

PERSECUTION IN TURKEY AFTER DECEMBER 2013



THE CORRUPTION CASE

- The Investigations in 2013 revealed the corruption in the Turkish Government. On December 17, 52 people who had a connection with Justice and Development Party (AKP) were detained.
- The detainees included: Suleyman Aslan, the director of Halkbank, Reza Zarrab, Iranian businessman, and several family members of the cabinet ministers.
- The accusations were: bribery, corruption, fraud, money laundering and gold smuggling.

Other people detained:

- **Muammer Guler** who was former governor of Istanbul, and acted as Minister of the Interior at the time while also being a member of the AKP. Muammer Guler's son, **Baris Guler**, received \$100,000 bribe from Zarrab.
- **Erdogan Bayraktar**, former Minister of Environment and Urban Planning, also a member of the AKP. Erdogan Bayraktar is considered as the “black box” of the government. He resigned from his job when his son was detained due to the corruption accusations.
- **Zafer Caglayan**, former Minister of Economy, was implicated in the corruption case as well.



FIRST WAVE

The police confiscated around **US\$ 17.5 million** as money used in bribery during the investigation: **US\$4.5 million** was found at **Suleyman Aslan's residence** and **US\$750,000** at **Baris Guler's**.

Prosecutors accused 14 people including Baris Guler, Kaan Caglayan, Suleyman Aslan and Reza Zarrab of bribery, corruption, fraud, money laundering and smuggling gold. On 21 December, the court ordered the arrest of these 14 people. In total, 91 people were detained in the investigation. 26 of them were arrested by the court.

SECOND WAVE

Several newspapers reported that a new investigation was expected on 26 December, possibly involving then-Prime Minister (now **President of Turkey**) Erdoğan's sons, **Bilal** and **Burak Erdoğan**. The police officers in Istanbul Security Directorate, newly appointed by the government just a few days prior to the date, refused to carry out their orders, and the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions did not approve this new operation. The man behind this second investigation, Prosecutor **Muammer Akkaş**, was dismissed on the same day. Akkaş said he was prevented from performing his duty.

A second wave of arrests was planned, and a list was **leaked** to the press. At the midnight hour on 7 January, a government decree was published which removed 350 police officers from their positions, including the chiefs of the units dealing with financial crimes, smuggling, and organized crimes. Mr. **Fethullah Gülen** described the decree as a purge of civil servants, while then-Prime Minister Erdoğan (now President of Turkey) described the corruption investigation as a "judicial coup" by those jealous of his success. He first and foremost blamed the Gulen Movement. That way Erdogan's scapegoat was ready.

REZA ZARRAB

- Reza Zarrab was detained for violating US sanctions against Iran.
- Hakan Atilla, Zarrab and the other seven defendants were charged with participating in a billion-dollar scheme to smuggle gold for oil in violation of the Iran sanctions.
- The charges included false documentation and bribing the highest level of Turkish authorities.
- He pleaded guilty and cooperated with the US authorities.
- In 2013, the scheme was uncovered by the Turkish Police and Zarrab along with other participants were arrested. However, the Turkish officials organized a purge of the police and prosecutors covering the case; they shut down the investigation as well as releasing Zarrab and the others.



Bilal Erdogan, son of Turkish President, is under investigation in Italy for **money laundering**. The Bologna public prosecutor has opened a file on Bilal as he brought large amounts of money to Italy to be recycled. The investigation continues and the claim is that money could be related to the massive political corruption in Turkey.

The video and audio recording leakages on Youtube clearly show how President Erdogan told his son, Bilal, to urgently get rid of tens of millions of dollars.



- After the coup attempt on **July 15, 2016**, the **President Erdogan declared Hizmet, a civil society movement, as a terrorist organization.**
- The government has undertaken a witch-hunt towards Hizmet supporters and shut down its organizations including schools and media outlets.
- The massive crackdown seems to get even more devastating by time.

151,967

dismissed*

132,668

detained

64,358

arrested

3,003

schools, dormitories and universities shut down

5,822

academics lost jobs****

4,463

judges, prosecutors dismissed**

189

media outlets shut down

319

journalists arrested***

since July 15, 2016

as of February 5, 2018

PERSECUTION OF THE MILITARY

- 10,102 military soldiers were arrested including 178 commanders.
- Most soldiers were unaware of the coup and only followed the orders.
- The soldiers were attacked by the crowd, tortured, hung and killed.



