

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

News Flash

AI Index: EUR 44/001/2007 (Public)
News Service No: 012
19 January 2007

Turkey: Turkish-Armenian journalist murdered

Amnesty International deplores the murder today of the prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. The organization believes that he was targeted because of his work as a journalist who championed freedom of expression.

Hrant Dink, editor of the newspaper *Agos* and contributor to the influential daily *Zaman*, was reportedly shot three times today in Istanbul outside the *Agos* offices. Hrant Dink, 53, was a passionate promoter of the universality of human rights who appeared on different platforms with human rights activists, journalists and intellectuals across the political spectrum. Best known for his willingness to debate openly and critically issues of Armenian identity and official versions of history in Turkey relating to the massacres of Armenians in 1915, Hrant Dink also wrote widely on issues of democratization and human rights.

"In Turkey there are still a number of harsh laws which endorse the suppression of freedom of speech. These laws, coupled with the persisting official statements by senior government, state and military officials condemning critical debate and dissenting opinion, create an atmosphere in which violent attacks can take place," said Nicola Duckworth, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International.

Last year, Hrant Dink was prosecuted for the third time on charges of "denigrating Turkishness" under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Amnesty International called for the repeal of that law and condemned his prosecution as part of a pattern of judicial harassment against him for peacefully expressing his dissenting opinion. Hrant Dink had already been given a six-month suspended prison sentence in July 2006 following an October 2005 conviction on charges of "denigrating Turkishness".

Amnesty International calls on the Turkish authorities to condemn all forms of intolerance, to uphold the rights of all citizens of the Turkish Republic and to investigate the murder of Hrant Dink thoroughly and impartially, to make the findings of the investigation public and to bring suspected perpetrators to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards.

For further information about Amnesty International's concerns regarding Article 301 please see *Turkey: Article 301: How the law on "denigrating Turkishness" is an insult to free expression* (AI Index: EUR 44/003/2006).

Public Document

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