

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



Issue 22 | November 16-22, 2020

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

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

November 18: Tunceli prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into 15 women who held a protest against sexual harassment. The women are investigated for resisting the police who intervened against the protest as well as violating the local governor's office's ban on outdoor gatherings.

November 18: The Constitutional Court [ruled](#) to annul a legislation banning protest marches on intercity roads on the grounds that it was unconstitutional.

November 19: The police in İstanbul briefly [detained](#) a group of workers protesting their layoffs without severance and wage payments.

November 20: The Governor's Office in Van [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 15 days. The ban has been uninterruptedly in effect since November 2016.

November 21: The police in İstanbul [attacked](#) a press briefing held by the HDP, briefly detaining 22 people including HDP İstanbul executives.

November 22: The Governor's Office in Kocaeli [issued](#) a ban on all outdoor gatherings for a period of 30 days.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

November 16: A Hatay court [ruled](#) to block access to several tweets by individual social media users involving a luxury car allegedly used by a local district mayor.

November 17: A court [sentenced](#) journalist Ali Engin Demirhan to 1 year, 2 months, 17 days in prison for allegedly insulting the president.

November 17: An İstanbul court [rejected](#) an appeal lodged by the Cumhuriyet newspaper against a 28-day advertising ban imposed by the Press Advertising Agency (BİK), the state body responsible for regulating publicly funded advertisements in the media. The ban was imposed over a news report about a presidential aide's real estate dealings.

November 17: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalist Uğur Güç of charges of denigrating state institutions, over a news report.

November 17: A Bursa court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories and a blog entry on an alleged mistreatment of students by a local high school executive.

November 18: A Yozgat court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories on corruption allegations about a local ruling AKP executive.

November 18: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to block access to news stories about a gold mining company's alleged links to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

November 19: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to arrest author Nezir Çakan who was detained on Nov. 12 as part of an investigation into a wave of protests in 2014 in predominantly Kurdish cities.

November 19: Mardin prosecutors [indicted](#) journalists Ahmet Kanbal, Mehmet Şah Oruç, Rojda Aydın, Halime Parlak and Nurcan Yalçın over their coverage of protests at the Mardin Municipality after the Interior Ministry ousted the city's elected mayor.

November 19: An İstanbul court [ruled](#) to acquit journalists Uğur Koç, Mustafa Kömüç and İbrahim Aydın who stood trial for allegedly insulting former finance minister Berat Albayrak in a news report.

November 20: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to Jinnews website, citing national security reasons.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

November 20: The police in İstanbul [raided](#) an Alevi prayer hall, detaining six people.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

November 17: Human Rights Defender and physician Serdar Küni was [sentenced](#) to 4 years, 2 months in prison for allegedly treating members of a terrorist organization during a curfew in southeastern Turkey.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

November 17: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit a police officer who shot dead a young man named Kemal Kurkut during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

November 18: A Bursa court [ruled](#) to acquit Levent Pişkin, the lawyer of imprisoned Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş. Pişkin stood trial and was briefly detained on terrorism charges for his professional activities as Demirtaş's lawyer.

November 19: Human Rights Watch and Article 19 released a [joint statement](#), slamming the political motivation prosecution of Kurdish opposition politicians.

November 20: The police in southeastern Turkey briefly [detained](#) 19 lawyers in early morning raids, as part of an investigation into the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), an umbrella group of the Kurdish political movement.

KURDISH MINORITY

November 16: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to arrest Cemal Özdemir, the former mayor of the Sur district who was removed from office by the Interior Ministry and detained on Nov. 13, on terrorism-related charges.

November 16: Münevver Ceylan, a HDP member in a district city council in Muş, was [removed](#) from her position by the Interior Ministry.

November 17: Human Rights Defender and physician Serdar Küni was [sentenced](#) to 4 years, 2 months in prison for allegedly treating members of a terrorist organization during a curfew in southeastern Turkey.

November 17: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to acquit a police officer who shot dead a young man named Kemal Kurkut during Newroz celebrations in 2017.

November 18: The police in İstanbul [detained](#) six members of the HDP.

