to wear her face mask properly.'