

HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY: 2024 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

This report highlights the most important developments in the area of human rights in Turkey in 2024. Throughout the year Turkey continued its downward trajectory in democracy and human rights under the increasingly authoritarian rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. With near-total control over the media, judiciary and state institutions, the government further intensified its crackdown on dissent, targeting opposition groups, independent media, civil society and marginalized communities with relentless pressure.

According to [Freedom House](#), Turkey is among the top 10 countries that have seen the sharpest decline in freedoms over the past decade. Turkey's score has dropped by 22 points since 2014, placing it alongside Venezuela in the seventh spot on the list of countries that have experienced the worst democratic backsliding.

Approximately 21,600 applications from Turkey are [pending before the European Court of Human Rights](#) (ECtHR), making it the highest case-count country in 2024, comprising more than a third of the ECtHR's caseload.

Throughout the year, the Erdoğan government escalated its repression of perceived adversaries, with the Gülen movement remaining a primary target. Tens of thousands of people were detained, prosecuted or imprisoned on terrorism-related charges based on tenuous evidence. Simply having an account at a Gülen movement-affiliated bank, working at any institution linked to the movement or subscribing to certain newspapers and magazines was enough to warrant arrest.

According to a [statement](#) from the Turkish justice minister, a total of 705,172 people have been investigated on terrorism-related charges due to alleged links to the Gülen movement since a failed coup in 2016. As of July 2024 there were 13,251 people in prison who were in pretrial detention or convicted of terrorism in Gülen-linked trials.

Following the death of Fethullah Gülen on October 20, 2024, government-aligned media [launched a new wave of hate speech](#), dehumanizing and vilifying both Gülen and his followers. Echoing Erdoğan's own inflammatory rhetoric, pro-government outlets intensified their smear campaigns, branding Gülenists as traitors and terrorists. At the same time the government expanded censorship efforts, systematically suppressing moderate voices while ensuring that anti-Gülen propaganda remained the dominant public discourse.

The Kurdish political movement and opposition groups also faced relentless crackdowns. Mass detentions, politically motivated trials and forced removals of elected mayors were routine. The government retaliated for opposition victories in

the March 31 local elections by seizing control of municipalities, particularly those won by pro-Kurdish parties. Opposition leaders, including Selahattin Demirtaş, remained imprisoned despite international court rulings demanding their release.

Turkey's transnational repression of critics abroad persisted in 2024, with the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) continuing illegal renditions. Since 2016, at least 118 dissidents have been abducted. In a high-profile case, Kenya, under pressure from the Turkish government, [deported UN-protected Turkish nationals](#) in October without due process, drawing [international condemnation](#). The US State Department and Human Rights Watch raised concerns over Turkey's misuse of international legal mechanisms to target exiles.

Press freedom in Turkey deteriorated further in 2024, with journalist associations calling it "[a lost year](#)." Press freedoms were under increasing legal and political pressure, marked by detentions, police violence and censorship. Eighty-nine journalists, media staff and one newspaper faced trial in at least 70 cases. There was also an alarming rise in physical and verbal [threats against journalists](#), often from political groups aligned with the ruling alliance.

The government systematically weaponized its control over state regulatory bodies, such as the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), imposing heavy fines and broadcast bans to silence critical reporting.

The enormous gulf between Turkey's constitutional provisions for the protection of human rights and the grim reality on the ground continued to grow. Political prisoners, including thousands of people jailed on vague terrorism charges, were subjected to harsh conditions, medical neglect and arbitrary [denial of parole](#). Over 700 prisoners [died](#) in the first 11 months of 2024, highlighting the dire state of detention facilities. Children were not spared either — 759 minors under the age of 6 were [forced to live in prison](#) with their incarcerated mothers.

Turkey is ranked the worst performer in Europe in terms of impunity, according to the [2025 Atlas of Impunity](#), a global index that assesses impunity across the five dimensions of unaccountable governance, abuse of human rights, economic exploitation, conflict and violence and environmental degradation.

The deterioration of labor rights continued, with at least 1,897 workers losing their lives in workplace accidents due to weak safety standards and poor enforcement. Underage labor exploitation was rampant in vocational schools, where students were forced to work long hours under unsafe conditions for meager wages.

Minority groups, including Kurds, Alevis and Syrian refugees, faced escalating discrimination, hate speech and physical attacks. Syrians were subjected to violent mob attacks, forced deportations and anti-refugee rhetoric.

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 and activism of the late Fethullah Gülen, a Muslim cleric who was living in exile in the US. It is known for its network of educational institutions and interfaith dialogue initiatives across the globe. After originating in Turkey as a grassroots community in the 1970s, the movement spread its activities to various regions worldwide, establishing schools, hospitals and charities in over 150 countries.

Self-designated as the “[Hizmet movement](#)” (“service” in Turkish), the group proclaims itself as a proponent of the ideals of human rights, equal opportunity, democracy, non-violence and the emphatic acceptance of religious and cultural diversity.

The movement’s activities depend on the countries and regions where it is present. For instance, it focuses on charity along with education in Africa, while its civic engagement in Western countries is more directed towards intercultural dialogue and the good integration of its members.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip 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 in excess of 4,000 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 a [statement](#) from the Turkish justice minister, a total of 705,172 people have been investigated on terrorism-related charges due to alleged links to the Gülen movement since the failed coup. As of July 2024, there were 13,251 people in prison who were in pretrial detention or convicted of terrorism in Gülen-linked trials.

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

Here is some of the most important news from 2024 concerning Erdoğan’s crackdown on the Gülen movement:

Decisions and reports by international organizations and foreign governments

UN raised concerns over Turkey's treatment of individuals linked to Gülen movement

The United Nations raised concerns about Turkey's treatment of people accused of links to the Gülen movement, citing arbitrary detentions, torture allegations and systematic violations of due process. [More..](#)

Turkey snubbed UN special rapporteurs probing widespread human rights violations against Gülen movement

The Turkish government declined to cooperate with UN special rapporteurs investigating widespread human rights violations against individuals accused of being linked to the Gülen movement, according to reports. [More..](#)

UN working group found rights violations in case of air force cadet sentenced to life

A UN working group concluded that Turkey violated the rights of an air force cadet sentenced to life in prison following the 2016 coup attempt, citing arbitrary detention and the lack of fair trial safeguards. [More..](#)



Turkey continued arrests for terrorism based on scant evidence, minimal due process: US State Dept.

The US Department of State reported that Turkey continued to arrest individuals on terrorism charges with scant evidence and minimal adherence to due process, often targeting those accused of links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

US listed widespread human rights violations in Turkey in annual report

The US Department of State's annual report highlighted widespread human rights violations in Turkey, including arbitrary detentions, politically motivated prosecutions, and crackdowns on freedom of expression. [More..](#)

PACE expressed concern about increase in torture allegations in Turkey

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) voiced concern over an increase in torture allegations in Turkey, urging authorities to investigate and address credible reports of mistreatment in detention. [More..](#)

EU Turkey rapporteur slammed Turkey over terror charges against teen girls

The EU rapporteur on Turkey criticized Turkish authorities for bringing terror charges against teenage girls, calling the actions part of a broader crackdown on dissent under the pretense of anti-terrorism efforts. [More..](#)

New report examined systemic rights violations in ByLock prosecutions

A new report detailed systemic human rights violations in the prosecution of individuals accused of using the ByLock messaging app, which Turkish authorities claimed was linked to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Decisions by the European Court of Human Rights

ECtHR notified Turkey of 3,000 new applications over Gülen movement convictions

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) notified Turkey of a total of 3,000 applications in its docket for Gülen movement convictions over the use of the ByLock messaging app, following a [landmark ruling](#) that found use of the application to not constitute a reliable piece of evidence or a criminal offense. The ECtHR notified the Turkish government in three different batches in [April](#), [July](#) and [November](#).

Turkish court again convicted teacher of terrorism in defiance of landmark ECtHR ruling

A Turkish high criminal court in a retrial again convicted a teacher of terrorism due to alleged Gülen movement membership, despite a landmark ECtHR ruling in the teacher's favor. [More..](#)

ECtHR faulted Turkey for arrest of 1,143 people over Gülen links after failed coup

The European rights court ruled in different cases that the pretrial detention of a total of 1,143 individuals after the coup attempt lacked grounds that could constitute reasonable suspicion. The first ruling was announced in [June](#) and the [second](#) and [third](#) in December.

ECtHR faulted Turkey for violating rights of top court member dismissed in 2016



The ECtHR found that Turkey [violated the rights of](#) Alparslan Altan, a former member of Turkey's Constitutional Court, who was dismissed and arrested following the 2016 coup attempt. In a separate ruling, the court also [faulted Turkey](#) over the detention of 23 judges and prosecutors after the failed coup.

ECtHR faulted Turkey for violating rights of top judicial board member dismissed in 2014

The ECtHR ruled that Turkey violated the rights of Adem Kartal, the former vice president of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors' (HSYK) inspection board, who was removed from his position following the adoption of a law in 2014 and was not reappointed. [More..](#)

European rights court faulted Turkey over arrest of UN judge in post-coup crackdown

The ECtHR faulted Turkey over the pretrial detention of a United Nations judge as part of a post-coup crackdown. [More..](#)

European rights court ordered Turkey to pay millions in damages to victims of post-coup purge

The ECtHR ordered Turkey to pay damages to 468 individuals, ruling that their detention in the aftermath of a failed coup in July 2016 was "unlawful" due to a lack of "reasonable suspicion." [More..](#)

Ongoing purge

Turkey has investigated more than 700,000 people over Gülen links since failed coup: minister

Turkey has investigated more than 700,000 individuals for alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement since a failed coup in July 2016, a statement by Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç revealed. [More...](#)

Turkey detained over 8,000 people on Gülen links in 11 months: minister

Turkish authorities [detained](#) more than 8,153 individuals over alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement between June 2023 and May 15, 2024. Operations continued at full speed in the second half of 2024 as well, with 139 people [detained](#) in the first week of June.

459 detained over alleged Gülen links in large operation after Gülen's death

In a significant escalation of an ongoing crackdown on individuals alleged to have links to the faith-based Gülen movement, Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya on November 19 announced the detention of 459 people across 66 provinces on terrorism accusations over alleged links to the movement. [More..](#)

14 teenagers detained over Gülen links revealed psychological abuse and rights violations in court

A group of 14 teenage girls who were [detained](#) and [prosecuted](#) on terrorism charges said they were [subjected](#) to psychological abuse and rights violations. [More..](#)



78-year-old mother of businessman sought over Gülen links begins prison sentence

Melek İpek, the 78-year-old mother of Turkish tycoon Akın İpek, currently living in exile, was detained in November to begin serving a prison sentence for conviction of alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Student detained for receiving money from relatives abroad, accused of 'terrorist financing'

Esengül Arslan, a 23-year-old nursing student in Istanbul was [detained](#) for receiving funds sent by her relatives abroad, which authorities have labeled as "terrorism financing." Arslan was later arrested [More...](#)

Turkish woman imprisoned for financially supporting family of husband's fellow inmate

Emine Güven, a mother of two, was sentenced in June to four years in prison for sending money to the family of a man jailed in the same ward as her husband. [More..](#)

Erdoğan's coup accusations against Gülen unfounded: former US national security advisor

Former US national security advisor John Bolton dismissed Turkish President Erdoğan's claims that Fethullah Gülen masterminded the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, calling them propaganda aimed at consolidating his power. [More...](#)

Ex-spy chief reveals messaging data that served as grounds for mass arrests was obtained extralegally

Hakan Fidan, Turkey's former intelligence chief and current foreign minister, revealed in an interview that controversial data from the ByLock messaging app used to prosecute thousands of alleged Gülen movement members was obtained through extrajudicial methods. [More...](#)

Gov't, media colluded to frame Gülen movement as terrorist: pro-Erdoğan journalist

Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı, a close confidant of Turkish President Erdoğan and a journalist who describes himself as the president's "spin-doctor," revealed the government's deliberate effort to label the faith-based Gülen movement as a terrorist organization before a failed coup in Turkey in 2016, acknowledging a coordinated media and political campaign to delegitimize the group. [More..](#)

Hate speech and discrimination

New report exposed systematic use of hate speech following Fethullah Gülen's death to dehumanize his movement



The Stockholm Center for Freedom published a new report examining the surge of hate speech following the death of Fethullah Gülen on October 20, 2024. Taking a cue from President Erdoğan's own inflammatory rhetoric, pro-government media relentlessly used hate speech dehumanizing and demonizing Gülen and his followers. Simultaneously, the government also initiated a spate of censorship to suppress moderate voices and promote anti-Gülen hate speech as the dominant public discourse.

