



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

POLITICALLY PERSECUTED, BECAUSE HE SPOKE AND WROTE THE TRUTH: DOĞAN AKHANLI (b. 1957)

On 10 August 2010 the writer and human rights defender Doğan Akhanlı from Cologne was arrested at an Istanbul airport in the attempt of entry to Turkey; this trip was intended to D. Akhanlı's sick father. According to Akhanlı's lawyer Haydar Erol he has been detained in a isolation prison in the Tekirdağ province since 20 August 2010 on the pretext of alleged involvement in a 1989 robbery at an exchange office in Istanbul. "This accusation was based on witness statements, one of which had been made under torture," said Erol. The supposed second witness - the son of the victim - later denied having ever identified Akhanlı in a photograph. "This scenario was produced by the police," said lawyer Erol, in order to try a late accounting with the political left. Despite the evidence provided by lawyer Erol at the two habeas corpus dates, a prosecutor requested an indictment against Doğan Akhanlı for robbery and homicide. Three prison complaints have so far failed.

On 6 September 2010 the 11th Criminal division of Istanbul's Criminal Court accepted the indictment by the Public Prosecutor Hüseyin Ayar, whereby Doğan Akhanlı is not not only blamed for the attack on the exchange office. Furthermore he is declared the leader of the then criminal gang and the head of a plot to overthrow the constitutional order of Turkey.

[Further information on the legal background:](#)

[Lawyer İlias Uyar, Cologne](#)
[Mobile 0177.8440.745](#)

[Lawyer Haydar Erol, Istanbul](#)
[Mobile: 0090.532.263.7735](#)

It is supposed, that the arrest of D. Akhanlı and the criminal court proceedings against him were brought in direct relation to the author's commitment for the recognition of the still officially in Turkey denied genocide against the Ottoman Christians. This view is shared by the known German writer Guenther Wallraff (Cologne): "Certain sections of the Turkish judiciary try to take revenge on an incommodious author, who has addressed the genocide against the Armenians for years." The Jewish novelist Edgar Hilsenrath, who has been friends for years with Doğan Akhanlı and represents his literary model, said after a meeting with the Deputy Turkish ambassador on 27 August 2010, he, Mr. Hilsenrath assumes, that in fact D. Akhanlı's literary activity is the underlying cause of his arrest. He asked the Ambassador to investigate the clear references to the non-law approach in this case and called for the immediate release of his friend Doğan Akhanlı. E. Hilsenrath is the author of the novel "The Tale of the Last Thought" (1989) about the genocide of the Armenians.

With the human rights NGO *Working group Recognition - Against Genocide, for International Understanding* Doğan Akhanlı maintains close contact since the spring of 2000,



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when AGA introduced a petition into the German Bundestag, demanding the legislative recognition of the genocide against the Armenians, Arameans/Assyrians and Greeks of Asia Minor. Doğan Akhanlı was among the first signatories of this petition. In subsequent years his public readings, cross-cultural study tours and participation in panel discussions significantly contributed to the enhancement of a critical view on history among the Turkish Diaspora in Germany.

For current and continuously updated information, visit the website of the Kulturforum TürkeiDeutschland: <http://www.das-kulturforum.de>

Biography and Achievements: Akhanli Dogan was born in 1957 in the north-eastern Turkish town Şavşat and lived after the military coup of 1980 in the underground. 1985-1987 he was imprisoned as a political prisoner in a military prison in Istanbul where he was tortured. He fled to Germany in 1991, has been recognized here as a political refugee and later deprived of Turkish nationality. Since 1992 D. Akhanlı is living as a freelance writer in Cologne; since 2001 he has German citizenship.

In novels, essays, interviews and in his various projects in Germany, D. Akhanlı promoted the open handling of historic violence and the indivisibility of human rights. The focus of his civic commitment are the commemoration the genocides of the 20th Century (including the genocide of the Armenians) and the interculturally oriented dialogue on reconciliation. Among others, D. Akhanlı's projects were sponsored by the Federal Foundation *Remembrance, Responsibility and Future* and awarded by the *Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance*. Dogan Akhanli has been intensively committed for solving the murder of Hrant Dink and points to the reconciliatory significance of this journalist and author.

