



HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY:

2022 in Review



About the Stockholm Center for Freedom

The Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF) is a non-profit advocacy organization that promotes the rule of law, democracy and human rights with a special focus on Turkey.

SCF was set up by a group of journalists who were forced to live in self-exile in Sweden against the backdrop of a massive crackdown on press freedom in Turkey.

SCF is committed to serving as a reference source by providing a broader picture of rights violations in Turkey, monitoring daily developments, documenting individual cases of the infringement of fundamental rights and publishing comprehensive reports on human rights issues.

SCF is a member of the Alliance Against Genocide, an international coalition dedicated to creating the international institutions and the political will to prevent genocide.

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** Subject matters are listed in alphabetical order*

1. Introduction

Authoritarianism continued to gain ground in Turkey in 2022. With the aim of consolidating his power, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took further measures to undermine the fundamental pillars of Turkey's already imperfect democracy. The enormous gulf between the country's constitutional provisions for the protection of human rights and the grim reality on the ground continued to grow during the year. Several opposition groups came under intense pressure, and individuals linked to such groups were detained by the Turkish authorities.

Turkey was ranked 116th among 140 countries in the rule of law index published by the [World Justice Project](#) in October. The country ranked 135th in terms of constraints on government powers and 134th in terms of fundamental rights. Turkey was last in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia group, worse than Russia and Belarus. In the global ranking Turkey came after Angola and Mali and above Republic of the Congo and Iran.

According to [2022 statistics](#) announced by Síofra O'Leary, president of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Turkey topped the list of countries with cases awaiting judgment with nearly 20,100 applications, corresponding to 26.9 percent of the total. It was followed by the Russian Federation, with around 16,750 applications; Ukraine (10,400); Romania (4,800); and Italy, with approximately 3,550 applications pending. Complaints related to arrests, prosecutions and dismissals in the public sector following a coup attempt in July, 2016 made up half of the applications against Turkey.

According to [Freedom House](#), Turkey remained "not free" with a score of 32/100 in 2022. The right group's [yearly report](#) revealed that internet freedom continued to decline for the fourth year in a row in Turkey, and thousands of online users, including members of the political opposition, faced criminal charges for their social media activities during the period covered.

In its [2022 Report](#) on Turkey, the European Commission, the executive branch of the European Union, said democratic backsliding continued, underlining serious deficiencies in the functioning of the country's democratic institutions. The Turkish parliament continued to lack the necessary means to hold the government accountable during the reporting period, and Turkey's constitutional architecture continued to centralize powers at the level of the presidency without ensuring a sound and effective separation of powers, the EU report stated.

Turkish courts continued to systematically accept bogus indictments, convicting without compelling evidence of criminal activity individuals and groups the Erdoğan government regards as political opponents. Among these were journalists, opposition politicians, activists and human rights defenders.

In October 2022 President Erdoğan [approved](#) a social media law that stipulates sanctions, including prison sentences of up to three years, for

people who are found to have produced social media posts for the purpose of fake news and disinformation.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said Turkey saw a significant [increase](#) in the number of jailed journalists in 2022, with the government using the media legislation as an additional tool to prosecute journalists. The number of journalists jailed during the year rose from 18 to 40, with 25 Kurdish journalists arrested on terrorism charges. According to most recent World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Turkey was [ranked](#) 149th out of 180 countries in 2022.

The Turkish government ramped up its crackdown on the Kurdish political movement in 2022 with a view to weakening the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), and Turkey's chief prosecutor in December asked the Constitutional Court to strip the party of government funding over its alleged links to an outlawed terrorist organization.

Thousands of people in Turkey came under investigation during the year, and most of them were under the threat of imprisonment over alleged insults of President Erdoğan and public officials. In December an İstanbul court sentenced Ekrem İmamoğlu, the mayor of İstanbul from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), to two years, seven months in prison and barred him from politics for allegedly insulting members of Turkey's Supreme Board of Elections (YSK).

2. Crackdown on the Gülen movement

The Gülen movement is a worldwide civic initiative rooted in the spiritual and humanistic tradition of Islam and inspired by the ideas of Fethullah Gülen, a Muslim cleric resident in the US. The bases of the movement are diverse service projects that are initiated, funded and conducted by people who are motivated by Gülen's humanitarian discourse.

President Erdoğan has been targeting followers of the movement since the corruption investigations of December 17-25, 2013, which implicated then-prime minister Erdoğan, his family members and his inner circle.

Dismissing the investigations as a Gülenist coup and conspiracy against his government, Erdoğan designated the movement as a terrorist organization and began to target its members. He locked up thousands, including many prosecutors, judges and police officers involved in the investigations.

Some of the claims that were part of the corruption investigations were later [substantiated](#) in New York federal court where Turkish banker Mehmet Hakan Atilla was sentenced to 32 months for conspiring to violate US sanctions on Iran and other offenses.

Erdoğan intensified the crackdown on the movement following a coup attempt on July 15, 2016 that he accused Gülen of masterminding. Gülen and the movement strongly deny involvement in the abortive putsch or any terrorist activity.

Following the failed coup, the Turkish government carried out a massive purge of state institutions under the pretext of an anti-coup fight. More than 130,000 public servants, including 4,156 judges and prosecutors, as well as 24,706 members of the armed forces were summarily removed from their jobs for alleged membership in or relationships with "terrorist organizations" by emergency decree-laws subject to neither judicial nor parliamentary scrutiny.

Such daily activities as having an account at or depositing money in a Gülen movement-affiliated bank, working at any institution linked to the movement or subscribing to certain newspapers and magazines were accepted as benchmarks for identifying and arresting alleged members of the movement.

According to Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ, a total of [117,208](#) people have been convicted while more than 600,000 have been the subject of investigation in Turkey due to alleged links to the Gülen movement since the coup attempt.

Ali Babacan, leader of the opposition Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA) and a former heavyweight of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), has [claimed](#) that President Erdoğan ordered officials to "show no mercy" in

the government crackdown following the failed coup and to not care about separating the guilty from the innocent.

During the year Erdoğan continued to relentlessly pursue anyone with alleged links with the movement. They have been targets of hate speech, hate crimes, unlawful prosecution, torture and abductions, among other serious human rights violations.

Here are some of the most important news from 2022 concerning Erdoğan's crackdown on the Gülen movement:

Decisions and reports by international organizations and foreign governments

UN committee faulted Turkey in case of teacher who died in custody after arrest over Gülen links



The United Nations Human Rights Committee released its decision concerning an application submitted on behalf of a teacher who was allegedly tortured in police custody and subsequently died during a post-coup purge in August 2016, saying the state violated his rights and the rights of his family under several articles of the UN's International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). [More..](#)

Turkey's post-coup detention of judges and prosecutors was unlawful: ECtHR

In September, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that the pretrial detention of 230 judges and prosecutors after a failed 2016 coup against President Erdoğan was unlawful, holding that Turkey is to pay 5,000 euros in non-pecuniary damages to every applicant. [More..](#)

In October, the ECtHR ruled that Turkey violated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) by detaining 167 judges and prosecutors after the failed coup attempt. [More..](#)

In December, the Strasbourg court ruled that Turkey violated the ECHR by detaining 82 judges and prosecutors after the coup attempt in 2016, holding

that the Turkish government is to pay each applicant 5,000 euros in non-pecuniary damages. [More...](#)

UN committee found rights violations in case of teacher arrested over Gülen links, calls for her release

The UN Human Rights Committee has called on Turkey to release a teacher who was arrested in 2018 over alleged links to a faith-based group and pay her damages since the arrest violated her rights under several articles of the UN's ICCPR. [More..](#)

UN committee sought further information from Turkey in case of missing Yusuf Bilge Tunç



The UN Human Rights Committee requested further information from Turkey in the case of former civil servant Yusuf Bilge Tunç, who has been missing since August 2019 and is believed to have been abducted by Turkish intelligence agency (MIT). [More..](#)

However, the ECtHR has rejected an application claiming that Turkish authorities failed to carry out an effective investigation into the case of Tunç. [More...](#)

ILO questioned post-coup dismissals of union members, lack of reinstatement to jobs

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations said in a recent report that it notes with concern the high number of rejections by a body established in Turkey after a failed coup to investigate appeals against the dismissal of some 130,000 civil servants by emergency decrees, stating that it has requested information from the Turkish government about the trade union members whose cases were rejected. [More..](#)

Turkey violated prisoners' rights by not granting visits for schoolchildren on weekends: ECtHR

The ECtHR ruled that Turkish authorities violated the ECHR by not allowing prison visits on weekends as weekday visits conflicted with children's school schedule and interfered with prisoners' family life, deciding that



Turkey was to pay each of the 19 applicants 1,500 euros in non-pecuniary damages. [More..](#)

ECtHR ruled Turkey violated prisoners' rights by uploading their correspondence to judicial network server

The ECtHR has ruled that Turkey violated the right to respect for private life of 14 inmates by uploading their incoming and outgoing correspondence onto the National Judicial Network Server (Ulusal Yargı Ağı Bilişim Sistemi or UYAP). [More..](#)

Top Swedish court refused to extradite Gülen-linked former principal to Turkey

The Supreme Court of Sweden refused Turkey's request to extradite a former principal who used to work at a school affiliated with the Gülen movement in Afghanistan on the grounds that his actions do not constitute any elements of a crime under Swedish law. [More..](#)

Brazilian court refused to extradite Gülen-linked businessman to Turkey

Brazil's Supreme Court rejected an extradition request from Turkey for a businessman due to his links to the movement, saying there is no guarantee the businessman will receive a fair trial if he is extradited. [More..](#)



Belgian law firm to take alleged crimes against humanity by Turkish officials to ICC

Johan Vande Lanotte, a legal counsel from the Belgian-based law firm Van Steenbrugge Advocaten (VSA) and a professor of law at the University of Ghent, told Belgian media that lawyers from VSA are

going to take evidence of crimes against humanity perpetrated by Turkish state officials to the International Criminal Court (ICC). [More..](#)

Ongoing purge

1.7 mln investigations launched in Turkey on terrorism allegations over past 5 years

More than 1.7 million investigations were launched into people in Turkey on allegations of membership in an armed terrorist organization between 2016

and 2021, opposition lawmaker Mustafa Yeneroğlu said, citing Justice Ministry data. [More..](#)

24,706 expelled from Turkish military since coup attempt: minister

Turkey's defense minister has announced that 24,706 personnel from the Turkish Armed Forces have been expelled over Gülen links since the failed coup. [More..](#)

Number of Gülen followers in İstanbul prison surpassed all others jailed on terrorism charges

The number of inmates in İstanbul's notorious Marmara Prison who are imprisoned on alleged links to the Gülen movement exceeds all other inmates in the prison who are jailed pending trial or convicted on terrorism charges.

The name of the former Silivri Prison, where mostly political prisoners are jailed, was recently changed to Marmara Prison. [More..](#)

662 employees expelled from foreign ministry in post-coup purge: minister

Turkey has seen the expulsion of 662 personnel from its foreign ministry as part of a purge launched by the government in the aftermath of the failed coup. [More..](#)



37 detained across Turkey for helping families of jailed Gülen followers

Thirty-seven people detained in a Bartın-based operation that was also conducted in Karabük, İstanbul and Isparta provinces on terrorism charges for helping the families of people jailed over alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Dismissed police officer reinstated to job 3 years after death

Meral Barut, 35, a former police officer who was fired in a wide-ranging purge in the aftermath of the coup attempt and died of cancer in 2019 has been reinstated to her job in May. [More..](#)

Turkey's top court upheld sentences given to 60 former cadets on coup charges

Turkey's top appeals court has upheld life sentences handed down to 60 former military cadets who were jailed following the failed coup and convicted on coup charges. [More..](#)

Court reporters reluctant to cover Gülen-linked trials, media ombudsman said

Faruk Bildirici, a well-known media ombudsman in Turkey, claimed that Turkish reporters have been reluctant to regularly cover trials of alleged members of the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Turkish authorities denied financial assistance to severely disabled teenager due to father's links to Gülen movement

Turkish authorities denied a severely disabled 15-year-old autistic teenager disability benefits because his father was arrested for alleged links to the Gülen movement. Yakup Ali Çetin suffers from epileptic seizures and hypotonia, a degenerative muscle disease, in addition to autism. [More..](#)

Ankara University used profiling files from MIT to justify post-coup purge of academics

Ankara University, where more than 100 academics were fired by government decrees since 2016, has been using profiling documents received from Turkey's National Intelligence Organization to justify the academic purges in court. [More..](#)

Hate speech and discrimination

Turkey's vice president called purge victims 'terrorists'

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay called the victims of a massive purge of state institutions "terrorists," accusing opposition parties of having plans for the reinstatement of former civil servants who were removed from their jobs following the coup attempt. [More..](#)



"May I ask who these people are? They are terrorists. Opposition parties should tell people that they will reinstate these terrorists to state institutions," Oktay said in an interview with the private TV channel A Haber.