Turkish media's coverage diverged sharply from the measured and objective tone of Western outlets, which highlighted Gülen's global influence and his advocacy for education and interfaith dialogue while also acknowledging unproven allegations against him. [More..](#)

EU-funded NGO report on hate speech in Turkey slammed for discriminating against Gülen movement

An NGO report on hate speech in Turkey that was prepared with funding from the European Union was widely criticized for ignoring the prevalent hate speech targeting the Gülen movement in the country. [More..](#)

Amnesty criticized for ignoring plight of Gülen movement members in new report

Amnesty International was criticized for overlooking systematic violations against people associated with the Gülen movement, a faith-based group outlawed by Ankara, in its 2024 report on the global human rights situation. [More..](#)

Turkish pro-gov't newspaper targeted Gülen-linked charity in Germany

Daily Sabah, an English-language daily managed by family members of Turkish President Erdoğan, targeted a Germany-based charity group, accusing it of “financing terrorism” due to its links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Torture and inhuman treatment

Turkish MP submitted parliamentary inquiry over allegations that 12 women became pregnant from rape while in custody

A Turkish MP submitted a parliamentary inquiry in September, regarding allegations that 12 women accused of membership in the Gülen movement became pregnant as a result of rape while in custody, citing a report by the Finnish Immigration Service. [More..](#)

Electric shocks, mock execution: Woman detained over Gülen links recounts torture by police

A woman detained for managing a dormitory affiliated with the Gülen movement described in an interview with the Kronos news website the torture she endured during her detention in the counterterrorism department of Turkey's western Afyon province. [More..](#)

New trial ordered in high-profile torture case following Constitutional Court ruling

The Antalya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office in July [ordered](#) a new trial in the case of Eyüp Birinci, a former teacher who endured severe torture in police custody resulting in critical injuries. Birinci fainted from the torture during his detention and was taken to a hospital where it was determined that he was experiencing internal bleeding. According to his family, Birinci's colon was ruptured from torture inflicted with a police baton.

Birinci's wife Asuman was arrested over Gülen links in May, adding to the family's persecution. [More..](#)

Children of the purge: death, disease and separation

Boy's health worsened after mother's arrest a year earlier

The health of a 9-year-old autistic child deteriorated due to the fact that both his parents were in prison over their alleged membership in the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Opposition MP highlighted plight of quintuplets with parents jailed on Gülen links

Mustafa Yeneroğlu, an opposition lawmaker, wrote a column in February, drawing attention to the predicament of children whose parents were sent to jail in October on charges of links to the faith-based Gülen movement, leaving them to stay in a tent with relatives whose house was destroyed in earthquakes that struck Turkey in 2023. [More..](#)

Mother revealed the effects of government's post-coup purge on her family

A Turkish mother revealed on a YouTube channel that her child did not recognize his father, who had been jailed for alleged links to the Gülen movement, upon his release. [More..](#)



Children aged 4 and 7 left to care of relatives after both parents sent to prison over alleged Gülen links

Güler Çetinkaya was arrested in February over alleged links to the Gülen movement. Her two children were left to the care of relatives since her husband has also been behind bars for four years on conviction of a similar offense. [More..](#)

Activists emphasized plight of children affected by Turkey's politically motivated trials

Activists campaigned to highlight the dire consequences of politically motivated trials in Turkey, emphasizing the severe impact on children's mental and physical health.

Examples include Elif Sinem, a girl with Down syndrome, whose parents have been jailed over alleged Gülen links and Tarık Ekmekçi, a 9-year-old autistic boy, whose parents have been incarcerated since 2017 over alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

20-year-old son of purge victims died by suicide

Onur Selim Y., a 20-year-old university student, died by hanging himself from a pipe in January. His father, a biology teacher, spent 11 months in pretrial detention and has been sentenced to more than six years in prison on charges of links to the Gülen movement. His mother was dismissed from her job with the education ministry on similar grounds over labor union membership. [More..](#)

Arrest of pregnant women and mothers with infants

706 children accompanying mothers in Turkish prisons: justice minister

Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç announced that 706 children were living with their mothers in Turkish prisons as of October. [More..](#)



Former teacher jailed over Gülen links with baby

Mine Işıktaş, a former teacher who was sentenced to more than six years in prison over links to the faith-based Gülen movement based on her alleged use of the ByLock messaging application, was arrested in July, to serve her sentence accompanied by her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. [More..](#)

20-month-old toddler accompanying mother in Turkish prison

Hatice Kaya, a former academic was sent to prison along with her 20-month-old daughter to serve a six-year sentence for alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement in August. [More..](#)

Former teacher jailed with infant over Gülen movement links

Emine Güçlüer, a former teacher previously sentenced to more than six years for her alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement, was arrested and sent to prison accompanied by her 1-year-old daughter in September. [More..](#)

Turkish court sent former teacher to prison with baby for links to Gülen movement

Sema Gökkan, a former teacher, was sentenced to over six years for alleged links to the Gülen movement and sent to prison on November 30, accompanied by her 4-month-old infant. [More..](#)

Former teacher jailed over Gülen links with premature baby

Ayşe Ercengiz, a former primary school teacher dismissed by a government decree in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt, was arrested and jailed on June 24 over alleged links to the Gülen movement, accompanied by her 20-month-old daughter, Ela, who was premature and continued to require medical care and breastfeeding. [More..](#)

Pregnant woman arrested for alleged links to Gülen movement

A seven-months-pregnant woman was arrested and put in pretrial detention on February 20 for alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Plight of ailing inmates



Paralyzed inmate waited a year for presidential pardon amid health concerns

Şerife Sulukan, a woman suffering from paralysis and epilepsy who is jailed for links to the Gülen movement, had been awaiting a presidential decision on her release for over a year as of May after medical authorities found her unfit to remain in prison. [More..](#)

Engineer jailed over Gülen links suffered brain hemorrhage but unable to get necessary care

Mehmet Beyret, a 35-year-old computer engineer who was arrested pending trial in southwestern Turkey over alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement, suffered a brain hemorrhage while in prison, requiring specialized treatment that is unavailable in the city where the prison facility is located. [More..](#)

Calls for release intensified as ailing Turkish inmate faces urgent surgery

Activists called on Turkish authorities to release Rukiye Çoygar, an ailing prisoner who is suffering from a fissure in her intestines and requires immediate surgery. [More..](#)

Ailing inmate with cancer kept in prison despite critical condition

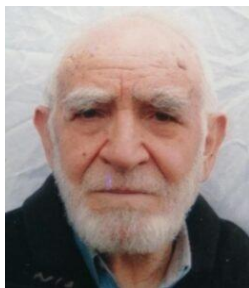
Mustafa Aytaç, an inmate in a prison in the western Turkish province of Afyon, remained incarcerated despite suffering from cancer and a medical report indicating a high probability of death. [More..](#)

Inmate denied release from Turkish prison despite suffering from MS

An inmate in İstanbul's Metris Prison who was previously a high-ranking officer in the Turkish military was denied suspension of his sentence despite suffering from advanced multiple sclerosis. [More..](#)

Activists called for release of ailing 76-year-old inmate

Activists called on Turkish authorities to release Ahmet Öztürk, an inmate who is suffering from deteriorating health. He was arrested and sent to prison in December 2023 to serve a more than six-year sentence on conviction of links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

**Elderly Turkish man went blind in one eye in prison; family alleged neglect**

Abdullah Aydoğan, an 82-year-old Turkish man imprisoned for alleged links to the Gülen movement, was released on parole after losing sight in his right eye during his incarceration. [More..](#)

Teacher suffering from vision loss and heart disease jailed on Gülen links

Family members and human rights activists have campaigned on social media for the release of Mustafa Seçkin, a history teacher jailed on accusations of links to the Gülen movement who is suffering from almost total vision loss as well as cardiac disease and hypertension. [More..](#)

Inmate suffering from cancer returned to prison after major surgery

Gülden Aşık, a woman jailed on conviction of links to the Gülen movement who recently underwent surgery for thyroid cancer, returned to prison a few days after her release from intensive care. [More..](#)

Activists called for release of ailing 84-year-old inmate

Social media users called on Turkish authorities to release Halil Karakoç, an ailing prisoner who has been kept behind bars even after suffering a heart attack in his cell. [More..](#)

Inmate with cancer awaited presidential pardon for 8 months

Yusuf Özmen, an ailing cancer patient who is serving a sentence on conviction of alleged links to the Gülen movement, had been awaiting a presidential decision on his release for eight months as of May after medical authorities found him unfit to remain in prison. [More..](#)

Social media campaigns urged release of ailing inmates

Social media users [called on Turkish authorities](#) to release Ali Odabaşı, the former legal counsel for the now-closed Zaman daily, who has been denied parole despite suffering from serious health issues.

Activists also [called on the authorities](#) to release Yazgül Dural, an inmate suffering from a neurological disorder whose health has deteriorated due to alleged negligence by the prison administration.

Prisoners not released by parole boards for political reasons

Prison administration denies former police officer convicted of Gülen links parole

Nilay Dağ, a former police officer imprisoned for links to the Gülen movement, was denied parole despite being eligible for the previous five months. [More..](#)

Purge victim suffering from celiac disease denied parole despite eligibility

Muharrem Gelen, a healthcare worker removed from public service and incarcerated in Ankara as part of the post-coup purge, was denied parole despite his eligibility and his celiac disease. [More..](#)



Prison administration denied parole for former teacher convicted of Gülen links

Ahmet Ergül, 65, a former teacher imprisoned over Gülen links was denied parole despite being eligible for the previous six months. [More..](#)

Ailing inmate denied parole despite eligibility

Turgay Doğan, an ailing inmate at a prison in Ankara, remained incarcerated despite fulfilling parole requirements including completing the minimum required portion of his sentence and being recognized for good behavior. [More..](#)

Former teacher arrested over alleged Gülen links denied conditional release despite eligibility

A Turkish court denied conditional release to a former teacher imprisoned for alleged links to the Gülen movement, citing a lack of “concrete evidence” of disassociation from the group. [More..](#)

Property Rights

Koza-İpek Holding, affiliates seized over Gülen links transferred to sovereign wealth fund

Twelve companies, including Koza-İpek Holding, its affiliates and a luxury residence belonging to the İpek family seized by the Turkish government in 2015 over their links to the Gülen movement, were transferred to the Turkey Wealth Fund (TVF) in December. [More..](#)

Turkish gov't to sell mansions seized from Gülen-linked businessman for at least \$23 mln

Turkey's state-run Savings Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) will sell two mansions owned by Akın İpek, a businessman currently living in exile in the UK whose assets in Turkey were seized in 2016 over his alleged links to the Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Boydak Holding executive convicted of Gülen links detained in İstanbul

Bekir Boydak, an executive from the Kayseri-based Boydak Holding, was detained in March to serve a sentence handed down on terrorism-related charges due to his links to the faith-based Gülen movement. The Turkish government in August 2016 seized Boydak Holding, which was among Turkey's largest industrial groups. [More..](#)

Deaths of purge victims

[Tevfik Birecik](#), a 49-year-old former police chief who was not released from prison until his colon cancer had spread to other parts of his body, died on May 4.