- The soldiers are **mistreated, tortured, abused and raped in Turkish prisons.**
- BBC reported many injuries and incidences of torture with evidence. The soldiers were beaten, their head was banged against the wall.
- The detainees have wounds, severe injuries, and burns. They have been **sexually abused.**
- They have broken ribs, noses and their wrists were cut because of the handcuffs and some have fractures around their skull.
- **Human rights group Amnesty International reported serious beatings, torture, and rape.**
- When the injured soldiers were taken to hospitals, the police pressured doctors to not record anything.



THE TRAGEDY OF A YOUNG SOLDIER

A portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a green military uniform with a red and white circular emblem on the left chest. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures.

Murat Tekin was a 21-year-old Air Force Academy student. He was lynched and violently killed on the Bosphorus Bridge in the morning after the coup. He was choked and his throat was cut. According to the reports, the generals and commanders ordered soldiers to shoot at the crowd claiming there was a suicide bomber. Even though Murat Tekin dropped his weapon, he was brutally slaughtered by the crowd.

He had a horrific death; he had been smashed with sharp objects and iron sticks. His dead body was unrecognizable and his father was able to identify him by his nail.

Şevkiye Tekin: 'We recognized him from his nail'.

PERSECUTION OF TEACHERS AND ACADEMICS

Purge in the Education sector:

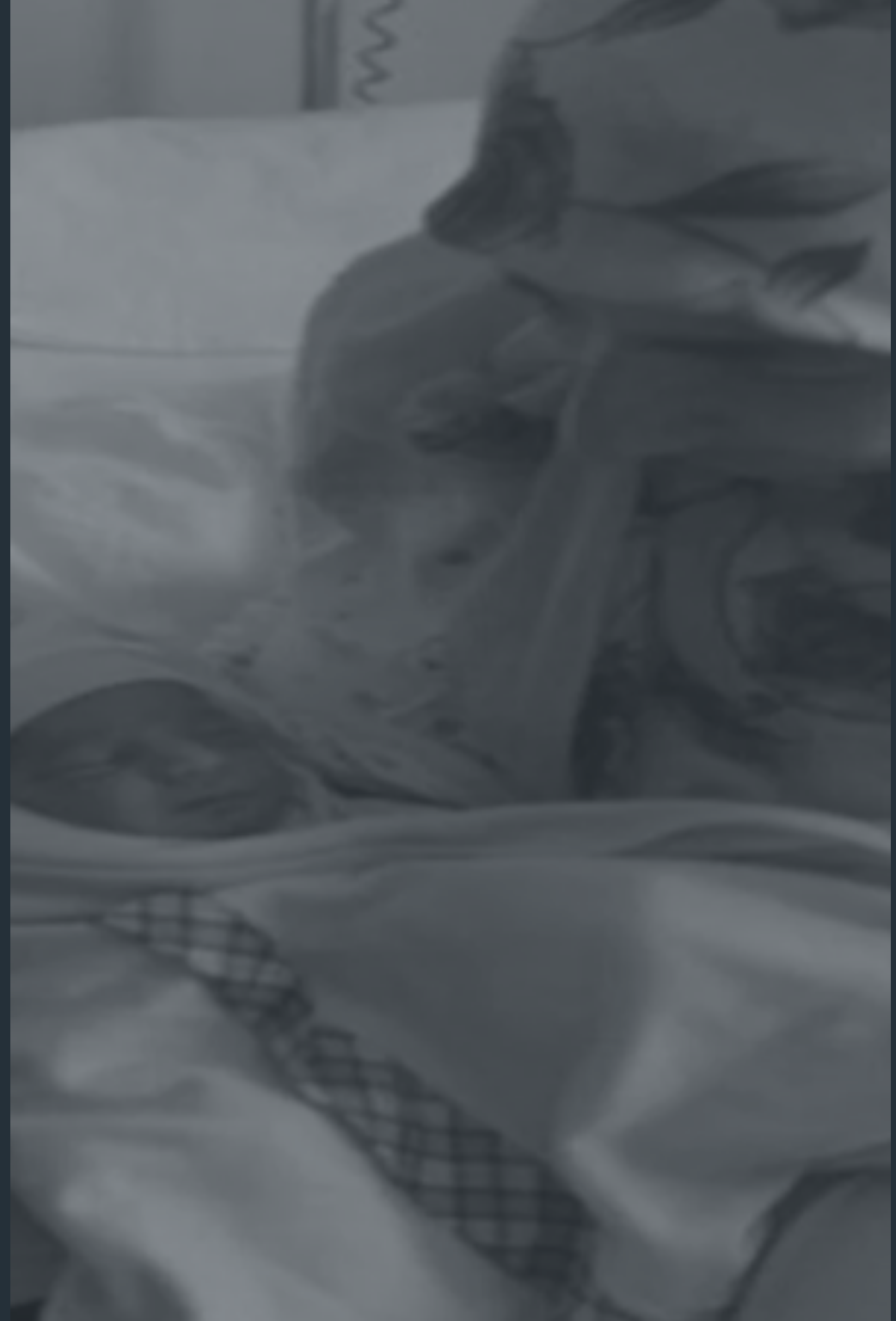
- 33,965 teachers,
- 5,740 academic personnel,
- 1,300 administrative staff at educational facilities were dismissed by the government with 28 decree laws under the rule of emergency declared in the aftermath of a controversial coup attempt on July 15, 2016.