Mayor faced probe for employing post-coup victim at municipal company

An opposition party mayor in western Turkey faced an investigation for employing a former judge who was fired in the aftermath of the failed coup at a company owned by the municipality. [More..](#)

Turkish expatriate in Germany attacked over Gülen links in apparent hate crime

A Turkish man who has been residing in Germany for 41 years was attacked in an apparent hate crime by the Turkish owner of a kebab shop in Kamen, North Rhine-Westphalia, due to his links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Victim of Turkey's post-coup purge said she was insulted and subjected to physical violence by neighbors

Emine Özdemir Kara, a former public servant who was dismissed by a government decree after the coup attempt, said she was subjected to insults and physical violence by her neighbors in Eskişehir province. "There was one incident where our neighbor forced herself into our home and pushed me onto the couch. She hit me and called me a dirty traitor," said Kara. [More..](#)

Torture and inhuman treatment

Detainees subjected to torture in Ankara police custody



People who were detained in January due to alleged links to the Gülen movement were subjected to torture at a police detention center in Ankara. Some of the detainees were beaten and forced to sign false confessions while in police custody. [More..](#)

Lawyers' report on torture in police custody not published, causes rift in bar association

A report by lawyers from the Ankara Bar Association's human rights committee on allegations of torture made by detainees held at a police detention center has not been published in 2022, prompting a rift between the rapporteurs and the bar administration. [More..](#)

13 students subjected to mistreatment in Bursa police custody

Thirteen students who were detained due to alleged links to the Gülen movement were allegedly subjected to mistreatment while in police custody in the western province of Bursa. The detainees, who were interrogated at the Bursa Police Department for four days without any evidence supporting the claims against them, were allegedly beaten for refusing to accept the accusation. [More..](#)

Former academic said he was brutally tortured at Ankara Police Department

Muhammed Savaş Bayındır, a former academic in the law faculty at Ankara's Gazi University, in a public letter said he was brutally tortured at the Ankara Police Department after being detained in the post-coup purge.

He said he was taken to a filthy back room where he was beaten with a baton. Bayındır recalled he was sprayed with water, stripped and further beaten. "In addition to the physical pain, I felt extremely humiliated," he said. [More..](#)

Ankara Bar filed complaint on allegations of torture at police department

The Ankara Bar Association announced that they filed a complaint against the Ankara Police Department based on nine allegations of torture made by detainees held at detention centers in February and March. [More..](#)

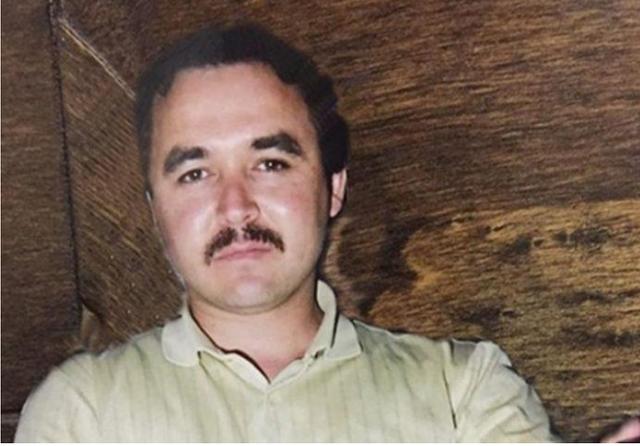
Mother and daughter allegedly subjected to strip-search in Amasya prison while visiting family member

The mother of an underage girl said she and her daughter were subjected to a strip-search on Friday while visiting her husband in Amasya E-Type Prison. "The guards shouted at us to remove our underwear, after which they started touching our genitals," woman said. [More..](#)

Former teacher said she was strip-searched in prison and punished for revealing it in letter

Nagehan Yüksel, a former teacher at a religious high school who was convicted of terrorist organization membership due to her links to the movement, has been given a disciplinary punishment for revealing in a letter to an opposition lawmaker that she had been subjected to a strip-search in prison.

"Can you tell the people who say 'There are no strip-searches in Turkish prisons' that I was strip-searched by two officers at Eskişehir Prison at 5:45 p.m. on 04.08.2022. When they were going to search me, I asked them if this was a strip-search, and they replied, 'Yes, this is a strip search.' I knew the answer to the question, but I wanted it confirmed by them," she said in her letter. [More..](#)



Turkish Prison administration threatened revocation of parole eligibility if sick inmate refuses to withdraw mistreatment complaints

A sick inmate in Afyonkarahisar T-type Prison, notorious for mistreating prisoners, was told to withdraw complaints of mistreatment if he wanted to be released on parole.

Lütfi Koç, who suffers from a brain tumor, was severely beaten by prison guards. He sent a letter to the Turkish Parliament's Human Rights Committee detailing the incident. The prison administration told Koç that his "good behavior report" would be revoked if he did not withdraw his complaint. [More..](#)

Children of the purge: death, disease and separation

Teen took own life over father's imprisonment in post-coup crackdown

Bahadır Odabaşı, a 16-year-old teenager, died in January by suicide in Turkey's eastern Diyarbakır province as a result of depression caused by the situation of his father, Nurettin Odabaşı, a former teacher who was fired from his job by an emergency decree and arrested on terror-related charges due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)



11-year-old girl with Down syndrome deteriorated after arrest of her mother on Gülen links

Ayşe Asude Gök, an 11-year-old girl with Down syndrome, stopped interacting with her caregivers after her mother was arrested in March to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

4-year-old started seeing psychologist after mother's arrest

Rana Uzunkaya, 4-year-old daughter of a woman who was arrested for alleged links to the Gülen movement, has started to receive psychological help after developing anxiety and social problems. [More..](#)



Mother of child suffering from bone cancer serving sentence on conviction of Gülen links

Gülten Sayın, the mother of 6-year-old Yusuf Kerim Sayın, who is suffering from a type of bone cancer, was arrested in December to serve a prison sentence on charges of links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Authorities refused to release critically ill mother of 3 arrested for Gülen links

Gülden Aşık, a mother of three who was arrested after being sentenced to six years, three months in prison for alleged links to the Gülen movement, was issued a hospital report saying she was fit to remain in prison despite suffering from thyroid cancer. [More..](#)

Mother of 2 hadn't seen children in 7 months due to distance between prison and home

Zeynep Köyden, a jailed mother of two, said in a letter to HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu that she had not seen her daughters in seven months and requested transfer to a prison closer to her home in Balıkesir. [More..](#)

Mothers leaving children to the care of relatives

Döndü Deniz, mother of Sema, 9, Belma, 7, and Semra, 5, was arrested in January for alleged links to the Gülen movement, leaving her children to the care of relatives. [More..](#)

Elif Çelik Demir, 42, a former kindergarten teacher and a mother of three, was arrested in January for alleged links to the Gülen movement, leaving her children to the care of relatives. [More..](#)

Seher Gök, a mother of three, was arrested in February to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement, leaving her three young children to the care of relatives. [More..](#)

Former teacher Nazife Karakoç was arrested in March and sent to a prison in western Izmir province. Her two children, aged four and six, were sent to live with their disabled grandmother in northwestern Tekirdağ province nearly 400 kilometers away. [More..](#)

Nagehan Yüksel, mother of three, was arrested in February to serve a nine-year sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement, leaving her children to the care of relatives. [More..](#)

Beyza Yıldırım who was arrested due to alleged links to the Gülen movement said in a letter to HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu that her children had been left to the care of relatives. “Why won’ they [the authorities] allow me to be with my children while my husband is imprisoned? They can’t even come to visit me, and I’m afraid my children will grow up motherless,” she said.

Arrest of pregnant women and mothers with infants

Photograph from Izmir’s Şakran Prison revealed large number of children accompanying their mothers

A recent photograph taken in western Turkey’s Izmir’s Şakran Prison has revealed the large number of children who were made to accompany their mothers in prison. [More..](#)



An inmate, who preferred to remain anonymous, told a relative during a visit in March that there were currently 14 women and 16 children in one ward. [More..](#)

At least 80 pregnant women detained or arrested in Turkey’s post-coup crackdown

At least 80 pregnant women have been arbitrarily detained or arrested over their suspected links to the Gülen movement, as part of the government-led crackdown since the abortive putsch in 2016. [More..](#)

Rights activist said Turkish prisons do not accommodate the needs of children who accompany incarcerated mothers

Rights activist Gamze Yentür said in an interview that Turkish prisons do not accommodate the needs of children and infants who accompany their incarcerated mothers, leading to problems in their physical and mental development. [More..](#)

Former teacher arrested and sent to prison with 8-month-old baby while trying to flee persecution in Turkey

Former teacher Büşra Çulha was arrested in September and sent to prison with her eight-month-old baby while trying to flee persecution in Turkey. [More..](#)

Hasan Semerci, the brother of former teacher Çulha, said after meeting with his sister and niece Bahar that his niece has a serious nutritional problem in prison. [More..](#)

Turkish authorities arrested pregnant Turkish asylum-seeker pushed back by Greece

A four-months-pregnant woman was arrested in September in Izmir province after being pushed back from Greece, where she had fled to seek asylum. [More..](#)

Mother of 2 announced on Twitter she was taken to prison with her children

A mother of two announced in January from an anonymous Twitter account that she was going to be sent to Ankara's Sincan Prison with her two young children. [More..](#)

9-month-pregnant woman imprisoned over Gülen links despite regulations

A nine-month-pregnant woman Ceyda Nur Eroğlu was sent to prison in May, in contravention of regulations, to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement. The Law on the Execution of Sentences and Security Measures stipulates that even if a pregnant woman is convicted, her sentence shall be postponed. [More..](#)

Pregnant woman arrested despite regulations diagnosed with cardiac dysrhythmia in prison

Aslı Ünlü, a six-months-pregnant woman who was sent to prison for alleged links to the Gülen movement in April despite regulations, has been diagnosed with cardiac dysrhythmia. [More..](#)

2-month-old baby accompanied mother serving sentence for conviction of Gülen links

Elif Karlıdağ, a mother of two who was arrested in February to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement, is being accompanied by her 2-month-old daughter in prison. [More..](#)

2 more children accompanied their mother serving prison sentence for conviction of Gülen movement links

Two children accompanied their mother to prison when Sevim Yıldırım was arrested in February to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

19-month-old toddler accompanied mother serving 3-year prison sentence

Sevim Yıldırım, a Quran teacher who previously worked at Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate (Diyanet), was accompanied by her 19-month-old toddler Mehmet Halil when she arrived at Düzce Çilimli Prison to serve a three-year sentence on conviction of alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Mother of 2 sent to prison with her children over Gülen links

Former teacher Esra Songur was sent to prison with her 22-month-old daughter and three-and-a-half-year-old son for alleged links to the Gülen movement following the upholding of her sentence by the Supreme Court of Appeals. [More..](#)

Mother of 11-month-old to serve prison sentence in violation of the law

Sümeyye Aydın, the mother of two children aged 11 months and four years, was sent to prison in December in violation of a law that requires the postponement of the execution of prison sentences for women who are pregnant or have given birth within the last year and a half. [More..](#)

Ailing prisoners denied proper care

Abducted teacher said he does not have access to proper healthcare in prison

Zabit Kişi, a former teacher who was abducted from Kazakhstan by Turkish intelligence agency MİT, said in a letter in January to HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu that he did not have access to proper healthcare in prison. [More..](#)

80-year-old critically ill inmate complained of lack of proper healthcare in prison

Gürbüz Dönmez, an 80-year-old inmate suffering from prostate cancer, said in a letter to HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu that he has no access to

proper healthcare in prison despite being critically ill. The elderly man was arrested in April, 2017 for alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Wife of critically ill prisoner urged authorities to release her husband before it's too late

The wife of Ahmet Zeki Özkan, a 65-year-old man who was arrested in January to serve a sentence for conviction of links to the Gülen movement despite suffering from end-stage cancer, urged authorities for the immediate release of her husband. [More..](#)

Another family called on Turkish authorities to release ailing loved one from prison

The wife of a former teacher Veysel Tıkaç, 54, who was imprisoned for alleged links to the Gülen movement, called on authorities to release her husband, saying in an interview that he had chronic heart disease and that his health had deteriorated considerably in prison. [More..](#)

Paralyzed woman sent to prison after terrorism conviction on Gülen links

Mehtap Şentürk, wheelchair-bound woman who has been suffering from multiple sclerosis for 14 years, was sent to prison in March after a top appeals court upheld a sentence handed down to her due to her affiliation with the Gülen movement. [More..](#)