[Yusuf Güner Aksay](#), a 41-year-old former teacher who was dismissed from his job by a government decree as part of the post-coup purge, died of brain cancer on May 25.

[Ömer Turanlı](#), a 54-year-old human rights lawyer who fled persecution in Turkey and has been living in exile, died on July 5 in a London hospital after battling cancer.

[Ahmet Zeki Özkan](#), a 67-year-old architect who was arrested despite his end-stage cancer, died on July 15.

[Hatice Kahraman](#), a 40-year-old former teacher who was dismissed from her job by a government decree as part of the post-coup purge, died of a brain hemorrhage on July 17.

[Özden Kivançlı](#), 46, a social studies teacher dismissed and never reinstated despite being acquitted in court, died in a traffic accident on September 14.

[Fahrettin İşgüder](#), a 73-year-old businessman who was sentenced to over six years in prison for alleged links to the Gülen movement, died on July 22.

[Adil Somali](#), a 55-year-old businessman sentenced to over six years in prison for alleged links to the Gülen movement, died on July 20, after his parole was delayed.

[Hüseyin Geçmek](#), a construction technician previously imprisoned on conviction of links to the Gülen movement, died on January 5 of pancreatic cancer, which had begun and spread during his incarceration.

[Osman Hacısalihoğlu](#), a former police officer who was dismissed by a government decree and subsequently served a prison sentence for alleged Gülen links, died of cancer in January.

[Hamza Erdoğan](#), a former police officer who was dismissed by a government decree over his alleged links to the Gülen movement, died of brain cancer in March.

[Betül Aygün](#), a 30-year-old former teacher, died of breast cancer in February after her treatment was significantly delayed by a prison administration during her incarceration on alleged links to the Gülen movement.

[Memiş Enes Gümüş](#), a 54-year-old former judge who was dismissed by a government decree, was killed in a cable car accident in southern Turkey on April 12.

[Salaheddin Akçay](#), a cardiologist who was dismissed from his job by a government decree as part of Turkey's post-coup purge of state institutions, died of a heart attack, just hours after crossing the Evros River into Greece on April 17.

[Mürüvvet Tunç](#), a former teacher dismissed from her job by a government decree, died of a rare and life-threatening blood disorder on April 23.

[Cemal Altıparmaköğlu](#), a 48-year-old primary school teacher dismissed under a government decree, died on November 29 after a delayed release from prison despite his doctor's warnings.

[Mehmet Ali Namlı](#), 55, a former teacher, who had been fired from his position by government decree, died on November 21 following a workplace accident.

[Mahmut Başığit](#), 54, a former Turkish police officer, died on November 4 after a prolonged battle with advanced gallbladder cancer following a delay in the granting of a temporary release from prison due to his illness.

[Adem Cirit](#), an 88-year-old inmate convicted of alleged links to the Gülen movement, died in prison on October 23 despite appeals for his release due to his worsening health.

[Lütfü Gündoğdu](#), a 71-year-old former public servant who was dismissed from his job and detained in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, died of colon cancer on August 20.

[Ece Nur Esen](#), a 16-year-old girl whose parents were fired from their jobs by a decree after the failed coup, died of a heart attack on April 13.

Suicides

[Recep Aydın](#), a former officer in the Turkish navy dismissed from the service by a government decree, died by suicide in the southern province of Adana on July 20.

[Oğuz Doğan](#), a former police officer dismissed from his job over alleged links to Gülen movement, took his own life in the northern province of Samsun on October 28.

[Gökhan Ünyeli](#), an officer in the Turkish military who had been under investigation for alleged links to the Gülen movement and was suspended from the service, died by suicide in Ankara on March 28.

[Onur Selim Y.](#), a 20-year-old university student, died by hanging himself from a pipe in January. His father, a biology teacher, spent 11 months in pretrial detention and was sentenced to more than six years in prison on charges of links to the Gülen movement. His mother was dismissed from her job with the education ministry on similar grounds over labor union membership.

3. Crackdown on the Kurdish political movement and opposition groups



The Turkish government's persecution of members of the Kurdish political movement and pressure on other opposition groups persisted throughout 2024, with people linked to such groups detained by the Turkish authorities.

In addition to leading political figures, thousands of people in Turkey are currently under investigation, and most of them are under the threat of imprisonment over alleged insults of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan or his ruling Justice and Development party (AKP).

According to a report by the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), Turkish authorities detained at least 3,948 people and arrested 632 in 2024 as part of an intensified crackdown on the DEM Party and affiliated groups.

In the March 31 local elections, the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) emerged as the leading party for the first time in 47 years, securing 37.7 percent of the vote, maintaining control of key cities and securing substantial gains in other regions, while the AKP came in second, garnering only 35.4 percent.

The CHP's election victory led to widespread concerns that Erdoğan might resort to measures that would hinder the operations of opposition municipalities or discredit them in the eyes of the public in retaliation for his party's election loss.

Despite claims of voter fraud, the DEM Party emerged victorious in the local elections, winning a dozen municipalities in Turkey's southeast. The DEM Party won three metropolitan municipalities out of 30, seven provincial municipalities and 65 district municipalities in the March 31 local elections.

The Turkish government took over several municipalities controlled by the DEM Party and the CHP following the local elections, citing terrorism-related court rulings and ongoing investigations into them. The government removed the first mayor from office from the DEM Party in June due to “terrorism” charges against him.

Former HDP co-chairs Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, who were imprisoned in late 2016, spent the year behind bars despite an outstanding European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) order for Demirtaş’s release, while scores of former HDP politicians, including MPs and elected mayors who were ousted by the Ministry of Interior, continued to sit in pretrial detention, stand trial and serve their sentences. Last year Demirtaş was also sentenced to more than two years in prison for remarks made between 2015 and 2017, alleged to have denigrated state institutions.

Here are some of the headlines from 2024 that concern the crackdown on Kurdish politicians and other political opposition:

Ankara court issued lengthy sentences for Kurdish politicians in Kobani trial



An Ankara court issued a verdict in the long-running Kobani trial and handed down lengthy prison sentences in May for dozens of Kurdish politicians, including imprisoned leaders Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ.

Demirtaş is among 108 former pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) politicians who stood trial. The HDP is the predecessor of the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party). [More..](#)

A Turkish court in July sentenced Demirtaş to more than two years in prison for remarks made between 2015 and 2017, alleging that they denigrated state institutions. [More..](#)

Demirtaş has been imprisoned since November 2016 on charges related to his political activities and speeches, which many international observers, including human rights organizations, have condemned as politically motivated.

In its 2020 ruling on Demirtaş, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ordered his release and said his “unjustified” detention pursued the ulterior motive of stifling pluralism and limiting freedom of political debate in Turkey.

Turkish authorities intensified crackdown on pro-Kurdish opposition in 2024

Turkish authorities detained at least 3,948 people and arrested 632 in 2024 as part of an intensified crackdown on the DEM Party and affiliated groups, according to a report published by the DEM Party. [More..](#)

Appeals court in SE Turkey upheld sentences of 58 Kurdish politicians accused of ‘terrorism’

An appeals court in the southeastern Turkish province of Gaziantep in May upheld prison sentences previously handed down to 58 Kurdish politicians, including former executives of the HDP and the Democratic Regions’ Party (DBP) on terrorism-related charges. [More..](#)

Turkish gov’t tightened its grip on opposition mayors over alleged irregular spending, unpaid debts

Turkish prosecutors launched investigations of three municipalities including the İstanbul and Ankara metropolitan municipalities run by main opposition CHP mayors on accusations of irregular spending and unpaid debts to the government. [More..](#)

In December the Labor Ministry imposed financial sanctions on six municipalities run by the CHP aimed at collecting debt owed the government. [More..](#)



Jailed PKK leader willing to take initiative for settlement of Kurdish conflict

Ömer Öcalan, a lawmaker from the DEM Party and a nephew of Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), said his uncle clearly stated his willingness to take the initiative for the settlement of a decades-long armed conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK. [More..](#)

Turkey’s top court upheld prison sentence for ousted Kurdish mayor in retrial

Turkey’s top appeals court upheld a prison sentence of more than nine years handed down to Selçuk Mızraklı, the former co-mayor of the predominantly Kurdish province of Diyarbakır, who was removed from office in 2019 and stood trial on terrorism-related charges. [More..](#)

Kurdish mayor denied mandate despite winning landslide victory in eastern Turkey

Abdullah Zeydan, a Kurdish politician who won the local election in Turkey’s eastern province of Van with a landslide victory in March, was denied the mandate to serve as the city’s mayor due to a last-minute political ban imposed on him,

while the runner-up from the ruling party was recognized as the city's new mayor by the election authority. [More..](#)

Turkish police detained 340 people over protests that erupted across Turkey in response to a local electoral authority's decision to annul the victory of Zeydan and hand the mayorship to the ruling party's runner-up. [More..](#)

Prosecutor asked to keep Kurdish politician in jail despite eligibility for release

A Turkish prosecutor demanded the continued pretrial detention of Gültan Kışanak, a Kurdish politician and the former co-mayor of Diyarbakır who has been behind bars on terrorism-related charges since October 2016. [More..](#)

Prosecutors launched investigation into DEM Party members over Kurdish anthem

The Şırnak Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation into 13 members of the pro-Kurdish DEM Party for singing a Kurdish anthem during a protest in southeastern Turkey. [More..](#)

Turkey's former opposition leader charged again, faces up to 65 years in prison

New criminal charges were filed against Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the former leader of the CHP, who faces up to 65 years in prison in 18 criminal cases. [More..](#)
Kılıçdaroğlu appeared in court in November and was accused of insulting President Erdoğan by calling him a "thief." [More..](#)

Turkey detained main opposition party mayor over alleged links to PKK

Ahmet Özer, the mayor of İstanbul's Esenyurt district from Turkey's main opposition CHP, was detained at his home in October on suspicion of membership in the outlawed PKK. [More..](#)

Turkey detained 165 in operations targeting Kurdish political movement

Turkish police in January conducted raids across 28 provinces and detained a total of 165 people, including peace activists and members of the DEM Party, for alleged ties to terrorism. [More..](#)

Turkey sentenced 15 Kurdish politicians to more than 100 years in prison

A court in southeast Turkey announced its verdict in the trial of 15 local Kurdish politicians accused of terrorism, handing down sentences totaling close to 104 years in prison in total. The defendants, including former member of parliament Gülser Yıldırım, received prison sentences ranging from six years, three months to seven years, six months on charges of membership in a terrorist organization. [More..](#)

Kurdish co-mayor detained following protests over trustee appointment

Birsen Orhan, the former co-mayor of Tunceli from the pro-Kurdish DEM Party, was taken into custody in December. Orhan was detained due to allegedly “violating the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations” and “resisting officials to prevent them from performing their duty.” [More..](#)



Elderly Kurdish politician died in prison after his parole was delayed

Abdölmelik Okyay, a 71-year-old Kurdish politician imprisoned for social media posts, died of a heart attack in September while incarcerated after his parole was delayed. [More..](#)

Kurdish man who questioned ‘transferred’ voters on election day indicted

Söleyman Salğucak, a Kurdish man who questioned voters who were allegedly “transferred” to his city of residence in the southeastern province of Şırnak on the day of the March 31 local elections to change the election results in favor of the ruling party, was indicted. [More..](#)

Turkey removed another Kurdish mayor from office

The Turkish Interior Ministry removed another Kurdish mayor from office due to his conviction in a terrorism-related trial. The ministry announced in December the removal of Ayvaz Hazır, the co-mayor of the Bahçesaray district in the eastern province of Van, from office following a court ruling against him. [More..](#)

Turkey began trial of 5 former MPs from pro-Kurdish party over Kobani protests

A Turkish court in June began to hear the trial of five former lawmakers from a pro-Kurdish party over their alleged role in violent protests that erupted in southeastern Turkey over the siege of the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014. [More..](#)

Turkish gov’t removed Kurdish mayor from office 2 months after his election

Turkey’s Interior Ministry removed Mehmet Sıddık Akış, the co-mayor of Hakkari from the pro-Kurdish DEM Party, and replaced him with a trustee two months after his election to office. [More..](#)

Kurdish mayor faced removal from office after top appeals court ruling

Abdullah Zeydan of the pro-Kurdish DEM Party, who won the race for mayor of the eastern province of Van, which sits on Turkey’s eastern border with Iran, faced removal from office after the Supreme Court of Appeals reversed a 2023 lower court decision that had restored his right to run for office. [More..](#)

4. Labour rights

Turkey faced a troubling year for labor rights in 2024, with at least 1,897 workers losing their lives in job-related accidents, according to the Health and Safety Labor Watch (İSiG).