- Licenses of **21,000** teachers in the private sector were canceled. Now they struggle with finding a job, and are excluded from the society.
- **626** education facilities (dormitories, college prep schools) were shut down.
- **1,043** private schools and **15** universities were shut down.



In Izmir, Fadime Danisman, mother of three, was arrested with her 8-month-old baby because the police could not locate her husband who was a teacher.

Another teacher, Fatma Ozturk was detained just after she delivered her baby. She was handcuffed to the hospital bed while she and her baby's conditions were serious.



Gokhan Acikkollu was a 42-year-old history teacher at a public high school in Istanbul. He had diabetes and died after being in custody for 13 days. He was accused and arrested for having ties to the Gulen Movement. He was mistreated and tortured by the police. After he passed away, his body was buried in a cemetery in Konya; the father was not allowed to bury his son in Istanbul and could only bury him in the Traitors cemetery. During Acikkollu's funeral, the imam refused to lead the ceremony.





Nuriye Gulmen and Semih Ozakca revolted and have been on **hunger strike for eleven months**. They were academics in a state university and were fired during the government purge.

PERSECUTION OF THE MEDIA AND JOURNALISM

- 16 television channel, 23 radio stations, 45 newspapers, 15 magazines and 29 publishing houses were closed.
- 245 journalists are in prison.
- They are sentenced to extremely long periods.
- Altan brothers and Nazli Ilıcak are amongst the imprisoned journalists.
- ZAMAN, the most circulated newspaper in Turkey, was closed on July 27, 2016.





Aysenur Parildak was a newspaper reporter and was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months in prison for having worked for Zaman newspaper and having ties with Gulen. While in Silivri prison, Parildak wrote a letter about the solitary confinement and sexual harassment. She was released in May but was re-arrested.

"I was subjected to violence and sexual abuse. I was interrogated day and night for eight days. They [police officers] were questioning me while they were under the influence of alcohol and were not avoiding saying this. Then the court process began, and here I am. I stayed here in a ward for one month. Then 20 people were taken out of wards and placed in cells, which is solitary confinement. ... I am afraid of being forgotten here."

JUDICIARY

- 3000 judiciary workers were suspended.
- Out of 4088 dismissed prosecutors and judges, 2000 are detained.
- 350 lawyers have been detained and 867 prosecutors have been prosecuted.



HEALTH SECTOR

- According to a report by Stockholm Center for Freedom, more than 21,000 doctors and healthcare have lost their jobs since July 15.
- The healthcare professionals can not find any jobs in the private sector as they as terrorists.
- There have also been cases of arrests.
- 50 hospitals and clinics were closed.
- Dr. Murat Acar was arrested due to the accusations of having affiliations with Gulen. Moreover, he was subjected to torture and ill-treatment; he also suffers from hypertension. He denied the accusations and sought protection from the United Nations.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Unfortunately, women and children are the most vulnerable victims. “Nonetheless, since July 15, women have been subjected to an upstick of a variety of intimidation strategies, including rape, harassment, and other forms of violence” (Sophia Pandya)

Over 17,000 women are in prison including seniors, sick, pregnant and mothers.

668 babies are in prison.

Children are pure and innocent; they are our future. In Turkey, they are raised in prisons under horrible circumstances.



BBC REPORT: WOMEN WITH YOUNGER-THAN 6-MONTHS-OLD BABIES IN JAIL IN TURKEY

The mother and their babies are not given clean water, food, diapers or necessary care items.

Some women are not even allowed to see their children or breastfeed their babies.

The children have no access to outside or fresh air.

Some women have been imprisoned just after the labor despite the doctor's objection.

The prisons are overcrowded and there are not enough beds for mothers or children.



