

Writer and activist Doğan Akhanlı arrested in Turkey [Prosecutor files lawsuit against writer and activist Doğan Akhanlı]

In a time of fierce battle between political parties and in an increasingly politicized atmosphere, we received the news that the widely acclaimed and awarded author and activist Doğan Akhanlı was arrested in Istanbul.

Yesterday prosecutor Hüseyin Ayar announced in an oral statement that he filed a lawsuit against Akhanlı in the 11th division of the criminal court in Istanbul. He explained further that he will sue Akhanlı for armed robbery that led to one person's death. In the meantime, the court denied Akhanlı's third appeal for release.

However, the prosecutor refuses until now to hear the victim's two sons as main witnesses in the case. The two brothers, accompanied by their lawyer, wanted to repeat to the prosecutor what they had testified earlier to the police on 13 August, 2010: When their father's exchange office was robbed in October 1989 Doğan Akhanlı was not present. Furthermore, they do not uphold their previously made statement anymore. According to the brothers' report the police suggested then, in 1992, to accuse Akhanlı without presenting any further proof or even identifying him. Now, wanting to renounce and correct their testimonial, the two main witnesses are not allowed to speak to the prosecutor Ayar. Without any further hearings of the brothers Ayar had already filed the lawsuit. They, therefore, handed a written testimony to their lawyer to include it into the court record.

With the main witnesses' new testimony the prosecution is forced to present further evidence to prove its case. After receiving the lawsuit the court has two weeks to press charges or put an end to this mere farce. If the court decides to press charges, the case will meet substantial international interest – within and without the court room. Already numerous authors, human rights activists, politicians, and organizations demand Akhanlı's immediate release.

Doğan Akhanlı is indeed a critical and often disturbing thinker. Nevertheless, Turkey should not let this important voice of our time being unrightfully criminalized. It should not be tolerated that political interest rather than genuine justice can deprive a person of his or her personal freedom.

We call for the immediate release of Doğan Akhanlı!

You can find the press release no. 1 from 24 August, 2010 and an overview of comments and media reports under

<http://www.das-kulturforum.de/archiv/verhaftung-dogan-akhanli-presseberichte/>

Doğan Akhanlı had been living in the underground after the military coup d'état in 1980. He was captured, imprisoned and tortured in the military prison of Istanbul between 1985-87 and fled to Germany in 1991. After being recognized as political refugee by Germany he was expatriated by Turkey.

Since the mid-1990s he has been living in Cologne as a writer. In his novels, articles, interviews and various projects he has been devoting himself to human rights and an open approach to analyze the use of force in history. The main aspects of his civil rights commitment are the memorial of the genocides of the 20th century (including the massacre on the Armenians) as well as the intercultural dialogue.

Akhanlı's projects were supported by the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" and awarded by the "Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance." His novel *Madonna'nın son hayalı* (Madonna's Last Dream, 2005) was elected as one of the most important Turkish publications. Furthermore, in 2009 he received the literature award of "Hürriyet" – one of the most wide-spread Turkish newspapers. Akhanlı also pledged for the clarification of Hrant Dink's murder and commemorates the journalist's and activist's effort for peace.

Doğan Akhanlı is associated to the "Recherche International e.V." This association dedicates itself to the educational rehabilitation after genocidal experiences. "Recherche International e.V." is also supporter of "The Third World in World War II" (www.3www2.de).

Please help us finance Doğan Akhanlı's defense and donate to the account stated below (Subject: "Doğan Akhanlı").

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Further information on Doğan Akhanlı's work (German):

Kanat Kitap; Akhanlı's Turkish publisher: <http://www.kanatkitap.com/index.php>.

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Do%C4%9Fan_Akhanl%C4%B1

<http://kulturserver.de/-/kulturschaffende/detail/14518>

<http://www.buehnederkulturen.de/pages/de/inszenierungen/487.htm>

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