People have been suffering from lax work safety standards for decades in Turkey, where workplace accidents are nearly a daily occurrence. According to İSiG, more than 30,000 work-related accidents have taken place since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in November 2002.

İSiG General Coordinator Murat Çakır [said](#) the reason for the record number of fatalities in occupational accidents has to do with the policies of the AKP, which he said aim to turn Turkey into a source of cheap labor for Europe.

According to Çakır, workers feel obliged to work under unsafe conditions fearing that they will become jobless and unable to support their families.

Weak safety policies have severely impacted underage workers, with [vocational schools](#) facing criticism for poor occupational safety measures and the exploitation of student labor.

There are currently more than 1 million students enrolled in vocational education schools (MESEM). According to regulations MESEM students attend one day of school and work in the relevant industry the rest of the week. However, students say they work up to 10 hours a day, six days a week. Most of these students come from poor families and are paid less than the minimum wage for their labor.

Alarmingly, these students have been working in dangerous conditions and under lax occupational safety measures. Several MESEM students have died in workplace accidents, and authorities have not taken any measures to prevent such fatalities.

Here is some of the most important news from 2024 in the area of labor rights:

Former union leader criticized Turkish vocational schools for exploiting student labor

Former union leader Feray Aytekin Aydoğan criticized Turkish vocational schools for lax occupational safety measures and for exploiting their students' labor. [More...](#)

695 child laborers died in workplace accidents in Turkey in last 11 years

At least 695 minors died in workplace accidents in Turkey between 2013 and May 2024. [More...](#)

Sexually harassed underage female employee told by boss to 'get used to it'

A female high school student who was allegedly subjected to sexual harassment while working at a logistics firm in İstanbul was told by her boss to “get used to it.” The incident took place at Sertrans Lojistik, where the student was working as part of a cooperation scheme between the company and a vocational training center. [More...](#)

Death toll of minors in Turkey's vocational training centers rose to 9 amid safety concerns

The death toll of minors working in Turkey's vocational training centers, known as MESEM, rose to nine for the 2023-2024 academic year, raising safety concerns. [More...](#)



Gendarmes beat, detain 16 during strike by union members

A strike at a food production factory in the Kemalpaşa district of İzmir escalated into gendarmes beating and detaining three union executives and 13 workers. [More...](#)

Labor union recommended raising Turkey's minimum wage 4 times a year due to record inflation

The research center from a leading labor union in Turkey said in its latest report that the Turkish government should increase the monthly minimum wage four times a year to tackle high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis in Turkey. [More...](#)

More than 1,000 dead or missing in Turkey's maritime accidents in 8 years

Turkey has since 2016 recorded a total of 3,223 maritime accidents in which 677 people died and 390 went missing. [More...](#)

Turkey has lost more than 2,000 miners in work related accidents under AKP rule

Turkey has tragically lost at least 2,188 miners in work-related accidents since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in November 2002, which reveals the country's failure to protect the lives of its workers. [More...](#)

3 construction workers died in workplace accident, again raising occupational safety concerns in Turkey

Three construction workers in Ankara's Sincan district died when a scaffolding collapsed, once again raising concerns about workplace safety in Turkey. [More...](#)



Worker died after chrome mine accident in southeastern Turkey

Halil İbrahim Yolcu, a 50-year-old chrome mine worker, died after suffering critical injuries when a rock fell on his head at a mine in Adana's Aladağ district, once again raising concerns about workplace safety in Turkey. [More...](#)

At least 425 workers died in occupational accidents in first quarter of 2024

Turkey recorded at least 425 deaths in work-related accidents in the first quarter of 2024. [More...](#)

At least 2,500 young workers died in occupational accidents in a decade

Turkey has recorded at least 2,500 deaths in work-related accidents since 2013. Most of the fatal workplace accidents occurred in the construction sector, accounting for 26 percent of all incidents, followed by agriculture and forestry, which made up 17 percent. [More...](#)

At least 1,371 workers died in occupational accidents in first three quarters of 2024

Turkey recorded at least 1,371 deaths in work-related accidents in the first nine months of 2024. [More...](#)

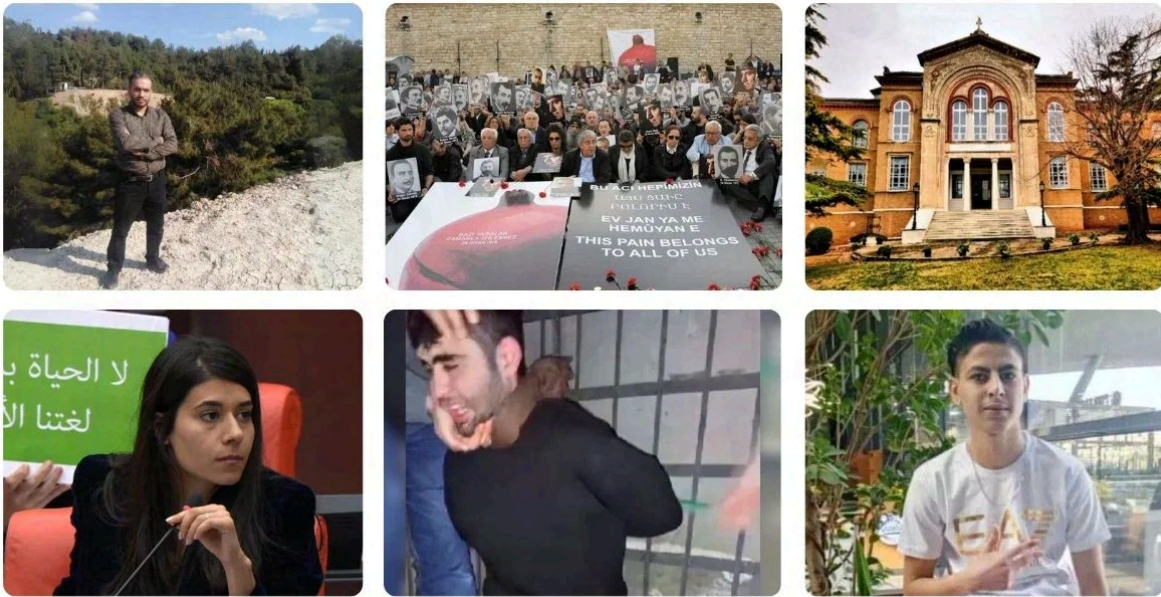
Nearly 2,000 workers died in occupational accidents in Turkey in 2024

Turkey recorded at least 1,897 deaths in work-related accidents in 2024. Most of the fatal workplace accidents occurred in the construction sector, which accounted for 25 percent of the total, followed by transportation with 12 percent and agriculture with 9 percent. İstanbul led all provinces in the number of occupational accidents. [More...](#)

Labor union protested TurkStat over inflation figures

The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK) gathered outside the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) in Ankara to protest the latest inflation data, claiming that the figures do not reflect the real economic challenges faced by Turkish citizens. [More...](#)

5. Minority and refugee rights



Minority groups in Turkey continued to suffer from discrimination, hate speech and assaults in 2024.

Members of different minority groups, such as Kurds and Syrians, suffered from physical assaults, while suppression of various cultural expressions, such as using the Kurdish language, continued. Furthermore, the Alevi community expressed [concern](#) over the Turkish government's overemphasis on religious education in the new curriculum. They argued that it was against the secular constitution and confined religious education to Sunni Islam, imposing it on the entire society.

Turkey's Greek Orthodox community [warned](#) that the government's policies were endangering the survival of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Greek Orthodox community in the country.

A wave of hate speech targeting [African students](#) in Turkey dominated social media, accusing them of engaging in sex work and spreading disease.

The summer months were marked by [attacks](#) on the properties of Syrian refugees in central Turkey. Following the claim that a Syrian man sexually assaulted a 7-year-old Syrian girl, a mob headed to a Syrian neighborhood, setting fire to buildings and throwing rocks at their workplaces. In addition to physical attacks, Syrians were the subject of [hate speech](#) on social media.

Human rights advocates have voiced concern that amid anti-migrant sentiment, Syrians have been forcibly [deported](#). In late 2024 Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya announced that the Syrian population in Turkey had fallen from 3,737,369 to

2,935,742. Human rights organizations argue that the reduction is not solely due to voluntary returns or irregular migration to Europe, as the Turkish government claims, but also widespread forced deportations, which is a violation of international law.

Turkey has not been doing well in protecting the [rights](#) of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBT) community. It was ranked 47th out of 49 countries, followed only by Azerbaijan and Russia, according to the 2024 edition of the Rainbow Index.

LGBT groups have been subjected to harassment during demonstrations and public celebrations, and their festivals were banned in major cities.

