TÜRKİYE RIGHTS & JUSTICE BULLETIN

Weekly Human Rights & Justice Developments in Türkiye

CROSSBORDER JURISTS

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As part of our mission of law and human rights advocacy, we closely monitor developments in law and human rights in Türkiye. Within the scope of this work, every week we publish a newsletter documenting/archiving the summary of the previous week.

ARBITRARY DETENTIONS AND ARRESTS

October 31: Serkan Öz, Chairman of the Republican Patriots Party (CVP), was detained in a raid on his family business in Ankara by anti-terror teams. The alleged reason was his connection to the YouTube account named "Erlik". The operation was conducted after the publication of a video titled "GÜRLEK CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION", which contained corruption allegations regarding Minister of Justice Akın Gürlek and his inner circle.

October 31: Out of 63 people detained within the scope of the investigation against Bakırköy Municipality, 39 people, including 5 vice mayors and 2 council members, were arrested.

October 30: 5 people, including Merkezefendi Mayor Şeniz Doğan and her husband Mehmet Ali Doğan, who were detained in Denizli on October 27, were arrested.

October 30: A total of 10 people in 3 provinces were arrested on charges of alleged links to the Gülen Movement.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

October 31: At their 1127th weekly gathering, Saturday Mothers brought up the case of 7 people and expert sergeant Bilal Batırır, who disappeared after being detained in the Dargeçit district of Mardin in 1995 and whose bones were found in wells years later, stating, "We will not give up our struggle until all those responsible are held accountable." In the statement, it was mentioned that individuals, including children, were detained during house raids between October 29 and November 8, 1995, and were never heard from again, and their families were told after interrogation that "they went to the mountains." It was emphasized that the struggle regarding the Dargeçit Case, where criminal complaints by families were not effectively investigated for a long time and closed due to the statute of limitations, will continue.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

October 30: Hakkari High Criminal Court sentenced 11 people, including cultural center artists and stage workers, to 10 months in prison each on charges of "terrorist propaganda" during the 2025 Newroz celebrations. It was emphasized that the decision stood in contrast to the ongoing peace process contradictions.

October 28: Four students who participated in a protest organized for two students arrested for protesting Minister of National Education Yusuf Tekin were detained during house raids.

October 28: Five children aged 14–17 who protested against a 7-day power outage in the Kumçatı town of Şırnak were detained in house raids.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE PRESS

October 28: Turkish citizens who protested against the headscarf ban in schools and public institutions in Azerbaijan and criticized the Baku administration were detained in Türkiye.

October 28: The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) imposed administrative fines on Sözcü TV and KOZA TV on the grounds that they violated the principles of "neutrality, reality, and accuracy". Sanctions were imposed on Sözcü TV on the grounds that comments regarding the arrest of Murat Ağırel "created perception", and on KOZA TV because the host approved and failed to correct allegations regarding the fund investigation into MPs.

October 27: Freedom House shared its '2026 Freedom on the Net' report; Türkiye is in the 'not free' category again this year.

October 27: Sözcü General Publication Director Ercüment İşleyen and Responsible Managing Editor Tuğba Nur Çelik were detained for reporting on two university students as "high schoolers".

October 26: Students were detained from their homes at night for hanging a banner reading "Yusuf Tekin resign" before Minister of National Education Yusuf Tekin's visit to Istanbul Kadıköy High School, and were subsequently arrested.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE RULE OF LAW

October 29: It was reported that the number of judicial members alleged to have obtained unfair benefits from fund fraud is 180.

October 27: The Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office initiated an ex officio investigation against Prof. Dr. Osman Korkut Kanadoğlu, presidential candidate of the Lawyers' Rights Group, due to his speech at the 128th Ordinary General Assembly of the Istanbul Bar Association. In his speech, Kanadoğlu stated that they "noted and reported" judges who did not comply with Constitutional Court decisions and criminal judges of peace who made arbitrary arrest decisions, and that "their hands would be on their collars". Kanadoğlu, who received 2,543 votes in the election, was targeted by the pro-government media.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

October 27: It is stated that Emrah Nebioğlu, who is 94% disabled and on the IHD's list of severely ill prisoners, is held in

Diyarbakır High Security Closed Prison No. 1 and cannot access his medication or physical therapy despite suffering from chronic kidney disease.

October 26: 73-year-old sick prisoner Abdullah Tırpan, linked to the Gülen Movement, died despite calls for medical release.

GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS

October 27: The final declaration of the Side by Side for Equality Forum was published. The 106 organizations signing the declaration shared the information that 117 people were detained and 83 people were arrested in operations carried out under the name "My Family is Safe", demanding the immediate release of arrested LGBTI+s. The declaration emphasized that the existence, organization, and defense of rights of LGBTI+s are not crimes, and stated that ill-treatment and torture occurred during detention and arrest processes.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

October 31: While protective and preventive measure decisions increased under Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women, more than 69 thousand violations were recorded in 5 years.

October 30: According to the announcement by the Women's Platform for Equality (EŞİK); the attempt to restrict poverty alimony in the 13th Judicial Package was prevented. As a result of the joint struggle of women and campaign efforts carried out regardless of political views, the regulation was removed from the package. Women's organizations evaluated this success as a resolute solidarity and joint struggle that forced the government to step back.

October 29: Özge Akyüz, Women in Prison Thematic Area Representative of the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CİSST), stated that according to General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses data, 21 thousand 128 women are held in prisons, announcing that the number of female prisoners has increased 12-fold since 2000. Akyüz emphasized that prison architecture and legal regulations are designed according to men's needs, which deepens gender inequality.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

October 30: A total of 90 suspects, 34 of whom were under the age of 18, were detained in simultaneous operations targeting the criminal organization known as 'Daltons' across 30 provinces centered in Istanbul.

October 28: In an environment where approximately 550 thousand children work within Vocational Education Centers (MESEM) in industrial sites across Türkiye, two apprentices beaten in an automotive shop in Çorlu, Tekirdağ and a barbershop in Niğde, as well as apprentices shot with a shotgun by their master in Aksaray, once again brought to the agenda the violence child workers are subjected to.

REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

October 29: According to news based on statements from the Kurdish Community in Germany, some Kurdish-origin German residents who came to Türkiye for holidays or visits cannot return home due

to travel bans. While it is alleged that up to 10 thousand euros are demanded to lift the bans, the organization called on the Berlin government for diplomatic intervention.

October 29: In Hakkari, a minibus carrying refugees plunged into a creek while fleeing gendarmerie teams, leaving 20 people injured.