End-stage cancer inmate fit to remain in prison, said Turkish Council of Forensic Medicine

The Turkish Council of Forensic Medicine for the third time has issued a report saying Yusuf Özmen, an inmate with end-stage cancer, is healthy enough to remain in prison. [More..](#)

Chronically ill man serving aggravated life sentence told family his health had deteriorated

Kazım Avcı, 67, who is serving an aggravated life sentence for allegedly violating the Turkish constitution, told his family during a visit in March that his health had deteriorated considerably, and he did not feel fit to remain in prison. Avcı had suffered a heart attack in February. [More..](#)

Wife called for release of imprisoned former teacher with thyroid cancer

Wife of 40-year-old inmate Hakan Kanat, who was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in October 2021, has demanded the immediate release of her husband along with other critically ill prisoners. [More..](#)

Former teacher arrested on Gülen links diagnosed with brain tumor for third time

Abdullah Aslan, a former teacher who was arrested for alleged links to the Gülen movement shortly after surgery to remove a tumor from his brain, has suffered a second relapse and is requesting his release to seek medical treatment. [More..](#)



Paralyzed former teacher arrested to serve sentence for conviction of Gülen links

Serife Sulukan, a former teacher who has been suffering from paralysis for 19 months, was sent to prison in May after a top appeals court upheld a sentence handed down to her due to her affiliation with the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Sulukan is almost totally disabled and unable to take care of herself. She also underwent a major heart surgery in September. However, Sulukan was issued a medical report by the Council of Forensic Medicine saying she is fit to remain in prison. [More..](#)

Woman imprisoned on Gülen links suffering from leukemia, appealed for release

Suna Halis who was arrested in April for alleged links to the Gülen movement has requested release from prison, saying she has leukemia and needs proper medical care. [More..](#)

Health of critically ill man detained in hospital waiting room had deteriorated in prison, wife says

The health of a critically ill man, Yunus Tosun, who was detained in a hospital while waiting for his doctor and later arrested in May, has deteriorated considerably in prison. [More..](#)



Health of inmate who had undergone 3 brain surgeries was visibly deteriorating, his family said

The health of former teacher Abdullah Aslan, who has been imprisoned since December 2017 for alleged links to the Gülen movement and who suffers from epilepsy, has deteriorated significantly since major surgery in August. [More..](#)

Ailing inmate not released despite eligibility for judicial supervision

Kamil Acar, a 58-year-old prisoner suffering from severe health problems, was not released even though he had been eligible for release under judicial supervision since September. Acar, who has been imprisoned since September 2016 for alleged links to the Gülen movement, had been suffering from kidney failure for four years and heart disease for three. [More..](#)

Property rights

Turkey granted immunity to trustees running 682 companies seized after 2016 coup attempt

Turkey granted immunity from prosecution to trustees who were appointed to replace the boards of directors of 682 companies that were seized by the Turkish government over their alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Erdoğan forcing TMSF to sell hundreds of companies seized over alleged Gülen links

President Erdoğan has been pressuring Turkey's Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) into selling some 700 companies seized by the Turkish government over alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)



Student dormitory seized over Gülen links now used as ultranationalist Grey Wolves headquarters in Ankara

A student dormitory seized over alleged affiliation with the Gülen movement after the coup attempt was given to the ultranationalist Grey Wolves to be used as their headquarters in Ankara. [More..](#)

Company seized over alleged Gülen links being sold to pro-gov't firm at rock bottom price

Turkey's Competition Authority has authorized the sale of a company owned by Naksan Holding, at one time one of Turkey's largest corporations before it was seized by the AKP government, to a pro-government company at a very low price. [More...](#)

In addition to Naksan Holding, the TMSF has taken over major conglomerates including Dumankaya, Boydak Holding, the Koza Ipek Group and Kaynak Holding among 880 other private companies.

Deaths of purge victims

[Bahadır Odabaşı](#), a 16-year-old teenager, died by suicide in January in Turkey's eastern Diyarbakır province because of depression caused by the situation of his father, Nurettin Odabaşı, a former teacher who was fired from his job by an emergency decree and arrested on terror-related charges due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement.

[Mehmet Ali Gündüz](#), father of İbrahim Gündüz, a former public prosecutor who died with his wife as they were trying to flee to Greece, passed away in January while he was waiting for his son's body to be returned from Greece.

[Nusret Muğla](#), an 84-year-old ailing man who was serving a sentence on conviction of links to the Gülen movement, passed away after contracting COVID-19 in prison in February.



[Yusuf Bekmezci](#), a jailed 82-year-old businessman and philanthropist convicted of links to the movement, died in February amid calls for his immediate release from prison.

His daughter Şeyma [said](#) her ailing father had been condemned to die in prison, adding that he could barely understand the court proceedings due to his advanced Alzheimer's and was unable to defend himself.

[Ahmet Olgun](#), a former police officer who was fired from his job by an emergency decree, died after setting himself on fire in March in Turkey's northern

province of Ordu.

[Emrah Hızarcı](#), a former sergeant who was dismissed from the military by an emergency decree, died by suicide in March.

[Cemil Karabidek](#), a former sergeant who was dismissed from the military by an emergency decree, died while trying to cross the Evros River in March.

[Mesut Karaboyun](#), 32, a former noncommissioned officer in the gendarmerie who was dismissed by an emergency decree, died by suicide in March.

[Emine Üzel Ahmadi](#), 29, the mother of a 4-month-old baby and a former lawyer who was dismissed by an emergency decree, died by suicide in May.

[Hakan Acar](#), a former professor who sought asylum in Canada, drowned in June in Ontario's Lake Simcoe while trying to save another person.

[Mehmet Sait Demiröz](#), a former member of Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals who was disbarred in the aftermath of the failed coup and

subsequently jailed due to his alleged links to the Gülen movement, died in July after spending a week in the intensive care unit.

Tuğrul Özşengül, 56, a former academic at the Police Academy who was jailed after the coup attempt, died in prison of a heart attack in August.



Abdurrahman Sakar, a former judge who was summarily dismissed from his job by a government decree, died of cancer in August.

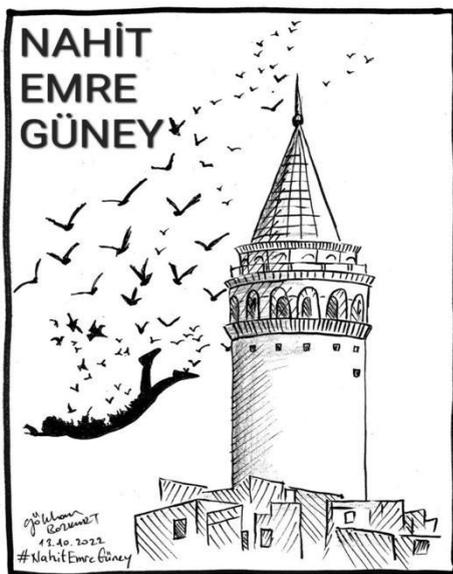
Ramazan Açıkgöz, who was convicted of alleged links to the Gülen movement, died of a heart attack in August, one day before he was due to be released from prison.

Tacettin Başer, 58, a father of five, succumbed to cancer in September, two weeks after he was belatedly released from prison despite his deteriorating health.

Mehmet Ali Gündoğan, 47, a former police officer who was summarily fired by a government decree, took his own life in September.

Kani Enön, a former police officer who was fired by an emergency decree, died while working at a quarry in September in Turkey's northeastern province of Gümüşhane.

Emrah Yıldız, 34, a former sergeant who was dismissed from the service by an emergency decree, was stabbed to death in October in the bus he was driving in the southeastern Turkish province of Gaziantep.



Nahit Emre Güney, a 26-year-old university student, died in October after he jumped from the observation deck of Galata Tower, an Istanbul tourist destination, due to depression caused by the imprisonment of his father in a post-coup purge.

Semih Parıltı, a post-coup purge victim who was dismissed from his civil service job by an emergency decree, died in October after being injured in a traffic accident while working as a deliveryman in the southwestern Turkish province of Denizli.

[Hasan Akdemir](#), a former imam who in 2017 was fired from Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) in a government purge, died of cancer in November.

[Hasan Önal](#), a former police officer who was dismissed from his job by an emergency decree, died in December in a traffic accident while working as a deliveryman in Ankara.

[Zeynep Baltacı](#), 34, a mother of two and former nurse who was fired by an emergency decree, died of cancer in December in Turkey's southern province of Adana.

A 25-year-old former [military cadet](#) who was the subject of an investigation after the coup attempt died by suicide. His identity was not disclosed at the request of his family.

3. Crackdown on the Kurdish political movement and opposition groups



The Turkish government ramped up its crackdown on the Kurdish political movement in 2022 with a view to weakening the HDP, the third largest political party in parliament. The HDP is currently facing the threat of closure ahead of a general election in May, and in December Turkey's chief prosecutor asked the Constitutional Court to strip the HDP of government funding over its alleged links to an outlawed terrorist organization.

Several opposition groups also came under intense pressure in 2022, and individuals linked to such groups were detained by the Turkish authorities. Detentions during the year indicated that President Erdoğan was determined to step up pressure on critical groups and individuals both inside and outside Turkey.

Selahattin Demirtaş, the HDP's former leader and an outspoken critic of Turkey's ruling AKP and its leader, President Erdoğan, remained behind bars on politically motivated charges despite rulings by Turkey's Constitutional Court and ECtHR. Scores of former HDP politicians are also in prison either in pretrial detention or serving sentences after being convicted of terrorism offenses for non-violent political activities, speeches and social media postings.

According to the Ministry of Interior, Ankara has ousted a total of 151 elected mayors from office on accusations of terrorism in the last seven years, almost all from the HDP, replacing them with government-appointed bureaucrats. State-appointed trustees now administer nearly all towns and cities in southeastern Turkey.

In December an İstanbul court sentenced Ekrem İmamoğlu, mayor of İstanbul from the main opposition CHP, to two years, seven months in prison and barred him from politics for allegedly insulting members of Turkey's Supreme Board of Elections (YSK).

Turkish police in May detained Alparslan Kuytul, leader of the Furkan Foundation, an anti-government religious group. Its members protested the arrest of their founder and the pressure on their activities in various provinces during the year. In many cases police intervened in their demonstrations with tear gas and used excessive force against the protestors.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 about the ongoing crackdown on the Kurdish political movement and opposition groups:

Turkey moved to strip pro-Kurdish party of funding

Turkey's chief prosecutor asked the constitutional court to strip the HDP of government funding over its alleged links to an outlawed terrorist organization. The HDP, parliament's second-largest opposition group, faces the threat of closure ahead of a general election in May. [More..](#)

ECtHR said Turkey arrested pro-Kurdish politicians to stifle pluralism, ordered their release

The ECtHR in November ruled that Turkey had violated the rights of 13 former lawmakers from the HDP by putting them in pretrial detention to stifle pluralism and to limit freedom of political debate, ordering the release of two of them who are still in jail.

The ECtHR rendered its judgment for Figen Yüksekdağ and 12 other politicians: İdris Baluken, Besime Konca, Abdullah Zeydan, Nihat Akdoğan, Selma Irmak, Ferhat Encu, Gülser Yıldırım, Nursel Aydoğan, Çağlar Demirel, Ayhan Bilgen, Burcu Çelik and Leyla Birlik. [More..](#)

CoE urged Turkey's top court to quickly conclude examination of Demirtaş's detention



The Council of Europe (CoE) Committee of Ministers' Deputies in September called on Turkey's Constitutional Court to expeditiously examine an application from Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş concerning his ongoing detention in a manner compatible with earlier

judgments of the ECtHR. [More..](#)

ECtHR ruled Turkey violated MPs' rights by stripping them of immunity in 2016

The ECtHR ruled that Turkey violated the freedom of expression of 40 former lawmakers from the HDP by lifting their parliamentary immunity. The prosecution of members of parliament had been possible since the CHP and other opposition parties lent support to a 2016 proposal submitted by the ruling AKP and its ally, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), on removing the deputies' immunity from prosecution. The immunity of all deputies who faced prosecution at the time was lifted in May 2016, and by their subsequent trial, ordering the government to pay 5,500 euros to each applicant. [More..](#)

Prison sentence, political ban for İstanbul mayor sparked int'l condemnation

An İstanbul court in December sentenced İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu to two years, seven months in prison and barred him from politics for allegedly insulting members of the YSK. The sentence and political ban must be upheld by an appeals court after a petition is filed.



The sentence drew harsh criticism from high-level officials in Europe and the US, including the mayors of major European cities, who expressed solidarity with İmamoğlu. [More..](#)

Court released assailant who staged attack at HDP office in İstanbul

An İstanbul court in January ruled to release from detention a man who staged an attack at an HDP building in İstanbul's Bahçelievler district. The assailant, identified as Muhammed Eren Sütçü, who was carrying a gun and a knife, injured two party employees during the attack.