Here are some of the most important headlines concerning minority and refugee rights from 2024:

Turkeys' policies threaten Greek Orthodox community, benefit Russia, church leaders warned

Two leaders of the Eastern Orthodox community warned at an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) conference that the Turkish government's policies were endangering the survival of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Greek Orthodox community in the country while opening the door for Russia to expand its influence. [More...](#)

Religious directorate said Armenian writer should be prosecuted for remarks on Islamic call to prayer

The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) filed a criminal complaint against Armenian writer and linguist Sevan Nişanyan for his remarks about the Islamic call to prayer (adhan). [More...](#)



Turkey again banned event to commemorate Armenian 'genocide' victims during WWI

The Istanbul Governor's Office banned a ceremony in memory of the Armenians who were killed during a mass deportation in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, in a decision condemned as an "anti-democratic move" by the organizers. [More...](#)

Bar association executives faced new investigation over commemoration of Armenian genocide victims

Diyarbakır prosecutors launched an investigation into 11 executives of the Diyarbakır Bar Association on accusations of “denigrating the Turkish nation and state,” over a 2021 statement commemorating the victims of the Armenian genocide. [More...](#)

Turkish court acquitted 2 human rights activists who recognized Armenian genocide

Two human rights activists from a leading rights organization in Turkey were acquitted of insult charges against the Turkish nation and government due to their remarks recognizing the mass killings of Armenians in the final days of the Ottoman Empire as “genocide.” [More...](#)

Kurdish Alevi university student allegedly brutalized in apparent hate crime

A university student in İstanbul was allegedly brutalized by roommates due to his Kurdish and Alevi identity. The student, identified only by the initials F.B., was having difficulties with his two dorm mates and suffered injuries due to a violent incident, which led to hospitalization. [More...](#)

Alevi organizations expressed concern over new K-12 curriculum

Alevi organizations in Turkey voiced strong opposition to a new K-12 curriculum proposal announced on April 26, citing concerns over the government’s ideological influence and the misrepresentation of Alevism. [More...](#)

Turkey’s main opposition leader condemned ongoing discrimination of Alevis

Özgür Özel, leader of Turkey’s main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP), in a speech said the Alevi community was being subjected to ongoing discrimination. Speaking at the International Hacı Bektaş Veli Commemoration Ceremony and Cultural Arts Festival, Özel said members of the Alevi community were not treated as equal citizens, adding that they faced discrimination and social exclusion and their legitimate demands were ignored by the authorities. [More...](#)



Turkish parliament censored MPs speaking minority languages

Several MPs who attempted to mark UNESCO’s International Mother Language Day by giving speeches in minority languages in Turkey’s parliament were censored by the deputy speaker, who turned their microphones off. [More...](#)

Turkey ranked among most repressive in LGBT rights index

Turkey received one of the worst scores in Europe in the 2024 edition of the [Rainbow Index](#) released by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), scoring 4.75 out of 100. [More...](#)

Ankara governor banned LGBT-themed festival

The Ankara Governor's Office banned an LGBT event and notified organizers the day before its scheduled beginning. [More...](#)

LGBTQ groups subjected to harassment during Nevruz celebrations

LGBTQ groups were subject to physical harassment and insults during a celebration to mark the spring festival of Nevruz in Istanbul's Yenikapı Square. [More...](#)

Greece, Turkey introduced new rules for minority schools in controversial moves

Turkey's Education Ministry introduced new restrictions affecting Greek minority schools in Istanbul, reciprocating a similar move by Greece for Muslim minority schools in Western Thrace, likely to again strain relations between the two neighbors. [More...](#)

Syrians in Turkey complained of intensified police checkpoints: 'It's like living in a prison'

A large number of unregistered Syrian refugees or those who live in provinces other than where they are officially registered were stranded inside their homes in Turkey due to the increased frequency of police operations and ID checks that put them at risk of detention and deportation. [More...](#)

Syrian refugee teen physically assaulted in southern Turkey

A 15-year-old Syrian refugee was brutally beaten by the family of a friend over a game dispute in the southern province of Gaziantep. [More...](#)



Syrian activist critical of Turkey's treatment of refugees among arrestees charged with espionage

Ahmed Katie, a Syrian human rights activist who went missing in November after his criticism of Turkey's worsening treatment of refugees, was among people arrested by Turkish authorities on charges of spying for French intelligence. [More...](#)

Syrians faced dire conditions in Turkish-occupied 'safe zone': HRW

Turkish authorities deported or otherwise pressured thousands of Syrians to leave the country for Tel Abyad, a remote Turkish-occupied district of northern Syria where humanitarian conditions are dire. [More...](#)

Video revealed torture of young Syrian Kurd who disappeared in Turkey

The family of Ali Veli, a 19-year-old Kurdish migrant from Syria who went missing after being released from a Turkish prison in March, received a video of him being physically mistreated by unidentified individuals. [More...](#)

Syrian businesses and homes attacked in central Turkey amid increasing anti-migrant sentiment

A group of locals attacked the houses, workplaces and cars of Syrian refugees in the central Turkish province of Kayseri in what appeared to be another wave of racist attacks amid the anti-migrant sentiment that has developed in the country in recent years. [MoreMore...](#)

Wave of online hate speech followed countrywide attacks on Syrians in Turkey

Turkish social media erupted with hate speech targeting Syrian refugees, following a series of attacks on the refugee community across the country. [More...](#)

Impunity, atmosphere of hate in Turkey perpetuate anti-Syrian violence: experts

A series of violent attacks on Syrian refugees in Turkey had experts and activists pointing to a pervasive social climate of hatred and impunity as the driving factors. Experts cited an orchestrated atmosphere of hostility, exacerbated by government neglect and socio-economic exploitation. [More...](#)



Teenage Syrian refugee killed in wave of racist attacks in Turkey

Ahmet Handan El Naif, a 17-year-old Syrian refugee worker, was killed in Antalya on Tuesday as racist attacks on Syrians spread across various Turkish provinces. [More...](#)

Major data breach amid racist attacks: IDs of Syrians in Turkey circulated online

A massive data breach compromised the personal information of over 3 million Syrian refugees residing in Turkey amid a wave of anti-Syrian violence in the country. [More...](#)

Parliamentary committee ignored case of 17-year-old Syrian mistreated and sentenced to aggravated life in Turkey

The Turkish parliament's Committee for the Inspection of Human Rights failed to review the situation of Zaim Hişman Ali, a 17-year-old from Syria who was allegedly tortured in custody before being sentenced to aggravated life in prison. [More...](#)

Syrian refugee's health was in peril due to bureaucratic barriers in Turkey

A Syrian refugee in Turkey was temporarily denied critical HIV treatment due to bureaucratic hurdles, sparking concerns about human rights violations and public health policy. [More...](#)

Millions of Syrians must be able to return to home safely, Turkish FM said

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said more than half of all Syrians live outside their country and that they "must be able to return to their homeland safely," in an [interview](#) with the UAE-based Sky News Arabia. [More...](#)

Turkish border guards accused of killing Syrian civilian, injuring 2 others

Turkish border guards shot and killed a Syrian civilian and injured two others when they opened fire on a group approaching the border, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported. [More...](#)

Media freedom groups urged release of Syrian journalist detained by pro-Turkish factions

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called for the immediate release of Syrian journalist Bakr al-Kassem, who was detained by pro-Turkish factions. [More...](#)

Killing of 15-year-old Syrian by masked men in Turkey led to allegations of racism

A 15-year-old Syrian was shot dead by masked gunmen in İstanbul, leading to allegations of a racially motivated attack. The incident, which took place in the Gaziosmanpaşa district, has shaken the local refugee community. [More...](#)



5 arrested in connection to murder of 15-year-old Syrian in İstanbul

Turkish authorities arrested five suspects in connection with the murder of a 15-year-old Syrian. [More...](#)

Syrian worker murdered during prayer in alleged racially motivated attack in Turkey

A 42-year-old Syrian man was stabbed to death at an industrial site in Turkey in what appeared to be a racially motivated incident. The victim, identified as Hüseyin Azuz, sustained wounds to the head while praying at his workplace. Two of his coworkers were also seriously injured in the attack, which took place after threats from Turkish workers at the site. [More...](#)

Human rights groups voiced concern over forced deportations to reduce Turkey's Syrian population

The number of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey dropped below 3 million for the first time in nearly seven years, sparking concern among human rights organizations that forced deportations were driving the decrease. [More...](#)

6. Press freedom



Press freedom in Turkey deteriorated further in 2024, with journalist associations calling it “a lost year” for press freedom. Turkish journalist groups warned that press freedoms were under increasing legal and political pressure, marked by detentions, police violence and censorship. Some union representatives even said 2024 had been more violent for journalists than previous years, with police disproportionately targeting them during protests and anti-government demonstrations.

Moreover, legal pressure on the press intensified, with 89 journalists, media staff members and one newspaper facing trial in at least 70 cases. Of these, 17 cases reached a verdict: 16 journalists were acquitted, while nine received prison sentences totaling over 50 years. Additionally, two journalists were fined a combined 33,320 Turkish lira (approximately \$969).

There was an alarming rise in physical and verbal [threats](#) against journalists, often from political groups aligned with the ruling alliance. At least 25 journalists and five media outlets experienced physical attacks, while 82 journalists were threatened, primarily by figures linked to the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). A lack of legal action against perpetrators has deepened concerns about press safety.

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) continued to stifle dissent, imposing fines totaling 72.1 million Turkish lira (\$1.92 million), along with broadcast suspensions and program bans.

A [disinformation law](#) enacted in 2022 continued to be weaponized by authorities to stifle dissent and muzzle the independent media. The legislation criminalizes the dissemination of “false or misleading information,” carrying prison sentences of up to three years. Critics argue that these measures are being used to stifle dissent and silence opposition voices.

Data from the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) showed that since the law’s enactment, at least 56 journalists have faced 66 investigations.

Turkey, which became [the world’s biggest prison for journalists](#) in 2018 during a state of emergency imposed after a coup attempt, was [ranked](#) 158th of 180 countries in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

Below is a roundup of key developments from 2024 about press freedom in Turkey:

Turkey continued to detain journalists, imposed media bans in January

Turkish authorities detained two journalists over their professional activities and imposed publication and broadcast bans at least 11 times in January. [More...](#)

Turkey still among top 10 offenders in CPJ’s census of imprisoned journalists

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) published its annual prison census for 2023, which showed that Turkey was still among the top 10 countries where journalists were imprisoned. [More...](#)

RSF ranked Turkey 158th in new press freedom index, underreported number of jailed journalists

Turkey was ranked 158th out of 180 countries in the 2024 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), although the organization reported the number of imprisoned journalists in the country at seven, far below what local and international rights groups have reported. [More...](#)

Prominent journalists were given prison sentences in retrial over Gülen links

A Turkish court that heard the retrial of several journalists and media workers on terrorism charges due to their alleged links to a faith-based group handed down prison sentences to two prominent journalists and one art director on charges of aiding and abetting a criminal organization. [More...](#)



CoE called on Turkey to release 3 journalists, cancel judicial supervision measures imposed on other media workers

The Council of Europe (CoE) called on the Turkish government to release several journalists arrested in previous weeks and to cancel the judicial supervision measures imposed on other media workers. [More...](#)

9 Kurdish journalists were detained police raids in Turkey

Turkish police conducted a series of coordinated home raids in İstanbul, Ankara and southeastern Urfa province that resulted in the detention of nine Kurdish journalists. [More...](#)

Editor-in-chief of Turkish daily arrested for Gülen condolence message

Kazım Güleçyüz, the editor-in-chief of Turkey's Yeni Asya newspaper, was arrested in October on accusations of disseminating terrorist propaganda for conveying condolences for the late Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic cleric listed as a "terrorist" by the Turkish government. [More...](#)



Greta Thunberg visited Turkey radio station closed over Armenian genocide row

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg in October visited İstanbul's Açık Radyo, whose broadcasts were silenced earlier in the month by Turkish authorities after a guest spoke on air about the Armenian genocide. [More...](#)

3 Kurdish journalists were referred to court for arrest, 6 released under judicial supervision

Three out of nine Kurdish journalists who had been detained were referred to court for arrest after testifying to a prosecutor, while six of them were released from custody under judicial supervision. [More...](#)

Turkish prosecutor sought prison sentences for journalists who covered alleged judicial corruption

A Turkish prosecutor demanded prison sentences for journalists Faruk Eren and Furkan Karabay on charges of "targeting officials fighting terrorism" due to their coverage of allegations of corruption within the judiciary. [More...](#)

Turkish Embassy spied on journalists in Sweden, leaked government documents revealed

Turkish intelligence services, operating from the embassy in Stockholm, spied on journalists in Sweden, monitoring their activities and relaying information back to headquarters in Ankara. [More...](#)

2 journalists investigated due to critical reporting on Turkish gov't officials

Turkish prosecutors launched investigations into two journalists from the Birgün daily due to their critical reporting on a former minister, a lawmaker from the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and the gendarmerie. [More...](#)

Journalists were among dozens detained, attacked during Nevruz celebrations across Turkey

Celebrations of Nevruz, a spring festival culturally significant for Turkey's Kurdish minority, across the country were marred by detentions and attacks targeting dozens, including journalists. [More...](#)