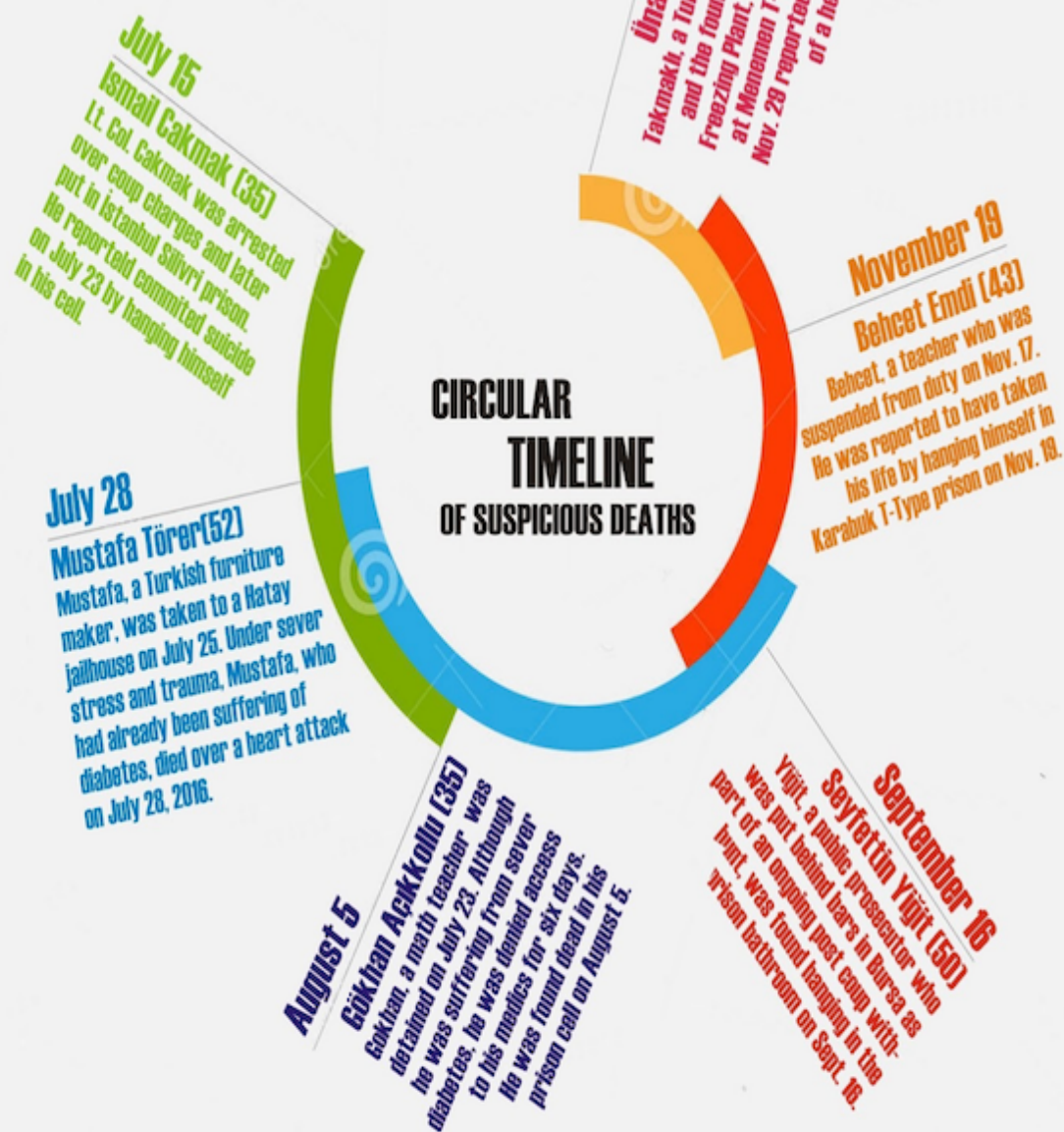
5 children were abandoned in the parking lot of Sincan prison, after their mother was detained while visiting their father. The children were in tears when one of their older brother said **“We are five brothers, left alone. We have a handicapped brother. I commend those people to God’s punishment.”**

This inhumane act raised a lot of attention. “Leaving children alone in such a situation is against the Convention on the Rights of the Child and all related laws. We will follow this issue,” said Mahmut Tanal, a deputy from the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and a member of the Human Rights Commission in the Turkish Parliament.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBsbNDWuZZM#action=share>

THE VICTIMS BEHIND BARS

- Amongst the detainees are thousands of **civil servants, health personnel, judges, writers, journalists, teachers** and **academics**.
- The detainees are arrested despite the lack of evidence and often can not hire lawyers to defend themselves.
- They are found guilty for having ties with Hizmet.
- They are under unpleasant conditions. The cells are overcrowded, there are not enough beds and food.
- Turkish prisons have released criminals like murderers, rapists, kidnappers in order to have more capacity for the Hizmet supporters.



