



**Arbeitsgruppe Anerkennung –
gegen Genozid, für Völkerverständigung e.V.
(AGA)**

Berlin, 5 September 2010

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Turkey

Sadullah Ergin

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- Detention of Mr Doğan Akhanlı

Dear Mr Ergin,

On 10 August 2010 Mr Doğan (Erdoğan) Akhanlı, a German national from Cologne, was arrested at an Istanbul airport, from where Mr Akhanlı intended to travel to his sick father of advanced age.

According to information given by his Istanbul based lawyer, Mr Haydar Erol he is detained in a prison of the Tekirdağ province since 20 August 2010. Three applications for the release of Mr Akhanlı so far failed despite the fact that lawyer Erol proved the accusation of homicide and robbery, in which Mr Akhanlı was allegedly involved in 1989 as unfounded. There is no convincing evidence that Mr. Akhanli was ever involved in his alleged crimes.

This causes our human rights organization to fear that the arrest and the opening of proceedings in fact represent a kind of revenge for the human rights and literary activities of Mr Akhanli. Both in his country of origin (Turkey) and in his country of residence (Germany) Mr Akhanli has gained high appreciation for his human rights advocacy and for his novels, which are dedicated to the phenomena of state violence and crimes against humanity in the 20th century. Since a special focus of his literary work is on the genocides of the First and Second World War – including the genocide against the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire – this commitment brings Mr Akhanli into conflict with the official and mainstream interpretation of late Ottoman history in Turkey of today. However, arrest, detention and unfounded criminal procedures in no way can be acknowledged or tolerated as indirect or direct means to solve conflicting interpretations of history. On the contrary, such an approach must cause significant damage to the international reputation of a country that allows the misuse of the judiciary. In particular, the case against Mr Akhanlı will be understood as a setback for Turkey's admission to the EU.



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We therefore kindly request you to use your authority and competence for the immediate release of Mr Akhanlı from detention. In this context we would like to remind you that Mr Akhanli was already traumatized by previous experience of imprisonment and torture. Each additional day in prison is an unnecessary and therefore cruel and degrading "punishment" for his convictions. However, a prosecution of conviction and belief is incompatible with international human rights standards and the principles of a state of law.

Let us please conclude with the remark that Mr Akhanli's literary and human rights commitment includes cross community projects, which have a highly welcome and reconciliatory effect on the multicultural and multiethnic society of Germany. His approach has achieved considerable effects of rapprochement and reconciliation among the Turkish and Armenian communities of Germany, in particular in Cologne.

We therefore hope to welcome our colleague Mr Akhanlı back to Germany as soon as possible and look forward to your reply and information,

Sincerely, yours

Dr. Tessa Savvidis
(Chairperson)