November 18: Diyarbakır prosecutors [demanded](#) between nine to 41 years in prison for Kurdish politicians Sebahat Tuncel, Gültan Kışanak and Leyla Güven on terrorism charges.

November 18: A Bursa court [ruled](#) to acquit Levent Pişkin, the lawyer of imprisoned Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş. Pişkin stood trial and was briefly detained on terrorism charges for his professional activities as Demirtaş's lawyer.

November 19: Romanian authorities tried to [deport](#) three Kurdish asylum seekers from Turkey, including journalist Nuri Akman prosecuted in Turkey on terrorism charges. Their deportation was reportedly postponed at the last minute for unknown reasons.

November 19: An Ankara court [ruled](#) to arrest author Nezir Çakan who was detained on Nov. 12 as part of an investigation into a wave of protests in 2014 in predominantly Kurdish cities.

November 19: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) local HDP politician Eşref Mamedoğlu to a total of 9 years, 7 months, 15 days in prison on terrorism-related charges.

November 19: A Diyarbakır court [sentenced](#) local HDP executive Edip Binbir to 7 years, 6 months in prison on terrorism-related charges.

November 19: Mardin prosecutors [indicted](#) journalists Ahmet Kanbal, Mehmet Şah Oruç, Rojda Aydın, Halime Parlak and Nurcan Yalçın over their coverage of protests at the Mardin Municipality after the Interior Ministry ousted the city's elected mayor.

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November 20: A Diyarbakır court [ruled](#) to block access to Jinnews website, citing national security reasons.

November 20: Reports said that a prison administration in Diyarbakır [charged](#) inmates translation fees for letters in Kurdish, which is not required for letters in other languages.

November 21: The police in İstanbul [attacked](#) a press briefing held by the HDP, briefly detaining 22 people including HDP İstanbul executives.

November 22: The police in Diyarbakır [detained](#) local Kurdish politician İhsan Çapan.

MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD

November 17: Turkey's military reportedly [fired](#) mortar shells at predominantly Kurdish settlements around Tel Abyad and Shahba in northern Syria.

November 20: A survey [revealed](#) that the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) is recruiting child soldiers.

MISTREATMENT OF CITIZENS ABROAD

November 18: Belgian prosecutors [launched](#) an investigation into an alleged email threat made against Flemish-Kurdish politician Zuhail Demir. The threat came after Demir's recent criticism of Turkey's Diyanet which runs a vast network of mosques in Europe.

November 19: Romanian authorities tried to [deport](#) three Kurdish asylum seekers from Turkey, including journalist Nuri Akman prosecuted in Turkey on terrorism charges. Their deportation was reportedly postponed at the last minute for unknown reasons.

November 19: Reports revealed an [opinion](#) by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) which found the arrest, detention and forced

transfer to Turkey of six Turkish teachers by Kosovar and Turkish state agents in March 2018 to be in violation of international human rights norms and standards.

PRISON CONDITIONS

November 19: The Human Rights Association (İHD) [announced](#) that 49 prisoners died in 2020 thus far.

November 20: Reports said that a prison administration in Diyarbakır [charged](#) inmates translation fees for letters in Kurdish, which is not required for letters in other languages.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

November 16: Reports revealed that three security officials at a provincial immigration authority in eastern Turkey [sexually assaulted](#) a woman from Iran in July 2020.

November 17: Lawyers are set to file a [case](#) at the UN Human Rights Committee on behalf of a man who was granted asylum in Germany but picked up and deported to Turkey by Greek authorities while searching for his 11-year-old brother in Greece.

November 22: [Nasibeh Shemsai](#), an Iranian activist who has participated in demonstrations in 2018 against the compulsory wearing of the hijab, was briefly detained in İstanbul and she reportedly fears a deportation to Iran where she could face up to 12 years in prison.

November 22: [Hemdullah Abduweli](#), a Uighur scholar legally residing in Turkey was reportedly arrested during a travel to Saudi Arabia and he is being held for a possible deportation to China.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

November 16: Soldiers in the Van province physically [assaulted](#) local citizens Lokan Orhan and Mehmet Şakir while taking them into custody.

November 19: The police in Mersin [held](#) Osman Alkış lying face downwards with a gun to his head for six hours while searching his house.