AT LEAST **28**

INDIVIDUALS, AMONG WHICH ARE
POLICE OFFICERS PROSECUTORS, TEACHERS
HAVE BEEN FOUND DEAD
IN TURKISH PRISONS
SINCE A FAILED COUP ATTEMPT ON JULY 15.

Sevcan Yaman - pro-Kurdish DBP member - July 18

Hasan Hayri Alp - leftist activist - July 19

Mutlu Çil - police officer - July 20

Levent Önder - lieutenant colonel - July 22

İsmail Çakmak - lieutenant colonel - July 23

Mustafa Törer - businessman - July 28

Vedat Savlu - businessman - August 2

Gökhan Açikkollu - math teacher - August 5

Ahmet Besli - police chief - August 10

Ömer Çubuklu - prison guard - September 1

Mustafa Güneyler - teacher - September 2

Bedi Kurucan - civilian - September 8

Seyfettin Yigit - prosecutor - September 16

Cigehun Akdeniz - civilian - September 28

Seyit Rıza Saban - civilian - September 28

Önder İrmak - noncommissioned officer - October 10

Dursun Kaynar - civilian - October 13

Mehmet Ali İnal - civilian - October 20

İrfan Kızıllarslan - gendarmerie commander - November 5

Zehra Epil - civilian - November 7

Burak Açıkalin - engineer - November 8

Muharrem Bahçıvan - civilian - November 11

Mehmet Emin Doğan - civilian - November 18

Behcet Emdil - teacher - November 19

Ünal Takmaklı - businessman - November 28

Beytullah Akil - Kurdish civilian - December 11

Hakan Ekin - civilian - December 23

Mehmet İnam - dentist - January 5

ABDUCTIONS BY THE PRESIDENT'S ORDER

Upon Erdogan's request, countries including Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Georgia, Pakistan, Indonesia and Myanmar have handed Turkish citizens that have affiliations with Gulen. There have been many incidents of abduction and no traces are to be found from the victims. Families are seeking help from the United Nations.





Mesut Kacmaz, his wife and two daughters were restrained, blindfolded and hustled into unmarked pickup trucks in Lahore on September 27 by more than a dozen plainclothes security agents, according to Fatih Avcı, a neighbor and fellow teacher. When he tried to intervene, Avcı said, he was also handcuffed and hooded, and transported to a secret facility. The family lived in Pakistan for over a year with the UNHCR asylum certificate. 17 days later they were blindfolded and boarded on an unmarked flight from Islamabad for Istanbul in the morning on October 14, 2017.

Enver Kilic and Zabit Kisi were abducted from the plane while flying from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan and were returned to Turkey by force.



ESCAPING FROM ERDOGAN'S REGIME

People have tried to escape and migrate to democratic countries, however, it is not easy and often they end up in tragedy. Maden family drowned in Aegean sea as they were trying to flee from the oppressive regime of Turkey to Greece. The family had three children and their bodies were found by the Greek authorities.

Another Turkish family of five have fled to Greece in an inflatable boat to escape from Erdogan's regime. Tahsin, father, had told his little daughter that the journey was a game and if they completed it, they would receive a prize. Fortunately, the family passed through the long and challenging journey.





- Around 300 families and 2000 individuals have fled to Greece.
- Families try to flee illegally to Greece as Turkish government had cancelled their passports.
- The journey is not easy and often results in tragedy.
- 198 people were detained in Mugla as they were trying to flee from Turkey to Greece
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzWfxKe95_4

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We, the Advocates, have made it our mission to champion the rights of Silenced Turkey until universal human rights and democratic governance are established and sustained as the utmost priorities of the Turkish Republic.

We urge you to take action to support the victims in Turkey and abroad.

You can help by:

- 1) Personally providing donations to these individuals,
- 2) Donating through human rights organizations like Embrace Relief or Advocates of Silenced Turkey, who focuses on these Turkish nationals,
- 3) Helping them attain legal help and cover legal fees for their asylum applications, with their education fees,
- 4) Sending support letters regarding the persecution of these Gulen sympathizers to relevant bodies such as the State Department, embassies and the European Court of Human Rights,
- 5) Creating awareness using social media and encourage other human rights and humanitarian aid organizations to create campaigns on behalf of these individuals.

Given their circumstance, we hope that you can help these people through your support. Every bit of help will aggregate to make a big difference.

SUPPORT THE VICTIMS IN TURKEY

CONTACT US

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DONATE ONLINE

silencedturkey.org

[gofundme.com/](https://gofundme.com/advocatesofsilencedturkey)

advocatesofsilencedturkey

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