Dogan Akhanli is actively committed to memory and human rights. He is a volunteer manager at the Nazi Documentation Centre, initiator of Raphael Lemkin Library at the Allerweltshaus (Cologne) as well as an employee of the non-profit organization "Inter-national research". The association is concerned with the educational work on genocidal experiences of violence and the project "The third World in the second World War " (www.3www2.de).

D. Akhanlı processed the experience of his generation with state violence and political persecution in his 1998/99 published in Turkish contemporary trilogy *Kayıp Denizler* (The disappearance of the sea), whose last volume *Kıyamet Günü Yargıçları* (The judges of the Last Judgment) deals with the genocide of the Armenians in 1915 (German translation by Hülya Engin 2007, Klagenfurt). His last novel *Madonna'nın Hayali Son* (The last dream of the Madonna) was published in 2005 in Istanbul. The book is about the Romanian vessel "Struma", which was sunk in 1942 in the Black Sea and ripped 769 Jewish refugees to their death. Akhanli's novels were selected among the most important novels in. In 2009, he received the Literature Prize of the newspaper "Hürriyet". D. Akhanlı also translated and edited the Turkish edition of the 1921 court proceedings against Soghomon Tehliryan, who assassinated the erstwhile Turkish Home Minister and main responsible for the genocide



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against the Armenians (*Talat Paşa Davası*, vol. 1 and 2, Istanbul 2003).

In April 2005 he visited Armenia on the occasion of the 90th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

HOW YOU CAN HELP DOĞAN AKHANLI: Eight steps

1) Write to the *Minister of Justice of the Republic of Turkey* and request the immediate release of the German citizen, author and human rights defender Doğan Akhanlı. The reasons for his detention and prosecution are unfounded and have been refuted by his lawyer as unfounded. The repeated refusal of the release applications suggests that this is a revenge campaign of parts of the Turkish judiciary against a politically inconvenient author that may seriously damage the international reputation of Turkey as a candidate to EU accession. Point also out to the fact that each day in custody causes unnecessary pain for the author, who has already traumatized by earlier imprisonment and torture experiences:

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Turkey, Mr Sadullah Ergin, 06669 Kizilay / Ankara,
Fax 90/312 419 33 70

2) Send copies of your letter to the Turkish Embassy in Berlin and at the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany:

Turkish Embassy in Berlin, Excellency Ahmet Acet, Rungestr. 9, 10179 Berlin, Fax
49/30/27590915, Email: turkemb.berlin@mfa.gov.tr

Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Minister Guido
Westerwelle, 11013 Berlin,
Email: [http://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/service/AllgemeinesKontaktformular.jsp](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Infoservice/service/AllgemeinesKontaktformular.jsp)

3) Mention in your letter to the Turkish Embassy in Berlin your concern for the plight of Mr Doğan Akhanlı and ask for further information.

4) Ask in your letter to the German Foreign Office for active and prompt support efforts to secure the immediate release of the German citizen and human rights activist Doğan Akhanlı! Ask for specific information on the recent steps of the German FO on the release of Mr Akhanlı. Until now, the Foreign Office has not forwarded any sharp protest to the Turkish government in this matter!

5) Sign the online petition on the website of the AGA!

6) Make your friends and acquaintances to support these activities and spread the word!



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7) Send copies of your letters also to the supporting group at the "Recherche International" Association, which coordinates the efforts of D. Akhanlı's release:
recherche international e.V, Merowingerstr. 5-7, D-50677 Köln.
Email: Albrecht.Kieser @ RJB-koeln.de

8) Donate to *Recherche International* e.V. for the coverage of legal fees, making note of the keyword "Doğan Akhanlı": Bank Account No. 23812043 - Stadtparkasse Köln - BLZ 370 501 98!