[More..](#)

Kurdish MP injured in police intervention in protest in SE Turkey

HDP lawmaker Habip Eksik was injured as a result of police intervention in a demonstration held in the

southeastern province of Hakkari in October to protest the 1999 arrest of the leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). [More..](#)

Top court found no rights violation in lengthy pretrial detention of Kurdish politician

Turkey's Constitutional Court found no rights violation in the five-year pretrial detention of Kurdish politician Figen Yüksekdağ, which it said had actually lasted for only three years, one month, describing the measure as proportionate. Yüksekdağ was arrested along with a number of other Kurdish politicians in November 2016 in a sweeping crackdown on the HDP. [More..](#)

Crackdown on anti-government Furkan religious foundation continued



Turkish police in May detained Alparslan Kuytul, leader of the Furkan Foundation, an anti-government religious group, in connection to the abduction of a businessman in the southern province of Adana. [More..](#)

An outspoken critic of the policies of President Erdoğan's government, Kuytul

and members of his foundation are facing growing pressure from the government for strongly advocating that religion and politics not mix and criticizing the AKP government for doing just that.

The police in Adana sparked outrage when they employed batons, plastic bullets and pepper spray in what many said was a disproportionate use of force to disperse Furkan Foundation members who wanted to hold a peaceful demonstration in March. [More..](#)

However, Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of Turkey's far-right MHP, praised the excessive force used by the police officers in Adana. [More..](#)

Members of the foundation were also beaten and detained by police in Osmaniye province in June. The detainees were resisting the closure of a private religious education center affiliated with their foundation. [More..](#)

Jailed Kurdish politician died after 6 years of imprisonment

In August Mehmet Candemir, a former party council member of the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) who had been behind bars on terrorism

charges and then conviction for six years, died after being taken to a hospital from a prison in northern Turkey. [More..](#)



Turkey freed Kurdish politician with dementia from prison

Kurdish politician Aysel Tuğluk was released from prison in northwest Turkey in October after a medical report stated that her dementia did not allow her to remain behind bars. Tuğluk, 57, was the deputy co-chair of the HDP before her arrest in 2016. She was sentenced in 2018 to 10 years in prison for membership in a

“terrorist organization.” [More..](#)

Turkish parliament stripped Kurdish MP of parliamentary status

The Turkish parliament in December stripped jailed HDP lawmaker Semra Güzel of her parliamentary status due to inadequate attendance at sessions of the legislature. [More..](#)

Opposition lawmaker prevented from leaving Turkey due to travel ban

Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, a lawmaker from the HDP and a prominent defender of human rights, was prevented from leaving Turkey due to a travel ban in place despite his parliamentary immunity. [More..](#)

Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals upheld jail for opposition figure



Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals in May upheld a prison sentence for Canan Kaftancıoğlu, head of the Istanbul branch of the country's main opposition CHP. In 2019 Kaftancıoğlu, 50, was sentenced to nearly 10 years in prison on a range of charges including “disseminating terrorist propaganda” and insulting

President Erdoğan. The charges related mostly to tweets Kaftancıoğlu posted between 2012 and 2017. She had been free pending appeal. [More..](#)

At least 170 detained as police intervened in events marking 9th anniversary of Gezi protests

Police intervention in a demonstration held in central İstanbul by a group wanting to mark the ninth anniversary of the anti-government Gezi Park protests and commemorate the activists killed in the 2013 events resulted in the detention of at least 170 people. [More..](#)

Dismissed academic got 10 years in prison on terrorism charges

A Turkish court handed down a prison sentence of 10 years to academic Nuriye Gülmen, who had been dismissed from her job in the aftermath of a coup attempt in Turkey in 2016, on charges of terrorist organization membership.



She was detained and released in 2016 numerous times for protesting her firing along with dismissed teacher Semih Özakça on Ankara's Yüksel Street, where they demanded reinstatement to their jobs in front of a human rights monument. The monument became a symbol of resistance and a demand for justice after other purge victims and activists joined them. Turkish police are believed to have used excessive force against the protestors on Yüksel Street. [More..](#)

Detention warrants issued for 50 women over alleged ties to PKK

Turkish prosecutors issued detention warrants for 50 women on charges of membership in a terrorist organization as part of an investigation based on witness statements. [More..](#)



298 detained during Nevruz celebrations in Diyarbakır

Turkish police detained at least 298 people, including 74 minors, during Nevruz celebrations in March in southeastern Diyarbakır province. Nevruz is

celebrated by Kurds as the first day of spring. However, Nevruz celebrations have often been marked by heavy-handed police intervention. [More..](#)

4. Crackdown on rights defenders



The situation of human rights defenders in Turkey has significantly deteriorated since a coup attempt in July 2016, with the HRDs subjected to judicial harassment over the last seven years.

Since 2016 international organizations and rights groups have repeatedly asked Turkey to guarantee that the rights and freedoms of human rights defenders are fully respected.

In 2022 human rights defenders continued to face baseless investigations, prosecutions and convictions. They were accused of "membership in an armed terrorist organization," "disseminating terrorist propaganda" and "insulting President Erdoğan." Turkish police have raided the offices of human rights organizations and detained rights advocates.

Prominent businessman and philanthropist Osman Kavala remained behind bars during the year despite a 2019 ECtHR ruling that found his detention was in pursuance of an "ulterior motive," that of silencing him as a human rights defender. The non-implementation of the ECtHR's ruling prompted the CoE Committee of Ministers to launch an infringement procedure against Turkey in February.

In September four UN special rapporteurs sent a joint letter to the Turkish government and expressed their concern regarding the apparent denial of justice for Kavala. The UN officials urged Turkey to respect the decision and legitimacy of the ECtHR and requested information on the factual and legal basis of the charges against and conviction of Kavala.

In October Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, head of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) and a prominent human rights defender, was detained due

to her remarks calling for an investigation into claims of the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Turkish military against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq.

In November the Supreme Court of Appeals overturned the convictions of Taner Kılıç, İdil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran and Günal Kurşun – four of 11 human rights defenders who were convicted in July 2020 on terrorism charges.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 in the crackdown on human rights defenders:

Turkey misused counterterrorism legislation to target human rights defenders

Mary Lawlor, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders, said in a statement in December that she was deeply concerned by the apparent misuse of counterterrorism legislation to target human rights defenders. [More..](#)

Turkish police raided IHD Diyarbakir office, detained board member

Turkish police in February raided the Human Rights Association (İHD) Diyarbakir branch and detained board member Ferhat Berkpınar. [More..](#)

Female inmates subjected to mistreatment and humiliating practices in Bakırköy Prison, said CİSST lawyers



Lawyers from the Civil Society in the Penal System (CİSST) said female inmates in Bakırköy Prison were subjected to mistreatment and humiliating practices. Berivan Korkut and Gülizar Tuncer said rights violations occurred especially in the provision of healthcare.

An X-ray of the wrists of architect and human rights defender Mücella Yapıcı, who is serving an 18-year sentence for allegedly aiding in attempts to topple the Turkish government during the Gezi Park protests of 2013, was circulated on social media in June. The image showed handcuffs on Yapıcı's wrists, clearly indicating that she was X-rayed while she was still handcuffed. Yapıcı also underwent eye and heart examinations while in handcuffs [More.](#)

Turkish court upheld rights leader's life sentence



A Turkish appellate court in December upheld the conviction of businessman and rights activist Osman Kavala, who has been behind bars since October, 2017, on charges of attempting to overthrow the government of Turkey. The appellate court ruled that an April verdict “complied with the law.” [More..](#)

An İstanbul court on April 25 had sentenced Kavala to aggravated life and his co-defendants to 18 years each on charges of instigating the anti-government Gezi Park protests in 2013. [More..](#)

The appellate court also upheld the convictions of the seven other defendants -- Mücella Yapıcı, Çiğdem Mater Utku, Ali Hakan Altınay, Mine Özerden, Şerafettin Can Atalay, Tayfun Kahraman and Yiğit Ali Ekmekçi – who were each sentenced to 18 years for “aiding and abetting the attempted overthrow of the government.”

Following the Turkish court’s ruling, President Erdoğan said the decision to jail Kavala for life showed that Turkey’s courts were independent. Erdoğan said the ECtHR as well as Ankara’s Western allies would have to abide by the court’s verdict. [More..](#)

In February the Committee of Ministers, the executive organ of the CoE, decided to take action against Turkey for failing to release Kavala despite a 2019 ECtHR ruling that found his detention was in pursuance of an “ulterior motive,” that of silencing him as a human rights defender. The committee ordered that the case be submitted to the ECtHR for review, officially beginning an infringement procedure against Turkey. [More..](#)

In May a request by the co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Turkey by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to visit Kavala in prison was denied by the Turkish Justice Ministry. [More..](#)

In July the ECtHR said Turkey had failed to comply with a binding judgment of the court issued in December 2019 which found that Kavala's detention violated his fundamental rights. The judgment came in response to a question by the Committee of Ministers as to whether Turkey had complied with the court's ruling. [More..](#)

In November Kavala said in a written interview he gave through his lawyers with the pro-opposition Halk TV that his detention was unlawful and that the Turkish government was keeping him in prison to lend credibility to the Gezi Park case. [More..](#)

Turkey refused to provide further information on Kavala case to OHCHR

A letter sent in November by the Turkish Permanent Mission to the UN Office in Geneva to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that Turkey would not provide further information to the UN on the case of rights activist Osman Kavala. [More..](#)



Turkey's response to UN letter on Kavala case didn't not address allegations: UN special rapporteurs

Turkey's response to a joint letter sent by UN special rapporteurs in September on the case of Osman Kavala did not address the allegations contained in the communication, UN special rapporteurs said in a statement in November. [More..](#)

2 human rights activists appeared in court for allegedly violating the law on demonstrations

Hüseyin Yaviç and Sevim Çiçek from the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (TİHV) appeared in court in eastern Van province in May for allegedly violating the law on demonstrations. They were detained by the police in October 2021 while delivering a press statement in front of Van University Hospital. [More..](#)

Justice prevailed as Turkey's top court overturned convictions of 4 rights defenders: Amnesty

Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals in November overturned the convictions of Taner Kılıç, İdil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran and Günal Kurşun – four of 11 human rights defenders who were convicted in July 2020 on terrorism charges.

“The decision by Türkiye’s highest appeals court to overturn baseless convictions of Amnesty International Türkiye’s Honorary Chair and three other human rights defenders is a huge relief, yet also highlights once more the politically motivated nature of the prosecutions,” Amnesty International said. [More..](#)

Turkey arrested doctors’ union chair after chemical weapons comment



Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, head of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) as well as an expert in forensic medicine and a prominent human rights defender, was taken into custody at her home in İstanbul on October 26 and put in pretrial detention due to remarks calling for an

investigation into claims of the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Turkish military against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq. [More..](#)

Answering questions posed by BBC from Sincan Prison in Ankara through her lawyers, she said her imprisonment was an attempt by the Turkish government to silence society and that she’s facing a “political” process. [More..](#)

5. Minority and Refugee Rights

Turkey continued to limit the rights of minorities and refugees in 2022, with these communities suffering from rights violations, hate speech and attacks throughout the year. President Erdoğan, his key ally, leader of the MHP Devlet Bahçeli, and some opposition parties employed a divisive ultranationalist rhetoric, especially against Syrians and Kurds, contributing to the rise in hate crimes.

The government made little effort to address religious freedom issues during the year. According to the yearly report by the US Department of State, rights violations against non-Muslim minorities included restricting efforts of minority religious groups to train their clergy, entry bans and deportations of non-Turkish-citizen leaders of Protestant congregations and government officials' use of antisemitic rhetoric in speeches.

In 2022 anti-immigrant sentiment reached a boiling point, fueled by Turkey's economic woes. Xenophobia, hate speech and hate crimes against Syrian refugees continued increasing as the country prepared for upcoming elections.

Moreover, Turkey rejected the citizenship applications of some Uyghur refugees in 2022 due to risks to the country's "national security" or "social order."

The state suppression of the Kurdish language and culture continued to rise across the country.

Alevi leaders repeatedly expressed their concern that the situation of Turkey's Alevi population became increasingly precarious as the government of President Erdoğan failed to fulfill its promise of granting them more rights to enable free practice of their beliefs and imposed its own version of Islam on various segments of society.

The latest rights reports revealed that Roma people did not have proper access to healthcare during the year. Roma children suffered from a lack of nutrition, poor housing conditions, a lack of heating and psychological problems. Drugs were found to be another common problem among Roma youth.