Journalists appeared in court 207 times in two months: opposition MP

Journalists in Turkey appeared at court hearings 207 times in the first two months of 2024. [More...](#)

Turkish court ordered journalists to pay damages to retired general

A court in İstanbul ordered four journalists to pay damages to a retired general due to five articles that were published in the now-defunct Taraf daily. [More...](#)



2 journalists were detained in house raids in Turkey

Eight people including two journalists were detained in house raids in the predominantly Kurdish province of Diyarbakır in southeastern Turkey. [More...](#)

Jailed Kurdish journalists were indicted on terrorism charges due to their news reports

Three Kurdish journalists who had been detained as part of an İstanbul-based investigation and were arrested by a court were indicted on terrorism charges. [More...](#)

22 women journalists were involved in court proceedings in June

The Mezopotamya Female Journalists Association (MKG) announced that a total of 22 women journalists were involved in trial proceedings in June over their professional activities. The journalists faced charges as part of 17 separate trials. [More...](#)

515 journalists were prosecuted in Turkey in first 6 months

A total of 515 journalists faced prosecution in Turkey in the first six months of 2024, with 36 of them receiving prison sentences or substantial fines. [More...](#)

Press freedom NGO criticized harsh sentences for journalists in Turkey

European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) Monitoring Coordinator Gürkan Özturan condemned the harsh sentences handed down by Turkish courts to journalists from the Mezopotamya news agency (MA) and JINNEWS, calling for an immediate end to the repression of journalists in the country. [More...](#)

200 journalists appeared in court in Turkey between April and June

Nearly 200 journalists in Turkey appeared in court between April and June, according to the BiA Media Monitoring Report published by the Bianet news website. [More...](#)

Turkish court accused convicted Kurdish journalists of ‘manipulating public opinion’

An Ankara court issued its reasoned decision in the trial of Kurdish journalists convicted on terrorism charges earlier in July, accusing the defendants of “manipulating public opinion” through their publications. [More...](#)

2 journalists died, 1 injured in alleged Turkish drone attack in Sulaymaniyah

A suspected Turkish drone strike killed two journalists and injured another in Iraqi Kurdistan's Sulaymaniyah province, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). [More...](#)



Turkey blocked X accounts of journalists, politicians on terrorist propaganda allegations

A Turkish court ordered an access ban on the X accounts of 82 people including prominent journalists and politicians on accusations that they were disseminating terrorist propaganda. [More...](#)

CPJ urged X not to comply with Turkish court order blocking journalists' accounts

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) urged the administrators of X not to comply with an order by a Turkish court to block accounts belonging to several journalists and media outlets. [More...](#)

Rights groups denounced threats against journalists by far-right party leader

Thirteen national and international freedom of expression organizations and press unions condemned threats against journalists by Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of Turkey's far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). [More...](#)

MEPs urged Turkey to restore democratic standards, drop charges against journalists

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voiced "deep concern" over what they described as the ongoing deterioration of democratic standards in Turkey, citing the targeting of independent journalists, activists and opposition members. [More...](#)

Journalists were among dozens detained during protests over removal of Kurdish mayors

On the second day of protests that erupted over the removal of three Kurdish mayors from office in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast, dozens of people, including two journalists, were forcibly detained by the police. [More...](#)

RSF called on Turkey to lift restrictions on journalists' X accounts, release jailed editor-in-chief

The German branch of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called on Turkish authorities to restore access to X accounts belonging to journalists Can Dündar and Amberin Zaman and to release Kazım Güleçyüz, editor-in-chief of the Yeni Asya newspaper, who was arrested for expressing condolences over the death of Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen. [More...](#)

Turkish prosecutors investigated 2 journalists under 'disinformation law'

İstanbul prosecutors launched an investigation into two journalists on accusations of spreading "disinformation" due to their comments about the forced resignation of three lawmakers from a far-right political party. [More...](#)

Turkish authorities detained 231, including mayors, journalists and activists in nationwide counterterrorism raids

Turkish authorities detained 231 individuals allegedly linked to terrorist organizations as part of a series of coordinated raids across 30 provinces. [More...](#)

Coalition of Women in Journalism condemned detention of journalists in Turkey

The Coalition of Women in Journalism condemned the detention of several journalists in coordinated raids conducted across Turkey. [More...](#)

Turkey marked Human Rights Day with 21 journalists behind bars

Turkey celebrated Human Rights Day in 2024 in an environment where 21 journalists were behind bars, reflecting concerns over the growing use of imprisonment as a tool to punish media workers. [More...](#)



Turkish journalist detained, fired from job after expression of condolences for Gülen on TV

A journalist in western Turkey was detained and subsequently fired from her job after she expressed condolences for Turkish-Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen during a live broadcast. [More...](#)

Int'l press advocacy groups urged Turkish gov't to withdraw espionage amendment

Prominent international media freedom groups called on the Turkish government to withdraw proposed amendments to an anti-espionage law in Turkey shortly after the government suspended talks on the legislation for further deliberations with the opposition. [More...](#)

2 Kurdish journalists killed in 'Turkish drone strike' in northern Syria

Two journalists from Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast were killed, reportedly by a Turkish drone strike, while covering the fighting between Ankara-backed militia and US-backed Kurdish fighters in northern Syria. [More...](#)

German press association urged Turkey to investigate Kurdish journalists' death in Turkish drone strike

The German Association of Journalists (DJV) called on the Turkish government to clarify the circumstances surrounding the death of two Kurdish journalists in a reported Turkish drone strike in northern Syria. [More...](#)

Turkish journalist associations call 2024 'a lost year' for press freedom amid crackdowns

Representatives of Turkish journalist associations warned that press freedom was eroding under legal and political pressure marked by detentions, police violence and censorship, with one calling 2024 a lost year. [More...](#)

Turkey sentenced 58 journalists to prison, arrested 26 in 2024

Turkish authorities sentenced 58 journalists to a total of 135 years in prison, detained 112 and arrested 26 in 2024, according to a report released by an opposition lawmaker. [More...](#)

Press freedom in Turkey declined further in 2024 amid censorship, arrests and intimidation

Press freedom in Turkey continued to face challenges in 2024 as authorities intensified their crackdown on independent journalism through systematic censorship, detentions, arrests and judicial harassment. [More...](#)

7. Torture, ill-treatment and prison conditions



Turkey has experienced a marked resurgence of torture and ill-treatment of people in custody since a coup attempt in July 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. Throughout the year, rights groups documented the systematic use of torture, inhuman treatment and degrading conditions by police, prison authorities and intelligence units. International scrutiny also intensified, with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) [raising concerns](#) in January about the alarming rise in torture allegations.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's ongoing crackdown on the Gülen movement, along with increasing repression of the Kurdish political movement and some other dissident groups, has led to the imprisonment of tens of thousands on terrorism-related charges. As a result Turkey's prisons are dangerously overcrowded. Inmates frequently lack adequate food, beds and hygiene products, while poor sanitation and limited access to healthcare have contributed to rampant illness and preventable deaths.

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 probes.

According to [Ministry of Justice data](#), Turkey's prisons now operate at 20 percent over capacity, with the country [leading Europe](#) in both total prison population and incarceration rates per capita. Since 2002 more than 5,300 inmate deaths have been [reported](#), including [709 in the first 11 months of 2024 alone](#).

The government has also weaponized incarceration by [denying parole](#) to over 8,500 inmates since 2021, including many political prisoners. Meanwhile, the [plight of children in detention](#) remains dire — 759 children under the age of 6 are currently growing up behind bars with their mothers, enduring conditions that violate international human rights standards.

Here are the most significant developments from 2024 regarding torture, inhuman treatment and prison conditions in Turkey.

PACE expressed concern about increase in torture allegations in Turkey

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in January adopted a resolution on torture and ill-treatment in places of detention across Europe, addressing the increase in alleged incidents reported from Turkey in past years. [More...](#)



759 children under 6 live in Turkish prisons as incarceration rates soar

Turkish prisons house 3,690 children aged 12 to 18, including 165 girls. In addition, 759 children under the age of 6 live with their mothers in prison, among a total of 16,039 incarcerated women across the country, according to statistics from the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CISST). [More...](#)

Widespread human rights violations reported in Turkish prisons in 2024

Turkish prison authorities committed multiple human rights violations against inmates in 2024, including torture, strip-searches and the denial of medical care, according to a report by the Freedom for Lawyers Association (ÖHD) and the Federation of Legal and Solidarity Associations for Families of Prisoners (MED TUHAD-FED). [More...](#)

TIHEK report detailed overcrowding and inhumane conditions in Turkish prisons

A visit by the Turkish Human Rights and Equality Institution (TIHEK) to Maltepe L-Type Prison revealed severe overcrowding and poor living conditions, highlighting the systemic issues plaguing the country's penal institutions. [More...](#)

Turkey recorded 709 prison deaths in first 11 months of 2024

Turkey recorded 709 deaths in prison in the first 11 months of 2024, according to data from the Ministry of Justice shared in response to a parliamentary inquiry. [More...](#)

Turkey led Europe in prison population, number of inmates per capita

Turkey surpassed all European countries in both total prison population and inmates per capita as of 2022, signaling a significant upward trend in incarceration rates over the past decade, according to data from Eurostat released in April. [More...](#)

Man died in custody after alleged police brutality

Serhat Kahyaoğlu, a man who on the night of the March 31 local elections was detained in İstanbul for celebrating by firing a gun into the air, died in police custody after he was allegedly assaulted by officers. [More...](#)



Teacher abducted from Kyrgyzstan recounted torture, death threats in custody

A report drafted by a bar association in Turkey revealed how Orhan İnandı, a Turkish educator renditioned to Turkey from Kyrgyzstan by Turkish intelligence in 2021 due to his links to the Gülen movement, recounted instances of torture and death threats he was subjected to in custody. [More...](#)

Electric shocks, mock execution: Woman detained over Gülen links recounted torture by police

A woman detained for managing a dormitory affiliated with the Gülen movement described the torture she endured during her detention in the counterterrorism department of Turkey's western Afyon province. [More...](#)

Jailed leftist band member's arm broken due to mistreatment

Prison guards in western Turkey allegedly broke the arm of Bahar Kurt, a jailed member of the leftist Grup Yorum band. [More...](#)

Turkish police accused of beating 2 detainees

Two men detained in connection with a shooting incident in İstanbul said they were subjected to police abuse and coercion while in custody. [More...](#)

Turkey promoted police chief connected to allegations of brutal torture

The Turkish Interior Ministry promoted Yaşar Gidiş, a police chief whose precinct has in recent years been implicated in several allegations of torture, to 1st class commissioner, the highest rank. [More...](#)

6 inmates held in cells designed for 3 in NW Turkey prisons

The Association for the Freedom of Lawyers (ÖHD) published an annual report on prison conditions in Turkey's northwestern Marmara region, which found that six prisoners were being held in cells designed for three. [More...](#)



Dismissed teacher, denied release from prison until too late, succumbed to cancer

Cemal Altıparmakoglu, a 48-year-old primary school teacher dismissed under a government decree, died on November 29 after a delayed release from prison despite his doctor's warnings. [More...](#)

Relatives of inmates reported mistreatment, lack of access to clean water in central Turkey prison

Inmates in Kırşehir Prison in central Anatolia were subjected to physical assaults and a lack of access to clean water. [More...](#)

Turkish prosecutors dismissed torture complaint by former dormitory director linked to Gülen movement

Turkish prosecutors dismissed a complaint of torture filed by Aysun Işınkaralar, the former director of a dormitory affiliated with the faith-based Gülen movement, who alleged she was tortured by police and neglected by doctors while in custody in 2018. [More...](#)

