

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

July 23: Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals [overturned](#) a decision by a lower court sentencing 14 former army privates to life in prison on charges of involvement in a failed coup in July 2016, stating that the privates "had no choice but to obey their commanders."

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

July 20: Turkish police [blocked](#) Suruç bomb attack commemorations in Ankara and İstanbul, briefly detaining several people.

July 20: Turkish police [stopped](#) and detained a group of activists marching towards the top appeals court in Ankara to submit a petition for jailed hunger striking lawyers Ebru Timtik and Aytaç Ünsal.

July 20: The governor's office in Hakkari [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings until August 3.

July 21: The governor's office in Van [extended](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for 15 days. The ban has been uninterrupted in effect since November 2016.

July 21: A women's march in the western city of İzmir to protest male violence after the murder of the 27-year-old Pınar Gültekin by her ex-lover was [blocked](#) by the police. Several women were briefly detained.

July 22: Gendarmerie forces briefly [detained](#) 12 people on an environmental protest in the Bursa province.

July 23: The governor's office in Hatay [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings between 24 and 26 July.

July 23: The governor's office in Antalya [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for 10 days.

July 24: The governor's office in Mersin [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for five days.

July 24: Turkish authorities [barred](#) access to the mausoleum of Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as well as other monuments honoring him, preventing civil society from celebrating the 97th anniversary of the Lausanne Treaty.

July 24: Gendarmerie forces [blocked](#) an environmental protest in Manisa, detaining at least six people.

July 25: Turkish police [detained](#) several members of the 'Saturday Mothers' during their 800th weekly sit-in in İstanbul's İstiklal Avenue. The mothers are Turkey's longest-running peaceful protest movement, gathering every Saturday since 1995, demanding information from authorities on the fate of their family members who went missing under suspicious circumstances after the 1980 military coup d'état.

July 25: Gendarmerie forces [detained](#) nine environmental protesters in the Çanakkale province. The detainees were released on July 26.

July 25: The governor's office in Çanakkale [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for seven days.

July 26: The police [blocked](#) an İstanbul Convention-related forum held in İstanbul, detaining eight people.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

July 21: Turkey's ruling AKP [submitted](#) draft legislation to parliament that would enable the government to tighten its grip on social media, after President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan vowed to regulate or ban social media. The bill would force social media companies with more than 1 million daily users in Turkey (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) to establish a formal presence

or assign a representative to be accountable to Turkish authorities and to be required to respond within 48 hours to complaints. Failure to comply would lead to increasing fines and bandwidth reductions of up to 90 percent, according to ruling party lawmaker Özlem Zengin. Rights groups [said](#) the draft legislation would curtail online freedom of expression and oblige providers to share user data with authorities.

July 21: A Turkish man in Denizli was [arrested](#) by a court for allegedly insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on social media.

July 24: Opposition lawmaker and human rights activist Sezgin Tanrikulu [drafted](#) a report which found that at least 721 journalists were arrested in Turkey between 2002 and 2019, 93 of whom are still in prison.

July 24: Turkey's Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services [appealed](#) to courts to ban access to news stories on the murder of a woman at the hands of her husband.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

July 23: Turkey's Constitutional Court [rejected](#) an opposition appeal for a stay of execution of a law allowing for multiple bar associations in a province. The controversial legislation was passed despite strong objections by legal professionals and rights groups who claimed it would divide the legal profession along political lines and diminish the biggest bar associations' role as human rights watchdogs.

July 24: The heads of nine bar associations in a video message [called for](#) the release of jailed lawyers Ebru Timtik and Aytaç Ünsal, who have been on a hunger strike for months to demand a fair trial.

KURDISH MINORITY

July 21: A court [handed down](#) prison sentences to Şehzade Kurt and Azim Yacan, the former co-mayors of a district in the Van province on terrorism-related charges. The co-mayors were previously removed from office by the Interior Ministry. They were charged with providing supplies to the militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), despite testimonies by municipal employees who said that the aid was distributed to refugees in the area.

July 22: The lawyer of jailed Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtaş [filed](#) an appeal with Turkey's Constitutional

Court after lower courts refused to implement a European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decision ordering his release.

July 22: Sema Aışeoğlu, a Kurdish city council member in Urfa, was [detained](#) by the police as part of a terrorism-related investigation.

July 22: Vedat Dağ, a local Kurdish politician in Diyarbakır, was [detained](#) by the police.

July 23: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to arrest Mehmet Demir, former co-mayor of the Batman province who was previously removed from office by the Interior Ministry, on terrorism-related charges.

July 23: A mob in the central province of Yozgat reportedly [attacked](#) a group of Kurdish workers from the southeastern Mardin.

MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

July 22: Human Rights Watch [said](#) that a Turkish airstrike on an armed group in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in late June 2020 disregarded civilian lives.

OTHER MINORITIES

July 20: An LGBTI person was verbally [attacked](#) and threatened by a grocery store employee in İstanbul.

PRISON CONDITIONS

July 23: Fatma Özbay, a cancer patient prisoner held in the Şakran prison in İzmir, was reportedly [denied](#) medication that she needs.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

July 20: A Turkish court [ruled](#) to arrest one of the suspects in the death of Hamza Ajan, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee who was beaten to death.

July 26: A report by the British Telegraph [claimed](#) that Turkey is helping China repatriate Uighur dissidents by way of third countries.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

July 23: Reports said that 20 migrants were [subjected](#) to torture and ill-treatment for three days at a police station near Turkish-Iranian border.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

July 21: The murder of a 27-year-old woman by her ex-lover [sparked](#) outrage on Turkish social media, prompting a strong call for implementing the İstanbul Convention from which ruling AKP officials have previously hinted at Turkey's potential withdrawal.

July 22: A military sergeant who was detained for allegedly raping a woman in the southeastern province of Batman was [released](#) from police custody while the woman he reportedly assaulted committed suicide after the incident and is now in critical condition in a hospital.

July 22: Turkey's official religious authority Diyanet [drew](#) social media ire over a series of fatwas advising women to tolerate violence at the hands of their husbands.