According to a report by the LGBT+ advocacy group KAOS GL, the country's LGBT+ community continued feeling threatened under the AKP government in 2022.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 in the field of minority and refugee rights:

Kurds continued to face discrimination and hate speech

Turkish authorities detained 10 people in June during a wedding in Istanbul's Esenyurt district for wearing traditional Kurdish scarves in the colors of the Kurdish flag. The groom, Mesut Karçık, and nine guests were detained for wearing the yellow, red and green scarves. [More..](#)

A group of university students in Turkey's southern Karaman province were attacked in April by the far-right ultranationalist Grey Wolves for dancing to Kurdish music. [More..](#)

Restrictions on use of the Kurdish language

Turkey's Constitutional Court found no rights violation in disciplinary punishments given to 22 teachers who staged a protest about the importance of the freedom to use one's mother tongue. [More..](#)



Imprisoned Kurdish singer Nudem Durak in May called on Turkish authorities to release her from prison, saying she was suffering from multiple illnesses and wanted to sing as a free woman once again. [More..](#)

In January police officers prevented four young street performers from singing in Kurdish in one of Istanbul's popular streets, later briefly detaining them. [More..](#)

Local administrations in May canceled four events, three concerts and a theater play that were to be performed in Kurdish in three Turkish provinces. [More..](#)



Remains of man killed in clashes between Turkish security forces and PKK handed to family in a bag

The remains of a young man who was killed during clashes between Turkish security forces and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in January 2016 were returned to his father Ali Rıza Arslan in a cloth bag nearly seven years after his death. Arslan received the remains of his son, Hakan, at the Diyarbakır courthouse in August. [More..](#)

Armored vehicles and abandoned explosives killed civilians

A total of 67 children in Turkey have been killed by armored vehicles, landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) since 2011, according to a report by the bar association of the southeastern province of Diyarbakır. [More..](#)

Abdulgaffar Dayan (23) died in January after he was hit by an armored police vehicle in the southeastern province of Şırnak. [More..](#)

The ruling AKP and its ally the MHP in February rejected a parliamentary motion by the HDP to investigate civilian deaths caused by armored vehicles in Turkey's Southeast. [More..](#)

2-month-old baby accompanied mother arrested for alleged links to PKK

Reyhan Abdi, a mother of three from northeastern Syria's Rojava province who was arrested for alleged links to the PKK, was accompanied by her 2-month-old daughter in prison. [More..](#)



Elderly Kurdish couple sent to prison to serve sentences for allegedly aiding and abetting terrorism

An elderly Kurdish couple in eastern Turkey's Van province were sent to prison in May after the top appeals court upheld sentences handed down to them for allegedly aiding and abetting a terrorist organization. [More..](#)

HDP deputy called for investigation into death of Kurdish inmate

HDP lawmaker Sait Dede called for an investigation into the circumstances of the death of Şervan Can Güder, a Kurdish inmate in Van F-Type Prison. Güder died after suffering a heart attack in March. [More..](#)

80-year-old Kurdish inmate died of cancer in Turkish prison

Kurdish inmate Abdo Baran, 80, who was suffering from end-stage colon cancer, died in March in southeastern Turkey's Mardin province after being denied release from prison to seek proper treatment. [More..](#)

Kurdish teenager died in police target practice area

The body of 16-year-old Muharrem Aksem was discovered in March in an open area in southeastern Şanlıurfa province that is used by special operations police twice a week for target practice. On the day the body was discovered, officers had been practicing in the area, according to witness statements. Aksem was a shepherd and had gone out to tend his flock. [More..](#)

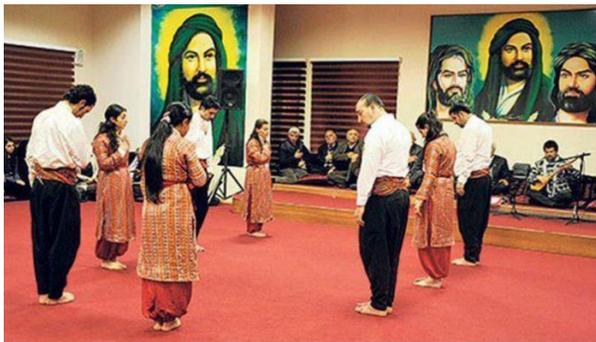


Court said killing of Kurdish student by police officer in SE Turkey was ‘legal’

A regional appeals court ruled that no charges can be leveled against a police officer who shot Kurdish university student Kemal Kurkut to death during Nevruz celebrations in Diyarbakir in 2017 and that the student’s killing took place “within the framework of the law.” [More..](#)

4 Alevi institutions in Turkish capital were attacked

On August 2 the Türkmen Alevi Bektaşî Foundation’s headquarters in Çankaya was targeted around 1:30 p.m. and the Şah-ı Merdan cultural association in Mamak at 2:30 p.m., while the Ana Fatma Cemevi and the Gökçeşel Village Association – both also in Mamak – were attacked simultaneously around 3:40 p.m. According to a lawyer representing the institutions, the attacks were “organized and planned beforehand.” [More..](#)



Alevi associations refused to pay high energy bills for cemevis, charged as ‘businesses’

The Federation of Alevi Associations announced in February that they refused to pay high electricity bills for cemevis, Alevi places of worship, which were considered to be “businesses.” The cemevis were

subjected to the highest increase among electricity users in Turkey. [More..](#)

Alevi leader attacked in Istanbul in apparent hate crime

Selami Sarıtaş, an Alevi leader in Istanbul’s Kartal district, was attacked and beaten in front of his house in August by two unknown assailants in an apparent hate crime. [More..](#)



Alevi organizations called on Turkish authorities to abolish compulsory religious classes and recognize cemevis as houses of worship

Alevi organizations in March staged demonstrations in several Turkish provinces demanding that compulsory religion classes in schools be abolished and that cemevis be officially recognized by the state. [More..](#)



Court acquitted 3 who put on a show atop gate of Armenian church in İstanbul

A Turkish court in March acquitted three people who danced on the gate of an Armenian church in İstanbul. The incident, which took place at the Surp Takavor Church in Kadıköy, sparked outrage at the

time among Turkey's Armenian community and Armenian activists. [More..](#)

Non-Muslim minority foundations were unable to hold board elections for 9 years

Christian and Jewish minority communities in Turkey complained that minority foundations had not been able to hold board of director elections for the past nine years since the government suspended election regulations in 2013 and failed to draft a replacement. [More..](#)

Jewish cemetery in İstanbul desecrated by vandals

Thirty-six headstones in the Jewish Hasköy cemetery in İstanbul were knocked over in July in the apparent vandalism of a Jewish burial ground, according to the Turkish Chief Rabbinate Foundation. [More..](#)



Discrimination against Roma in Turkey increased during the pandemic

A report drafted by Boğaziçi University researchers revealed that discrimination against the Roma community in Turkey increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the report, Roma children suffered from a lack of nutrition, poor housing conditions, a lack of heating and psychological problems. [More..](#)

Syrian refugees continued to suffer from hate speech, discrimination and attacks

Xenophobia, hate speech and hate crimes against Syrian refugees increased in Turkey as the country prepared for upcoming elections, the İstanbul-based Asylum Seekers Platform said at a press conference in September. [More..](#)



A group of unidentified assailants wearing police uniforms raided an Istanbul apartment where several young Syrian refugee men were living and killed Naif Elnaif, a 19-year-old refugee, in January. [More..](#)

Faris Muhammed Al-Ali, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee, was stabbed to death in September in an apparent hate crime

in the southern Turkish province of Hatay. He was attacked by five people while walking with a friend after his shift at work. The two were taken to a secluded spot where Al-Ali was stabbed and his friend hit on the head. [More..](#)

A landlord and his son attacked their own rental unit in Istanbul, breaking down the front door with an ax while their Syrian tenants were sleeping, after the family rejected a 230 percent rent increase and refused to move out. [More..](#)

Billboards telling Syrian refugees in Arabic to return to their homeland since they're no longer wanted in Turkey were put up in the northwestern city of Bolu upon the order of Mayor Tanju Özcan from the main opposition CHP. [More..](#)

Philippe Leclerc, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) representative in Turkey, said approximately 800 Syrians leave Turkey for Syria every week but that conditions are not suitable for a large number of returns. [More..](#)

5 Afghans found stabbed to death in Turkish capital

Five Afghan nationals were found stabbed to death in a house in Ankara in November. A medical team arrived to find the victims' dead bodies after their friends, who had been unable to reach them, notified the authorities. They determined that the five Afghan nationals were stabbed to death a week earlier. [More..](#)

Turkish gendarmes opened fire on van carrying refugees, killing a child

In July Turkish gendarmes fired on a van carrying migrants that disobeyed an order to halt while passing through a village on the Iranian border. A 4-year-old boy was killed, and 12 others were injured. [More..](#)

Turkey violated Afghans' right to apply for int'l protection through deportations or pushbacks at Iranian border: HRW report

Turkey deported tens of thousands of Afghans directly to Afghanistan or pushed them back at its land border with Iran without checking to see if they were eligible for international protection, Human Rights Watch said in a report released in November. [More..](#)

Turkey denied citizenship to some Uyghur refugees

Turkey rejected the citizenship applications of some Uyghur refugees due to risks to the country's "national security" or "social order." Erkin Ekrem, director of the Uyghur Research Institute, said Turkish Deputy Interior Minister İsmail Çataklı told him and other Uyghur representatives that some foreign nationals, including Uyghurs from China, were considered risks to national security. [More..](#)

Turkish police threatened Uyghurs protesting outside Chinese Consulate with detention and deportation

Police in November threatened Uyghurs outside the Chinese Consulate in Istanbul who were protesting the death of innocent Uyghurs in a fire in Urumqi, Xinjiang, with detention and deportation to China. [More..](#)

Somali restaurant owner detained for deportation despite legal residence

Mohamed Isse Abdullah, a Somali restaurant owner living in Ankara, was detained in September for deportation despite being a legal resident. [More..](#)

Turkey's LGBT+ under increasing government pressure, report revealed

A report by the LGBT+ advocacy group KAOS GL revealed that Turkey's LGBT+ community felt increasingly threatened under the AKP government. The report was based on data collected from 2007 to 2021 and documented rights violations and discrimination against the LGBT+ community. [More..](#)



Turkish authorities banned all Pride Week activities in Istanbul

Turkish authorities banned all Pride Week activities in Istanbul in order to "maintain peace and security, and prevent criminal activities," amid an increasing number of bans on LGBT+ events across the country.

526 detained for attending events during Pride Month in Turkey

A total of 526 people, including 34 minors, were detained by police at Pride Month events held across Turkey in June. [More..](#)

Istanbul neighborhood community center appeared in court for allegedly 'disseminating terrorist and LGBT propaganda'

The Tarlabaşı Community Center (TTM), a neighborhood community center in Istanbul that had been active since 2006, was scheduled to appear in court in April for allegedly "disseminating terrorist and LGBT propaganda." [More..](#)

6. Press freedom

The Turkish government renewed its assault on press freedom in 2022 ahead of the 2023 presidential election, including imprisoning journalists, using the regulatory authorities to exert financial pressure and capitalizing on a new media law that mandates prison sentences for spreading disinformation.

Rights groups claimed that authoritarianism continued to gain ground in the country during the year. Most of Turkey's major media outlets remained under the control of the government.

According to the CPJ, Turkey, among the top jailers of journalists worldwide, saw a significant [increase](#) in the number of jailed journalists in 2022, with the government using the media legislation as an additional tool to prosecute journalists. The number of journalists jailed during the year rose from 18 to 40, with 25 Kurdish journalists arrested on terrorism charges.

Journalism is still associated with terrorism in Turkey, and their professional work is used as evidence against journalists in the overwhelming majority of convictions. In most of the trials, the evidence typically comprises social media posts, news stories, articles or TV broadcasts.

According to most recent World Press Freedom Index published by RSF, Turkey was [ranked](#) 149th out of 180 countries in 2022.

Cognizant of these trends, the Turkish government continued to increase its control over social media through restrictive laws. According to a [yearly report](#) by Freedom House, internet freedom continued to decline for the fourth year in a row in Turkey, and thousands of online users, including members of the political opposition, faced criminal charges for their social media activities during the period covered.

In October 2022 President Erdoğan [approved](#) a social media law that stipulates sanctions, including prison sentences of up to three years, for people who are found to have produced social media posts for the purpose of fake news and disinformation.

Moreover, Turkey's Press Advertising Agency (BİK), the state body responsible for regulating publicly funded advertisements in the media, changed the [Press Ethics Code](#), adding to it vague and abstract wording that is feared to be contributing to the increasing media censorship in the country.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 in the field of press freedom:

Journalism on trial

21 journalists detained in southeastern Turkey's Diyarbakır province



Turkish authorities in June detained 21 journalists in southeastern Diyarbakır province who worked for pro-Kurdish news outlets JinNews and the Mezopotamya news agency (MA). Among those who were detained were MA's editor-in-chief Aziz Oruç, JinNews news director Safiye Alagas and JinNews editor-in-chief Gülşen Koçuk.