Prison authorities denied critically ill woman necessary medical care

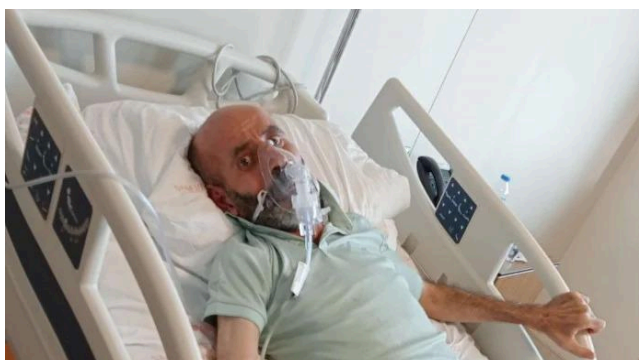
Aysu Bayram, 46, a Turkish woman who suffers from Parkinson's disease and also requires regular care for a liver transplant, said she has been denied critical medical attention during her incarceration in an İstanbul prison. [More...](#)

Prison authorities denied labor union official access to essential medication

İsmet Aslan, a Turkish labor union official battling a rare form of skin cancer, said he has been denied access to his prescribed medication in prison. [More...](#)

Turkish prison authorities denied parole to Kurdish inmate over ‘lack of remorse’

Prison authorities in southeastern Turkey delayed the conditional release of Besra Erol, a 66-year-old Kurdish inmate, by a year over allegations of a “lack of remorse.” [More...](#)



Kurdish inmate with ALS died in Turkish prison after release denied

Abdulkadir Kunday, a Kurdish inmate suffering from ALS, died in an İstanbul prison after authorities refused to release him. [More...](#)

Elderly Kurdish politician died in prison after his parole delayed

Abdülmelik Okyay, a 71-year-old Kurdish politician imprisoned for social media posts, died of a heart attack while incarcerated after his parole was delayed. [More...](#)

Turkish prisoner’s parole delayed after protesting strip-search

Turkish prison authorities delayed Mazlum Ari’s parole after he protested a strip-search. [More...](#)

Poor prison conditions sparked concern over human rights violations in eastern Van province

Reports of poor prison conditions have raised concerns about human rights violations in prisons in eastern Turkey’s Van province. [More...](#)

Unlawful strip-searches became common practice in Batman prison

Human rights abuses, in particular the use of unlawful strip-searches, became a common practice in the Batman M Type Prison. [More...](#)

Prisoner denied release for 6 years despite European rights court ruling

Fermani Çetin, an inmate serving a life sentence in northwest Turkey, saw his parole postponed by six years based on disciplinary penalties that the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) had ruled violated his rights. [More...](#)

NGO reported widespread discrimination, violence targeting LGBT individuals in Turkish prisons

Incarcerated LGBT individuals in Turkey frequently faced violence, isolation, slander and discrimination during their time behind bars. [More...](#)

NGO reported physical mistreatment, denial of meals in northern Turkey prison

The Human Rights Association (İHD) has released a report on a Turkish prison in the northern province of Samsun, documenting the alleged physical assault of 11 inmates who were later deprived of meals. [More...](#)

Female inmates in Çorum Prison struggled with overcrowding and poor conditions

Family members of female inmates in central Turkey's Çorum Prison complained of poor conditions and overcrowding. Many inmates were sleeping on the floor or on filthy mattresses brought from the prison basement due to overcrowding. There were also frequent water outages, and some inmates claimed the guards had said the administration was turning off the water. [More...](#)

8. Transnational repression



Turkey's efforts at transnational repression against critics abroad did not wind down in 2024. The Turkish government continued to relentlessly pursue anyone with alleged links with the Gülen movement, a worldwide civic initiative inspired by the ideas of Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen, who passed away in exile in October.

Since a coup attempt in July 2016, Turkey's repression of political dissidents has expanded into a global phenomenon, marked by systematic efforts to silence critics and dissidents overseas. The administration of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has employed a range of coercive tactics, including illegal renditions, spying, diplomatic pressure and the [misuse of international legal mechanisms](#), including INTERPOL.

A key pillar of this strategy is the abduction and forced repatriation of dissidents, particularly those affiliated with the Gülen movement. As of 2024 the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) has orchestrated over 118 renditions since 2016, frequently bypassing legal norms with the cooperation of host governments.

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 probes.

One of the most alarming cases this year involved the [abduction of UN-protected Turkish nationals in Kenya](#), [sparking international condemnation](#) from human rights organizations.

In January Enes Kanter Freedom, an activist and former NBA player, shed further light on Turkey's transnational repression tactics in [testimony](#) before a US congressional subcommittee. He detailed cases of abduction, financial harassment abroad and personal experiences of persecution, including the imprisonment of his father and a \$500,000 bounty on his head.

In February Human Rights Watch published a global [report](#) on transnational repression and said MIT collaborated with authorities in countries with weak rule of law frameworks for the forced return of dissidents.

In April the US State Department published its annual human rights [report](#) on Turkey, which included the Turkish government's transnational repression tactics to suppress its critics living overseas. "The government engaged in a worldwide effort to apprehend suspected members of the Gulen movement," the report said. "There were credible reports the government exerted bilateral pressure on other countries to take adverse action against specific individuals, at times without due process."

In December an article by The Washington Post [detailed](#) how Turkey adopted post-9/11 US counterterrorism tactics to target exiles, particularly members of the Gülen movement.

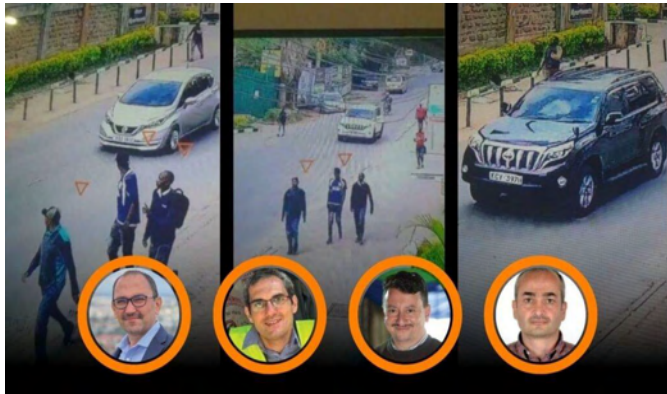
Beyond forced renditions, Turkey has leveraged diplomatic and economic pressure to secure the transfer of Gülen-linked schools to Turkey's state-run Maarif Foundation, facilitating the transfer of schools in [Kyrgyzstan](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) in 2024. Turkey has [seized control of](#) 232 Gülen-affiliated institutions across 21 countries since 2016.

Espionage and surveillance remain central to Ankara's repression tactics. Turkish intelligence operatives have been reported monitoring protests and gatherings in Western countries, including [France](#), [Germany](#) and [the United States](#). Leaked documents [reveal](#) that Turkish embassies continue to serve as intelligence-gathering hubs, tracking activists and journalists critical of Erdoğan's policies.

Below is a roundup of key developments from 2024 concerning Turkey's efforts at transnational repression:

Abduction, rendition and forcible return of Erdoğan critics

Kenya deported UN-protected Turkish refugees linked to Gülen movement



The Kenyan Foreign Ministry confirmed the deportation of four Turks on October 21 after they were [kidnapped](#) by unidentified individuals in Nairobi three days earlier.

They were asylum-seekers registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who were protected from forcible return to Turkey under international law. [More..](#)

UN-protected refugee shared harrowing tale of abduction

Saadet Taşçı, who was kidnapped on October 18 in Nairobi, recounted her harrowing experience in a video message. Taşçı said she and her husband were abducted from the courtyard of a government office where they had gone to get driver's licenses. According to her account, four men in ski masks armed with AK47s forced them into a large black SUV. After driving for about an hour, the kidnappers separated the couple and released her. [More..](#)

UN secretary-general vowed 'active advocacy' for refugees facing refoulement after Turks deported from Kenya

UN Secretary-General António Guterres reaffirmed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) commitment to advocating against the forced return of refugees, in comments concerning Turkish nationals deported by Kenya, guaranteeing "active advocacy." [More..](#)

20 rights groups condemned forced return of UN-protected Turkish nationals

An alliance of 20 human rights, legal advocacy and social justice organizations condemned the Kenyan government after it admitted that it deported four UN-protected Turkish nationals without due process, in a statement published by Amnesty International Kenya. [More..](#)

Kenya's forcible return of UN-protected Turkish refugees followed armed drone sale

Kenya's forcible return to Turkey of four UN-protected refugees came two months after the purchase of TB2 Armed UAVs produced by Baykar Makina, a Turkish company led by President Erdoğan's son-in-law. [More..](#)

Erdoğan's long arm and international reaction against his global witch-hunt **Turkish gov't has seized 232 Gülen-linked schools in 21 countries since coup attempt**

A total of 232 schools run by the faith-based Gülen movement across 21 countries have been taken over by the Turkish government since a coup attempt in July 2016. The schools were transferred to Turkey's state-run Maarif Foundation. [More..](#)

INTERPOL does not name system abusers in order to preserve int'l police cooperation: secretary-general

Jürgen Stock, the secretary-general of INTERPOL, said in a "60 Minutes" [interview](#) on CBS News that while the organization is aware of abuses of its systems, including prominent Red Notice alerts, it chooses not to "name and shame" member countries, which explains the organization's inaction on countries such as Russia, China, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. [More..](#)

Kyrgyzstan transferred management of Gülen-linked Sapat schools to Turkey

The government of Kyrgyzstan transferred the management of the Sapat schools, affiliated with the Gülen movement, to Turkey's state-run Maarif Foundation.

The decision followed years of pressure from Ankara. Established in 1992, the Sapat network of 20 schools, serving over 11,000 students across the country, was recognized as a leading educational institution in Kyrgyzstan. [More..](#)



Turkey's foreign minister urged North Macedonia to join fight against Gülen movement

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan urged North Macedonia's new government to support Ankara's efforts against the Gülen movement during a visit to Skopje. Fidan expressed optimism that the new administration would address Turkey's concerns. The minister did not specify what actions he expected from the government, but his remarks seemed intended to test the new administration's commitment to Turkey's longstanding extradition requests. [More..](#)

Gülen-linked school in Burkina Faso handed over to Turkish Maarif Foundation

Turkey's state-run Maarif Foundation took over schools in Burkina Faso affiliated with the Gülen movement. The Horizon International School complex in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, was opened in 2003 and has been run by Turkish businessmen affiliated with the movement since then. The schools were expropriated by a cabinet decision and were handed over to the foundation. [More..](#)



Former NBA player said NYC mayor withdrew support from him on Turkey's orders

Former NBA player and activist Enes Kanter Freedom said New York City Mayor Eric Adams withdrew his support for him upon orders from the Turkish government due to Freedom's ties to the faith-based Gülen movement. [More..](#)

Belgium convicted Turkish hit team in absentia for foiled assassination attempt

A Belgian court convicted in absentia two members of a Turkish hit team who authorities said were preparing for attacks on Remzi Kartal, co-chair of the People's Congress of Kurdistan (Kongra-Gel), and Zübeyir Aydar, a member of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), in 2017. [More..](#)

Turkish authorities continued to engage in transnational repression, HRW report said

Turkish authorities have continued the practice of organizing the abduction and rendition to Turkey of individuals with alleged links to the Gülen movement, Human Rights Watch said in a February report. [More..](#)

Exiled journalist testified on Turkey's transnational repression at US Congress

Abdülhamit Bilici, the former editor-in-chief of the now-closed Zaman daily, gave testimony on the Turkish government's transnational repression at a congressional [hearing](#) in Washington, D.C. [More..](#)