[More..](#)

Sixteen of the journalists who had been held in custody for eight days were arrested. [More..](#)

Journalists Sibel Yükler, Deniz Nazlım and Yıldız Tar were also detained for attending a demonstration in Ankara protesting the arrest of their colleagues.

[More..](#)

Turkish police detained 11 journalists, including the mother of a 45-day-old baby

In October Turkish police raided the offices of several pro-Kurdish media outlets as well as the staffs' private residences, detaining 11 journalists, including the mother of a 45-day-old infant, as part of a "counterterrorism operation." Eight of the detainees worked for MA



and three for JinNews. Mezopotamya's Ankara correspondent, Zemo Ağgöz, the mother of a 45-day-old baby, was among those detained. [More..](#)

Nine of the 11 journalists were arrested a week later. The arrests took place after the Turkish Parliament approved a tough pre-election law that could see reporters and social media users jailed for up to three years for spreading "fake news." [More..](#)

Police detained journalist who revealed hack of e-government website

Journalist İbrahim Haskoloğlu, who claimed that a group had hacked Turkey's e-government website and other government-related sites, was detained in April. [More..](#)

Former Taraf daily journalists sentenced to prison for reporting on alleged war plan

Four journalists from the now-closed Taraf daily were handed down prison sentences by a Turkish court on conviction of publishing state secrets in their 2010 reporting on an alleged war plan. [More..](#)



Turkey deported Greek journalist 'for reasons of public order'

Turkish authorities in August deported Evangelos Areteos, a reporter for Greek newspaper Real and author of two books on Turkish politics, "for reasons of public order." [More..](#)



Turkish journalist sentenced to nearly 300 years in prison for smearing al-Qaeda-linked jihadists

Hidayet Karaca, a prominent Turkish journalist who was accused of defaming an al-Qaeda-linked radical group that endorsed Osama bin Laden and called for armed jihad and the beheading of Americans, was sentenced to nearly 300 years in prison. [More..](#)

Karaca has spent more than eight years in a one-person prison cell. [More..](#)

Court handed down sentences to former Zaman daily columnists in retrial over Gülen links

Four former columnists from the now-closed Zaman daily appeared in an İstanbul court in November in the latest hearing of a retrial during which the court handed down prison sentences of varying lengths to the defendants. [More..](#)



Turkey arrested TV journalist for insulting President Erdoğan

Turkey in January arrested well-known television journalist Sedef Kabaş for comments she made on air about President Erdoğan.

Commenting on Erdoğan's yearslong performance as president during the television program, Kabaş said, quoting a Circassian proverb, "When an [ox] enters a palace, it doesn't become a king. [However], that palace becomes a barn." [More..](#)

3 political parties filed complaints against journalist for allegedly insulting Turkey

Turkey's ruling AKP, its far-right ally the MHP and the small, nationalist Grand Unity Party (BBP) filed separate complaints against veteran journalist Ayşenur Arslan. The parties accused the journalist of "insulting Turkey and the Turkish nation" in remarks about the Turkish Resistance Organization (TMT). During a program on Halk TV, Arslan said the TMT was a "semi-official organization known for [carrying out] assassinations." [More..](#)



Documentary filmmaker arrested in Ankara on terrorism charges

Sibel Tekin, a documentary filmmaker and journalist, was arrested in December on terrorism charges. She was detained following a complaint by law enforcement that she deliberately filmed a police car while shooting videos for her new project about daylight saving time in Turkey. [More..](#)

Journalist reporting on child abuse in eastern Turkey detained

Journalist Sinan Aygül was detained in December on charges of "inciting hatred and hostility" after reporting on a child abuse incident in Turkey's eastern province of Bitlis. [More..](#)

Photojournalist who captured murder of Kurdish student in 2017 sentenced for terrorist propaganda

A local court sentenced photojournalist Abdurrahman Gök, who took photos of a university student being shot to death by a police officer in southeastern Turkey in 2017, to one-and-a-half years in prison on charges of "disseminating terrorist propaganda." [More..](#)



Transnational repression of journalists



Dissident Iranian journalist who disappeared in Turkey deported to Iran

Mohammad Bagher Moradi, a dissident Iranian journalist who disappeared in Ankara in May, was deported to Iran in early November after being kept in “illegal” detention in Turkey for five months.

[More..](#)

Turkey arrested 34 Egyptian journalists to accelerate normalization with Cairo

Turkish authorities in November arrested 34 Egyptian journalists who are allegedly members of the Muslim Brotherhood in an attempt to accelerate the process of normalizing relations with Cairo. [More..](#)

Turkish court confirmed transfer of Khashoggi murder trial to Saudi Arabia

A Turkish court in April confirmed a halt of the trial in absentia of 26 suspects linked to the killing of Saudi journalist and critic Jamal Khashoggi. The Turkish prosecutor requested that the trial be halted because arrest warrants for the suspects could not be executed and their statements could not be taken. The 59-year-old journalist was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, 2018 in a gruesome murder that shocked the world. [More..](#)



Releasing a video on Twitter, main opposition CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu accused Erdoğan of “selling” Turkey’s national sovereignty by handing the case of Khashoggi’s murder over to Saudi Arabia. [More..](#)

Violence against journalists

2 Turkish journalists claimed they were receiving threats due to their reporting

Two journalists announced in May that they were receiving threats due to their reporting on an aide to a mafia boss and an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militant. [More..](#)

Local journalist fatally shot in attack in northwestern Turkey



Journalist Güngör Arslan, who owned a local news website in Kocaeli province, was fatally shot in February in front of his office. In the last article he wrote for his seskocaeli.com news website on Feb. 18, Arslan criticized Kocaeli Mayor Tahir Büyükakın from the ruling AKP for awarding a public tender to Haldız Construction, a pro-government contractor. [More..](#)

Kurdish journalist died in Turkish airstrike in Syria

Kurdish-Syrian journalist Îsam Hesên Ebdullah died in an airstrike conducted by the Turkish Armed Forces on Kurdish militants in Syria in November. Ebdullah, a reporter from the Hawar News Agency (ANHA) who was covering the Turkish airstrikes, was killed, while Mihemed Ceradê, a reporter from Stêrk TV, was seriously injured. [More..](#)



Social media and internet freedom

Erdoğan signed controversial media law critics say will stifle free speech

In October 2022 President Erdoğan approved a social media law that stipulates sanctions, including a prison sentence of up to three years, for people who are found to have produced social media posts for the purpose of fake news and disinformation. [More..](#)

Turkey's 'disinformation' bill could irreparably harm free speech prior to 2023 elections: PACE

The PACE's Monitoring Committee expressed concern over a Turkish government-backed bill that criminalizes the dissemination of "false or misleading information" and stipulates prison sentences, saying it could cause "irreparable harm" to the exercise of free speech prior to the 2023 elections in the country. [More..](#)

Opposition leader became first politician facing charges under Turkey's controversial media law

A criminal complaint was filed by the Security General Directorate (EGM) against CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu after he blamed the government for widespread drug use in the country. It was the first petition targeting a politician based on a controversial new media law. [More..](#)

Turkish authorities launched investigation into social media users who posted video mocking Erdoğan

The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in September launched an investigation into a group of TikTok users who shared a video showing President Erdoğan magically appearing behind them as they count their money. The social media users are accused of insulting the president. [More..](#)

Fines and discrimination against critical media



Turkey's media watchdog gave int'l news websites 72 hours to obtain licenses

In February Turkey's broadcasting watchdog, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), gave international news agencies operating in the country a 72-hour deadline to apply for online broadcasting licenses, warning that access to those news

websites that fail to obtain licenses will be banned. [More..](#)

Deutsche Welle and VOA challenged RTÜK's move and announced that they would appeal its decision and take legal action in court. As for Euronews, the news outlet removed the content that necessitated the license and was hence no longer required to secure a broadcasting license.

An Ankara court in July banned access to the Turkish editions of Deutsche Welle and VOA based on a demand from RTÜK. [More..](#)

Turkish authorities permanently banned Evrensel daily from publishing public ads

BİK, the state body responsible for regulating publicly funded advertisements in the media, canceled the leftist Evrensel daily's license to publish public ads, a significant source of revenue for newspapers, on the grounds of bulk buying.

[More..](#)

RTÜK continued to fine TV stations

RTÜK in May imposed a fine on the pro-opposition Tele1, Halk TV, KRT and Flash Haber TV stations due to the remarks of two opposition politicians on a court decision concerning the anti-government Gezi Park protests of 2013.

[More..](#)

Also in May Turkey's broadcasting watchdog imposed a fine on the same four TV stations for airing the remarks of main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who claimed that President Erdoğan was planning to flee the country with his family in the event of an election defeat. [More..](#)

In October the watchdog fined Tele1, Halk TV and KRT TV for airing debate programs during which the inner workings of an alleged corruption network involving state officials and pro-government figures were discussed. [More..](#)

7. Torture, inhuman treatment and conditions in Turkish prisons

Turkey has experienced a marked resurgence of torture and ill-treatment in custody over the past seven years and especially since a coup attempt in 2016. Lack of condemnation from higher officials and a readiness to cover up allegations rather than investigate them have resulted in widespread impunity for the security forces.

The enormous gulf between Turkey's constitutional provisions for the protection of human rights and the grim reality on the ground continued to grow during the year. In a landmark decision, Turkey's Constitutional Court in November 2020 [found](#) a government decree that granted immunity to civilians who were involved in criminal activities to suppress the abortive putsch to be constitutional, hence sanctioning the country's culture of impunity at the highest level.

Turkey is party to several international conventions that have different review and inspection mechanisms such as the United Nations, the CoE and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). According to information published on the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [website](#), the country is currently party to 16 UN human rights conventions and 121 of the CoE's 225 conventions and has signed 31 other conventions. Yet in the recent past the Turkish government has continuously disregarded the provisions of the constitution and failed to uphold its international obligations.

The CoE's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) confirmed in two reports [published](#) in August 2020 the continued existence of ill-treatment, torture, informal questioning and restricted access to a lawyer as well as a fundamentally flawed medical screening system in Turkish detention facilities.

According to the Directorate General of Prisons and Detention Houses, there are 384 prisons with a 286,737 inmates capacity. However, prisons are holding 336,315 people as of December, 49,518 people or 15.9 percent over capacity. The Turkish government has allocated 8.7 billion liras for the construction of 36 new prisons in the next four years, which will significantly increase Turkey's already high incarceration rate.

In addition to torture and mistreatment, strip-search is an ongoing practice in Turkish prisons. In January 2021 the ECtHR [found](#) strip-searches to constitute degrading treatment when not justified by compelling security reasons and/or due to the way they were conducted. But the practice has been used frequently by Turkish security officers against people suspected or convicted of political crimes, especially since the coup attempt.