Spying on dissidents abroad

Turkish intelligence agency MIT conducted covert surveillance at US funeral to identify Erdogan critics



The Turkish intelligence agency covertly conducted surveillance on US soil to identify individuals, including many American citizens, critical of President Erdoğan's government, according to several official communiqués. [More..](#)

Turkish intelligence conducted covert surveillance of dissidents in Strasbourg,

documents revealed

Classified documents revealed that Turkish intelligence conducted covert surveillance of dissidents during a peaceful protest in Strasbourg on October 2, 2024. Operatives from MIT monitored approximately 2,000 protesters outside the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). [More..](#)

Turkey's intel service spied on Gülen followers, PKK supporters in Germany: report

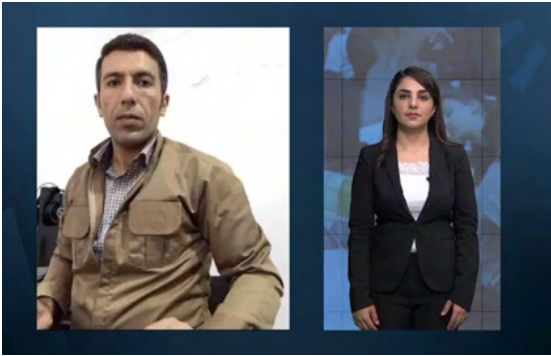
Followers of the faith-based Gülen movement and supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were the primary targets of Turkish intelligence agents in Germany, according to a [report](#) from the German interior ministry. [More..](#)

Deportation of foreign nationals despite risk of mistreatment

Turkish authorities forcibly deported 300 Eritreans despite high risk of human rights violations: UN special rapporteurs

The Turkish government [forcibly deported](#) 300 Eritrean migrants to their home country, where they face the serious risk of human rights violations, according to official documents published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In a joint letter dated October 16, 2024, three UN special rapporteurs asked the Turkish government about the "alleged arbitrary detention and forcible return" of Eritrean migrants and the imminent risk of refoulement (forcible return) of an additional group of approximately 50 Eritreans. [More..](#)



Turkey to deport 2 Kurdish journalists back to Iran, putting their lives at risk

Two Kurdish journalists from Iranian Kurdistan are facing deportation from Turkey to Iran, where they fear for their lives. Rashad Mohammadi and Fehmide Hoseini have been detained in a repatriation center in western Kırklareli province's Pehlivan köy district since allegedly entering Turkey illegally. [More..](#)

Attacks and pressure on critics and journalists living abroad

Turkish Embassy spied on journalists in Sweden, leaked government document revealed



Turkish intelligence services, operating from the embassy in Stockholm, spied on journalists in Sweden, monitoring their activities and relaying information back to headquarters in Ankara, based on an internal government communiqué obtained by Nordic Monitor. [More..](#)

Exiled Turkish journalist harassed by Turkish Embassy, security officials at Johannesburg event

A Turkish journalist who is currently living in exile in South Africa was subjected to harassment and physical intervention by the Turkish Embassy and security officials while he was covering an event on Palestine in the South African city of Johannesburg on May 10. [More..](#)

9. Women's rights



The increase in the number of violations of women's rights in Turkey continued in 2024, with a rising number of femicide cases, bans on events organized by rights groups and detentions of women protesting gender-based violence.

Turkey experienced harrowing incidents of femicide in 2024, including the shocking circulation on social media of graphic images showing a young woman being murdered and dismembered in broad daylight.

Despite these brutal incidents of femicide, the ruling Justice and Development Party, along with their conservative allies, such as the New Welfare Party (YRP) and the Free Cause Party (HÜDA-PAR), have continued to call for the repeal of Law No. 6284, which safeguards families and seeks to prevent violence against women.

While the Turkish government has been willing to consider repealing the law, activists across the country expressed outrage, saying it was the only legal measure against gender-based violence.

In 2024 femicide and violence against women remained serious problems in Turkey, where women are killed, raped or beaten every day. Many critics say the main reason for the situation has been the policies of the Turkish government,

which protects violent and abusive men by affording them impunity. According to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP), at least 394 women were murdered by men last 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.

Women’s struggles in Turkey are not limited to violence; reports from 2024 reveal they also faced systemic inequity and discrimination in every aspect of life.

Here is some of the most important news from 2024 in the field of women’s rights:

Top court rejects application challenging Turkey’s withdrawal from int’l women’s treaty

Turkey’s Constitutional Court dismissed a case challenging the country’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, an international treaty to protect women’s rights and prevent domestic violence.

On March 20, 2021 President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan issued a decree pulling Turkey out of the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention. The application to the court, submitted by lawyer Oya Aydın Göktaş on behalf of Şenal Sarıhan and the 29th October Women’s Association, contested the presidential decree, arguing that it violated several constitutional rights, including the right to respect for private and family life, to a fair trial, to effective legal remedies and to the principle of equality.

[More...](#)



Number of femicides in Turkey soared to 394 in 2024: rights groups

According to the We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP), the number of women who fell victim to domestic violence rose sharply in Turkey in 2024, when a record number of at least 394 women were killed by men. [More...](#)

Over 1.4 million women in Turkey have reported domestic violence since 2013

More than 1.4 million women in Turkey reported being subjected to domestic violence between January 2013 and July 2024, according to data from the Family and Social Services Ministry.

An average of 10,343 women per month of the total 1,437,688 women reported experiencing domestic violence to the ministry's Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM) over the past 10-and-a-half years. [More...](#)

46 women sought protection from platform against violence in January

The We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) revealed that 46 women asked for their help in January, claiming they were victims of domestic violence. [More...](#)

Women at all educational levels earn less than men: TurkStat

Women at all levels of education in Turkey have lower wages than their male counterparts, with the pay gap being the largest among university graduates. The gap was 12.4 percent among people with an elementary school education or less; 12.8 percent among people with a secondary education; 16 percent among high school graduates; and 17.1 percent among people with advanced degrees. [More...](#)

Turkish MP submits parliamentary inquiry over allegations that 12 women became pregnant from rape while in custody

A Turkish MP submitted a parliamentary inquiry regarding allegations that 12 women accused of membership in the Gülen movement became pregnant as a result of rape while in custody.

Meral Daniş Beştas, a member of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), addressed the inquiry to Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç, seeking clarification on findings that also highlight the abuse and torture of detainees. [More...](#)

Turkish women call for end to gender-based violence and discrimination on International Women's Day

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Turkish women's rights activists called for an end to discrimination and gender-based violence, which is worryingly common in the country.

Women's rights activist Dilara Kurtuluş said the increasing number of gender-based violence cases was a direct result of government policies.

In March 2021 President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan withdrew Turkey from the Istanbul Convention, which requires member states to adopt domestic legislation and strictly punish domestic abuse and gender-based violence. [More...](#)

Women rights activists criticize low number of female candidates in upcoming elections

Women's rights activists criticized the low number of female political candidates in Turkey's upcoming local elections, saying it reflects the gender divide in the country.

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) had four female candidates, while the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) had eight. Only the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) put forward an equal number of female candidates. [More...](#)

Prosecutor demands imprisonment for activists taking part in women's rights march

A Turkish prosecutor demanded prison sentences of up to one year for 35 people who were detained in 2020 for participating in a women's rights march. The defendants were accused of attending an unauthorized demonstration and not dispersing despite police warnings, according to the report. [More...](#)

Opposition MP raises alarm over alleged mistreatment of female detainees



Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, a member of parliament from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party) and a human rights advocate, raised concerns over allegations of mistreatment involving several women detained in Malatya.

The women were accused of participating in a chat room on X, organized by the faith-based Gülen movement and communicating through this platform. Out of nine detainees brought before the court, seven were arrested. [More...](#)

New judicial reform bill again requires women to take husband's surname

Turkey's legal provision allowing women to use their maiden name only in conjunction with their husband's surname, previously annulled by the Constitutional Court, was reinstated in a new judicial reform bill unveiled by the ruling party, which cited "family unity" as the rationale. [More...](#)

Age-based discrimination more likely to affect women, says report

A report by a Turkish women's rights organization revealed that ageism and age-based discrimination in the labor force disproportionately affects women. The Women Workers Solidarity Association (Kadın İşçi Dayanışma Derneği) carried out

a study on 24 women above the age of 50 which concluded that women were more likely to experience discrimination based on their age.

While older men were regarded as “experienced,” women around the same age were regarded as “old” and incapable of doing the job. [More...](#)

Following the murder of 2 young women, Turkish social media calls attention to victims of femicide

Following the brutal murder of two young women, Turkish social media became a platform for sharing the stories of women who fell victim to femicide, highlighting their repeated pleas for protection from authorities. Social media users took to X to share stories of numerous women who repeatedly sought help and protection but were failed by the police and the judiciary.

According to women’s rights activists and academics, femicide in Turkey is a political issue since existing policies and regulations are insufficient to ensure women’s safety, and perpetrators are often afforded impunity with lenient sentencing. [More...](#)



Turkish activists demand end to impunity for crimes against women after brutal murders

Turkish women’s rights organizations held demonstrations in İstanbul and several other cities in the wake of the brutal murder of two young women by a 19-year-old man, demanding more effective and stronger measures for better protection of women and an end to impunity for the perpetrators of violence against them. [More...](#)

Critics blame widespread impunity for surge in violence against women in Turkey

Despite a rise in violent crimes against women in Turkey, rights groups said that impunity remains widespread, allowing perpetrators to avoid accountability. High-profile cases fueled protests and calls for stronger protections, as activists criticized state policies they claimed are failing to address the issue. [More...](#)

Turkey’s interior minister blames women for femicide

In Turkey, where women are killed, raped or beaten every day, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya in controversial remarks blamed women for contributing to femicide when they do not observe protective measures. Yerlikaya said during a discussion

in parliament that many victims of femicide were partly to blame for their own deaths. He referred to cases where, despite having legal protection orders, women “opened the door” to their killers when they arrived at their home. [More...](#)

Ban on Istanbul demonstration to support women’s right to life without violence sparks outrage amid rising femicide rate

The İstanbul Governor’s Office blocked access to Taksim Square and restricted public transport to prevent access to demonstrations planned for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

The move drew criticism from activists who accused the government of silencing women rather than tackling the issues surrounding violence and femicide.

The governor’s office defended the restrictions, citing concerns over public safety and potential provocations. In a statement officials said the ban was necessary to prevent “verbal and physical provocations” between groups, the potential exploitation of the events by individuals linked to terrorist organizations and risks to public order and safety. [More...](#)

Authorities evict trans women in İstanbul

The governor of İstanbul’s Beyoğlu district ordered the eviction of a group of trans women from their apartments on the grounds that they were “leaning out of their windows.” The evictions were carried out by police and municipal employees, who sealed the apartments off after forcing the trans women out. [More...](#)

Police detain dozens in İstanbul demanding action to end violence against women

Dozens of people were detained by the police while attempting to stage a demonstration in central İstanbul to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. [More...](#)

Women with disabilities in Turkey face alarmingly high rates of abuse: UN

According to a report by the Turkish Association of Women with Disabilities as part of the “Strong Civic Space for Gender Equality” project implemented by UN Women Türkiye, women with disabilities in Turkey confront high rates of abuse as well as systemic barriers in nearly every aspect of life, including access to education and workplace discrimination.

The report noted that violence against women with disabilities is alarmingly widespread, with 35.8 percent of respondents reporting experiences of abuse. Psychological violence was the most common form, affecting nearly 90 percent of the participants. Additionally, 23 percent experienced socioeconomic violence and 13.5 percent reported sexual violence or other harmful practices. [More...](#)