In addition, human rights activists and opposition politicians have frequently criticized authorities for not releasing seriously ill prisoners so they can seek proper treatment. 73 inmates have [died](#) in Turkish prisons in 2022, 39 of whom

died of serious illness and 34 by suicide, according to a report by the HDP deputy Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 in the field of torture, inhuman treatment and conditions of Turkish prisons:

Man captured by MiT abroad over terrorist links claimed he was tortured in Turkey for 87 days



Savaş Çelik who was reported to have been captured abroad due to alleged terrorist links and brought to Turkey in July claimed that he was actually transported to the country in April and tortured for 87 days before his capture was covered by state media. [More..](#)

Images of inmate who died in Silivri Prison showed signs of severe beating and mistreatment

Images of Ferhat Yılmaz, one of the inmates who was allegedly subject to mistreatment by guards in Istanbul's Silivri Prison, emerged in April showing him badly injured in a hospital bed. In one photograph Yılmaz's face appears bruised and his nose broken. [More..](#)

Strip-search is an ongoing practice in Turkish prisons, opposition deputy said

Strip-search is an ongoing practice in Turkish prisons, HDP lawmaker Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu said in December. In his speech in the parliament, Gergerlioğlu read letters from female inmates and visitors who had been subjected to strip-searches in prisons. Children have also been forced to endure such embarrassing procedures, Gergerlioğlu said. [More..](#)

European rights court fined Turkey for unlawful strip-search in prison

The ECtHR has faulted Turkey for violating the private and family life of Elif Kaya, who was subjected to a strip-search in prison in 2013. [More..](#)

Turkish prisons at 16 percent overcapacity: report

Turkey's Directorate General of Prisons and Detention Houses revealed that there are 384 prisons with the capacity of 286,737 inmates. Turkish prisons are holding 336,315 people as of December, 49,518 people or 15.9 percent over capacity. The ruling AKP has allocated 8.7 billion lira for the construction of 36 new prisons in the next four years, which will significantly increase Turkey's already high incarceration rate. [More..](#)

Two inmates in Istanbul's Silivri Prison took their own lives after allegedly being subjected to severe beating and mistreatment by prison guards

Two inmates in Istanbul's Silivri Prison took their own lives after allegedly being subjected to severe beating and mistreatment by prison guards. Prison guards allegedly beat inmates Coşkun Ağaca, Abdülmenav Çetin, Halil Kasan, Tolga Okçu, Orhan Hacıoğlu, H. Masal, Ali, Serhan Yılmaz and another inmate whose name was not disclosed, on April 6. The guards reportedly stepped on the inmates heads with their boots and threatened to kill them. [More..](#)



Members of anti-gov't Furkan Foundation mistreated by police

Members of the Furkan Foundation, an anti-government religious group, in May were beaten by police officers as they were trying to make a public statement in southern Turkey's Adana province. [More..](#)

Former military cadets were severely beaten by guards in Turkey's Silivri Prison

Former military cadets who are incarcerated in Istanbul's notorious Silivri Prison for allegedly participating in an abortive putsch in Turkey in July 2016 were severely beaten by prison guards in January. [More..](#)

Claims of mistreatment and psychological abuse arose in Afyon T-type prison

Family members of inmates in Turkey's Afyon T-type prison claimed prison authorities subjected prisoners to mistreatment and psychological abuse. One man who wanted to remain anonymous said his father had recently been transferred to Afyon Prison and that during a recent visit had said prison authorities frequently threatened inmates and psychologically abused them. [More..](#)



Former general serving life sentence on coup charges died in prison

Kemal Mutlum, a former brigadier general who was serving an aggravated life sentence on conviction of coup charges following an abortive putsch in 2016, died in prison in November. [More..](#)

Mutlum was not released despite a medical report from Turkey's Council of Forensic Medicine (ATK) dated September 12 stating that he was not fit to remain in prison. [More..](#)

Wife of former officer claimed she suffered miscarriage after police beating

Hacer Karaşal, the wife of former gendarmerie 1st Lt. Recep Karaşal, said in an interview that she suffered a miscarriage after being beaten by police officers at the Ankara Courthouse on January 25, 2019. [More..](#)

Istanbul prosecutor declined to pursue case against police officers who allegedly tortured detainee

The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office declined to pursue a case against police officers in Istanbul's Fatih district who were accused of mistreatment and torture, despite a Constitutional Court ruling requesting a thorough investigation into the accusations. [More..](#)

Female inmates subjected to mistreatment and humiliating practices in Bakırköy Prison

Lawyers from the Civil Society in the Penal System said in June that female inmates in Bakırköy Prison were subject to mistreatment and humiliating practices. [More..](#)

Guards mistreated inmate in Turkish prison, video showed

A video recording of inmate Şehmuz Emen being mistreated in southern Turkey's Adana E-Type Prison was made public in July. Emen was apparently stripped down to his underwear and dragged into a one-person cell in February by guards after asking if his petition to see a hospital doctor had been accepted. [More..](#)

Man detained for links to PKK tortured at Istanbul police headquarters

Mehdi Mihçı, who was detained in August for alleged links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), was subjected to torture at Istanbul police headquarters. According to the lawyers from the Association for the Freedom of Lawyers (ÖHD), he was repeatedly beaten, threatened and raped with a baton over the four days. [More..](#)



Turkish prosecutor declined to pursue case of inmate who was tortured and found dead in prison

A Turkish public prosecutor has declined to pursue the case of Garibe Gezer, who was reportedly beaten and sexually harassed by

prison guards and found dead in her cell on December 9, 2021. The Jin News Agency released a video showing the mistreatment by the prison guards. [More..](#)

'They will not discourage us,' said women subjected to strip-searches in police custody

Two inmates, Deniz Aktaş and Ebru Yiğit, from the left-wing Socialist Women's Assembly (SKM) said they were subjected to unlawful strip-searches in August while in custody at Istanbul Police headquarters and felt they were sexually violated. [More..](#)

Retired general serving life sentence for role in 1997 postmodern coup died in prison



Vural Avar, one of a group of retired generals who were imprisoned in 2021 due to their role in a military intervention in Turkey in 1997, known as the Feb. 28 post-modern coup, died in his sleep in prison in December. [More..](#)

Avar was issued a medical report 22 days before his demise that said he was healthy and fit to remain in prison. [More...](#)

Letters by inmate prior to his death revealed severe mistreatment

Letters written by inmate Mehmet Bozan, 45, prior to his death revealed he had been subjected to beating, death threats and psychological pressure. Bozan was found dead in Ankara's Sincan Prison in August. Before his death he had written 12 letters to the Civil Society in the Penal System saying he was being severely mistreated and in the event of his death, the prison administration was responsible. Bozan said he did not feel safe in prison and feared being killed during the mistreatment he was receiving. [More..](#)

Silivri Prison inmates complained of ill-treatment, poor prison conditions

Inmates at Silivri Prison in Istanbul said they had been mistreated and that prison conditions were very poor, according to a report by the Turkish parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights Investigations, which visited the penal facility on June 16. [More..](#)

Ankara court blocked access to news and tweets about torture allegations against police officer

The Ankara 6th Criminal Court of Peace ordered the removal of news and tweets regarding torture allegations against police officer Abdulkadir Türkyılmaz, who works at the counterterrorism branch of the Ankara Police Department. The ruling, which included a total of 2,071 URLs in 102 pages, also removed social media posts featuring a photo of Türkyılmaz and allegations of his involvement in the torture of several individuals. [More..](#)

8. Transnational repression

Turkey's efforts at transnational repression against critics abroad did not wind down in 2022. On the contrary, President Erdoğan's government devised new tools and methods with a view to intimidating opponents and suppressing dissent.

Since a coup attempt in July 2016, President Erdoğan's long arm has reached tens of thousands of Turkish citizens abroad, from spying through diplomatic missions and pro-government diaspora organizations to denial of consular services and outright intimidation and illegal renditions.

In 2022 Erdoğan continued to relentlessly pursue anyone with alleged links with the Gülen movement. They have been targets of hate speech, hate crimes, unlawful prosecution, torture and abduction, among other serious human rights violations.

The Turkish government has employed extralegal methods to secure the return of its critics after its official extradition requests have been denied since 2016. The government's campaign has mostly relied on renditions, in which the government and the MIT persuade the relevant states to hand over individuals without due process, using various methods. The victims have faced a number of human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, house raids, torture and ill-treatment during these operations.

According to a Freedom House report on global transnational repression, Ankara's campaign primarily targets people affiliated with the Gülen movement, but the efforts of the government have recently expanded to include Kurds and leftists.

In November Vice President Fuat Oktay [said](#) in a speech in parliament that more than 100 people with alleged links to the Gülen movement have been forcibly returned to Turkey by MIT thanks to "intelligence diplomacy." According to Oktay Turkish agents have conducted "diplomacy" with their counterparts in countries where Turkish nationals were abducted.

In several of these [cases](#) the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [concluded](#) that the arrest, detention and forced transfer to Turkey of Turkish nationals were arbitrary and in violation of international human rights norms and standards.

Similarly, WGAD [concluded](#) in June that the arrest and detention of two individuals who were abducted from Malaysia on October 13, 2016 due to alleged ties to the movement were arbitrary and urged the Turkish and Malaysian governments to ensure a full and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding their detention and to take appropriate measures against those responsible for the violation of their rights.

Abduction, rendition and forcible return of Erdoğan critics

Businessman who went missing in Azerbaijan rendered to Turkey by MIT



Uğur Demirok, 42, a Turkish businessman who went missing in Azerbaijan on September 6, was abducted and illegally brought to Turkey by MIT in November. Demirok, who had been working in the medical equipment business in Baku for the past seven years, left his home to go to work on the morning of September 6 and was never heard from again.

Demirok's family was told by Azerbaijani officials that he was taken to Turkey as part of an operation carried out by Turkish spies. After they went to the missing persons bureau in Ankara, the family found that Demirok was being held at the counterterrorism branch (TEM) of the Ankara Police Department.

[More..](#)

The businessman appeared before a court in İstanbul that ruled for his arrest on charges of terrorist organization membership due to his use of ByLock.

[More..](#)

Teachers working at Gülen schools deported from Liberia

The Liberian government in April summarily deported Turkish and Azeri teachers and their families, 12 people in all, working at a school affiliated with the Gülen movement. The deportees were not sent to Turkey but are in Ghana, where there is also a Turkish school.

Local media commented that the abrupt deportation was as a result of overtures from the Erdoğan administration, aiming to suppress dissent around the world. [More..](#)

Former intel official said Turkish intel agency abducted critics from Africa, Central Asia by paying bribes

Associate Professor Ali Burak Darıçılı, an intelligence expert and former official at MIT, said the organization had forcibly returned to Turkey individuals linked to the Gülen movement from some African and Central Asian countries by bribing local officials. [More..](#)

ECtHR faulted Azerbaijan for violating rights of 4 Turkish teachers illegally deported to Turkey

The ECtHR ruled in March that Azerbaijan violated the rights of four Turkish teachers who had worked at private schools in the country linked to the Gülen movement, saying their detention and deportation to Turkey amounted to “extrajudicial rendition.” [More..](#)

Prosecutor recommended up to 15 years in prison for teacher abducted from Kenya

A Turkish prosecutor recommended that Selahaddin Gülen, a teacher who was forcibly returned from Kenya to Turkey in 2021 due to his affiliation with the Gülen movement, be sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of terrorist organization membership. [More..](#)



Kosovar officials involved in illegal deportation of Turkish teachers face 5 years in prison

Three Kosovar officials involved in the illegal deportation of six Turkish teachers to Turkey in March 2018 face five-year prison sentences in a trial that got underway in February. A court in Pristina started proceedings against the three

officials, who faced accusations of “abuse of official position or authority” and “illegal deprivation of liberty.” [More..](#)

Albanian PM turned down Erdoğan’s request for measures against Gülen followers

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama rejected a request made by President Erdoğan for measures against followers of the Gülen movement. Erdoğan made the request to Rama during an official visit to Tirana in January. [More..](#)

Dr. Dana Moss called on the UN to appoint a special rapporteur on transnational repression



Dr. Dana Moss, who developed the term “transnational repression,” in an interview with SCF called on the United Nations to appoint a special rapporteur to study the practice.

“I would like to see the United Nations, the EU human rights arms, bringing more attention to this issue. Perhaps the UN could appoint a special rapporteur to

study the issue,” she said. [More..](#)

Attacks and pressure on critics and journalists living abroad

Critical Turkish journalist living in exile in Sweden brutally attacked



Ahmet Dönmez, a Turkish journalist critical of President Erdoğan’s ruling party who has been living in exile in Sweden, was attacked by two men in March in Stockholm. Dönmez, known for his reports on mafia groups associated with

Turkish government officials including President Erdoğan, lost consciousness after the attack, which took place in front of his 6-year-old daughter. [More..](#)

In an interview with the Svenska Dagbladet newspaper in November Dönmez said he no longer feels safe in Sweden. [More..](#)

Erdoğan labeled journalist in exile a ‘terrorist,’ demanded his extradition from Swedish PM

President Erdoğan demanded the extradition of Bülent Keneş, a Turkish journalist in exile in Sweden whom he called a “terrorist,” during a meeting with the country’s prime minister in Ankara in November. “Issues such as the number of terrorists who will be extradited to Turkey, 30 or 100, are things open to discussion. The deportation of the terrorist named Bülent Keneş is of importance to us,” Erdoğan said at a news conference with Kristersson. [More..](#)



Turkey’s state-run TRT Haber news station targeted Keneş by broadcasting footage of his home in Stockholm. TRT’s Enes Boyraz reported from the vicinity of his home for a news story about Turkey’s demand for Keneş’s extradition. [More..](#)

Sweden’s Supreme Court in December blocked the extradition of Keneş, a key demand by Ankara to ratify Stockholm’s NATO membership. “There is also a risk of persecution based on this person’s political beliefs. An extradition can thus not take place,” Judge Petter Asp said in a statement. [More..](#)

Turkey added exiled journalist Dündar to ‘Terrorist Wanted List’

Can Dündar, a Turkish journalist living in exile, was added to the Turkish Interior Ministry’s “Terrorist Wanted List.” Dündar was listed in the “gray category,” under which a reward of up to TL 500,000 (\$26,710) is offered for information that leads to the apprehension of the suspect being sought. [More..](#)

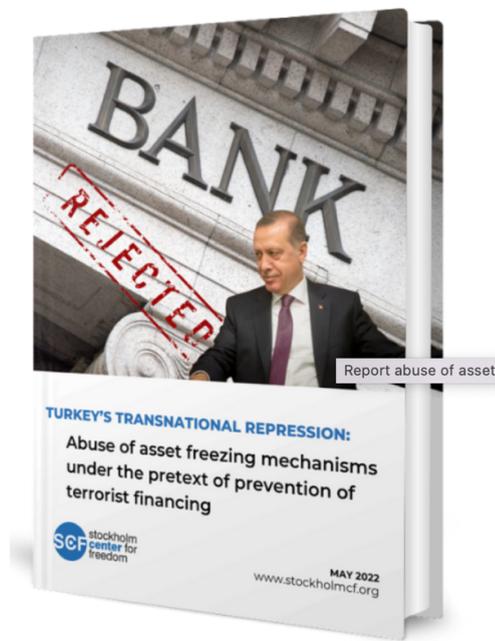
Turkish TV station investigated for hosting former football star sought on Gülen links

Turkey’s broadcasting watchdog initiated an investigation into a TV station for hosting former national football player Hakan Şükür, who is sought by Turkey due to his links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Deutsche Bank closed accounts of Erdoğan opponents without giving any reason

Germany's Deutsche Bank closed the accounts of three opponents of President Erdoğan without providing a reason, possibly over dubious risk intelligence that relies on information coming from Ankara, which labeled the dissidents as terrorists. [More..](#)

Turkey's Transnational Repression: Abuse of asset freezing mechanisms under the pretext of prevention of terrorist financing



SCF in May released a report titled “Turkey’s Transnational Repression: Abuse of asset freezing mechanisms under the pretext of prevention of terrorist financing,” a study that focuses on how the Turkish government’s decisions to freeze assets based on the pretext of preventing the financing of terrorism have been weaponized to suppress critics abroad as a further means of Turkey’s transnational repression.

According to the report, people whose names appeared on the published lists faced various repercussions including the freezing or closure of their accounts, negative credit scores and various other personal and

financial difficulties in Western countries. [More..](#)

Turkey sought extradition of journalist in exile reporting on gov’t corruption

Turkey’s Justice Ministry sought the extradition of Cevheri Güven, an investigative journalist living in exile in Germany from where he reports extensively on the Turkish government’s corruption and shady relations with mafia and crime groups. [More..](#)

Exiled journalist indicted for insulting President Erdoğan in report on convicted jihadist

Swedish-based Turkish journalist Abdullah Bozkurt was indicted in Turkey over an article he wrote about a convicted jihadist, with the public prosecutor claiming that the article insulted President Erdoğan. [More..](#)

Pro-Erdoğan daily targeted Turkish journalists and critics living in exile

Turkish journalists and critics living in exile were targeted by a pro-government newspaper that revealed their home addresses and published secretly taken photos.

The Sabah daily, owned by the Turkuvaz Media Group, published secretly taken photos of exiled journalists [Cevheri Güven](#), [Abdullah Bozkurt](#), [Bülent Keneş](#) and [Levent Kenez](#) and former police chief [Murat Çetiner](#).

Unidentified assailants damaged a car belonging to Çetiner after he was recently targeted by the daily. [More...](#)

Erdoğan's long arm and the global witch-hunt

Germany accused alleged MIT agent of spying for Turkey, violating weapons law

A suspected Turkish agent was charged with spying on dissidents for Turkey's MIT and violating the weapons law in an indictment brought before the Higher Regional Court of Düsseldorf.

German federal prosecutors said in the indictment sent to the court in March that the suspect, identified as Ali D., who was arrested in a Düsseldorf hotel in 2021, after an employee noticed a weapon on him, had been collecting information on supporters of the Gülen movement and the outlawed PKK in order to pass it on to Turkish intelligence since August 2018. [More..](#)

3 Austrian-Turks detained on suspicion of espionage

The Austrian interior ministry confirmed that three Austrian Turks were detained in June on suspicion of spying on dissidents for Turkey's intelligence agency and were released pending trial after questioning. Austrian police in June raided two houses and detained three people who reportedly gave information about 800 members of the Gülen movement to Turkish intelligence service MIT.

The Austrian interior ministry viewed the case as a typical one of "foreign powers spying on opposition members and government opponents living abroad." [More..](#)

Taxi driver got suspended sentence for spying on Turkish dissidents in Germany

A German court handed down a nine-month suspended sentence to a taxi driver who was accused of spying on Turkish dissidents in Germany for Turkey's intelligence service.

A German citizen of Turkish descent who was identified as Aziz A. and was working as a taxi driver in Cologne was accused of collaborating with a Turkish man recently convicted of spying on dissidents for MIT in addition to facing weapons charges. [More..](#)

9. Women's rights



The increase in rights violations against women in Turkey continued in 2022, with a rising number of femicide cases, bans on events organized by rights groups and detentions of women protesting gender-based violence.

Turkey's top administrative court in July ruled that President Erdoğan had the right to pull the country out of the Istanbul Convention, a Council of Europe treaty designed to prevent violence and domestic abuse against women. Erdoğan's political opponents argued that the president did not have the power to unilaterally withdraw the country from an international agreement.

In 2022 femicides and violence against women remained serious problems in Turkey, where women are killed, raped or beaten every day. Many critics said the main reason behind the situation has been the policies of the Turkish government, which protects violent and abusive men by granting them impunity. According to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu), at least 392 women were murdered by men and 226 women died under suspicious circumstances during the year.

In addition, rights activists criticized courts handing down reduced sentences to perpetrators of gender-based violence on the grounds that they were "provoked," saying it created a culture of impunity. Article 29 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) has often been used to reduce sentences for men accused of such crimes on the grounds that the victim provoked the murder with her actions.

Here is some of the most important news from 2022 in the field of women's rights:

Turkey's top court said Erdoğan had the right to withdraw from women's treaty

Turkey's top administrative court in July ruled that President Erdoğan had the right to pull Turkey out of a European convention against gender-based violence. The Council of State rejected a request to annul Erdoğan's decision in a case that included testimony from leading women's rights advocates and legal scholars. [More..](#)

Opposition slammed top court for refusing to annul Erdoğan's withdrawal from women's treaty

Turkish opposition parties criticized Turkey's top administrative court for refusing to annul President Erdoğan's decision to pull Turkey out of a European convention against gender-based violence.

Following the ruling by the top court, main opposition CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu vowed to reinstate the treaty once they came to power. "I have a promise for this nation. When we come to power, we will put the Istanbul Convention back into force in the first week, even within the first 24 hours," Kılıçdaroğlu said. [More..](#)

UN rapporteur urged Turkey to rejoin women's treaty



Reem Alsalem, the UN rapporteur on violence against women, urged Turkey in July to reverse its decision to drop out of the Istanbul Convention. Alsalem expressed "profound regret" at President Erdoğan's decision in 2021 to leave the convention that Turkey took pride in helping draft more than a decade ago. [More..](#)

392 women fell victim to femicide in Turkey in 2022

At least 392 women were murdered by men and 226 women died under suspicious circumstances in Turkey in 2022, although the government claimed that the number of femicides in the country was trending downward, according to data from the We Will Stop Femicide Platform.

Two hundred eighty women were killed by men in 2021, with 217 suspicious deaths the same year. [More..](#)

7,071 women murdered by men in Turkey during 19-year-long AKP rule

A report released by CHP lawmaker Sezgin Tanrıku on the occasion of International Women’s Day showed an upward trend in cases of domestic violence in Turkey during the 19-year rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which had witnessed the killing of 7,071 women by men. [More..](#)

Nearly 40 percent of women in Turkey subjected to violence: HRW senior Turkey researcher

Around four out of 10 women in Turkey suffered physical and/or sexual violence during their lives, said Emma Sinclair Webb, Human Rights Watch (HRW) senior Turkey researcher with the Europe and Central Asia division, in an interview with her colleague Birgit Schwarz.

Webb said this was unacceptable as nearly 40 percent of women suffered from violence or stalking. [More..](#)

Turkish women’s rights activists criticized reduced sentences on grounds of ‘provocation’ in gender-based violence cases



Turkish women’s rights activists criticized courts handing down reduced sentences to perpetrators of gender-based violence on the grounds that they were “provoked,” saying it created a culture of impunity. They said by issuing reduced sentences based on provocation, the courts were saying victims deserved to be

killed or hurt.

Article 29 of the Turkish Penal Code has been often used to reduce sentences for men accused of such crimes on the grounds that the victim provoked the murder with her actions. [More..](#)

Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals president said femicide cases in Turkey exaggerated



President of Turkey’s Supreme Court of Appeals Mehmet Akarca said in a controversial remark in January that femicide was exaggerated in Turkey as the number of women killed was not as nearly as high as in Europe.

“Femicide occurs two times more frequently in Europe, but

some people are creating the impression that it is a huge problem in Turkey,” he said during the court’s annual evaluation meeting.

Feminist groups criticized Akarca’s statement, saying he was normalizing femicide. [More..](#)

18 women appeared in court for participating in demonstration against withdrawal from Istanbul Convention

Eighteen women had their first court hearing in February in Turkey’s Izmir province for participating in an August 2020 demonstration against government plans to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention. [More..](#)

3 women detained by police acting without a warrant for attending demonstration

Turkish police in January detained three women during a raid on their homes in Istanbul, despite not having a warrant ordering their detention. The women allegedly participated in a demonstration in Istanbul’s Taksim Square to raise awareness about violence against women on November 25, 2021 and were accused of insulting President Erdoğan. [More..](#)



9 women detained in Ankara for demanding free feminine hygiene products

Turkish police dispersed a group of women in the Turkish capital of Ankara in January who wanted to stage a protest demanding free feminine hygiene products, detaining nine of them. [More..](#)

Governor’s office banned annual Feminist Night March in Istanbul

The İstanbul Governor’s Office in March announced that there had been many calls on social media inviting people to demonstrations in Taksim to mark International Women’s Day. The office said all demonstrations and marches, including sit-ins and handing out leaflets, were prohibited. [More..](#)

Police detained 12 women’s rights activists in southeastern Diyarbakır province

Turkish police detained 12 women’s rights activists in southeastern Diyarbakır province after raids on their homes due to their participation in International Women’s Day demonstrations on March 8.

Adalet Kaya from the Diyarbakır-based Rosa Women’s Association, former Diyarbakır co-mayor from the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Filiz

Buluttekin and Fatma Yıldızhan from the Trade Union of Public Employees in Health and Social Services (SES) were among those who were detained. [More..](#)

Hundreds rallied against threat to close Turkish women's rights group

Hundreds of people demonstrated in April in several Turkish cities including İstanbul and Ankara against a move to close one of the country's most respected women's rights groups. "It is not possible to stop our fight. We are not going to allow the closure of our association," the secretary-general of We Will Stop Femicide said.

An İstanbul prosecutor filed a case aimed at shutting down the association for "activity against law and morals." [More..](#)

20 Iranian women detained in İstanbul at protest over death of Mahsa Amini

İstanbul police detained 20 Iranian women in September for staging a demonstration in a prohibited area in protest of the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died in the custody of Iran's morality police.

Iranian women in Turkey held protests in İstanbul and İzmir, carrying placards bearing photos and the name of Amini and chanting the slogans "Freedom for women," "No to compulsory hijab" and "We are Mahsa Amini" in Persian. [More..](#)

Turkish women's organizations said authorities turned blind eye to sexual harassment from local men but quick to blame migrants

Following accusations that migrant men sexually harassed Turkish women, women's organizations said authorities were quick to blame migrants but turned a blind eye to harassment committed by local men.

The women's organizations said migrants were used as scapegoats but that local men were often granted impunity when it came to sexual harassment cases. [More..](#)

Hundreds demonstrated in Turkey as groups fight for women's rights in court

Hundreds of people rallied outside Turkey's highest administrative court in June as it was examining a case hoping to overturn the country's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.

Feminist groups, human rights campaigners and representatives of bar associations across Turkey called for the withdrawal from the convention to be scrapped. [More..](#)



8 members of a women's platform detained in İstanbul at protest over domestic violence

Police detained eight members of Avcılar Kadın Platformu, an İstanbul-based women's platform, in November for staging a demonstration in a prohibited area.

The platform members gathered to protest violence against women and to call on Turkish women to participate in a demonstration to be held on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. [More..](#)

Turkish police prevented demonstrations by women's groups, detained dozens of protestors

Dozens of women who gathered in various Turkish provinces on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity and Elimination of Violence against Women, marked on November 25, were detained, while marches were blocked by the police in a number of cities.

Twenty-five women who were marching in Turkey's eastern provinces of Şırnak, Ağrı and Van were detained, including the HDP provincial and district presidents and elderly members of the Saturday Mothers. [More..](#)