

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
2011		68	Turkey	<i>Büşra Ersanlı (and others)</i>
	2012			<i>follow-up 3</i>
	2011			<i>follow-up 2</i>
	2011			<i>follow-up 1</i>

Announcement

PEN International has sent a new update today regarding the arrest of Büşra Ersanlı (a professor of constitutional law and a historian at Marmara University in Istanbul), Ragip Zarakolu (a publisher) and others. Professor Ersanlı is charged with “leading an illegal organization.” The prosecutor has demanded between 15 and 22.5 years for her. We hope again that you can send the recommended urgent appeal immediately. Please remember to write in your professional capacity.

NCH SUMMARY

On 28 October 2011, Büşra Ersanlı, a constitutional law expert, political scientist and historian at the political science department of Marmara University, Istanbul, publisher Ragip Zarakolu and dozens of others were arrested. The police spent hours searching her home. She was to attend a conference on “Controversial Issues in the History of the Turkish Republic” at Istanbul Bilgi University on 29 October 2011. The arrest was part of a larger crackdown initiated in 2009 against Kurdish political parties and called “Operation against the Union of Kurdistan Communities (Koma Civaken Kurdistan; KCK).” The KCK was seen as the (illegal) political wing of the outlawed armed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey. Among the organizations the authorities alleged to be linked to the KCK was the pro-Kurdish legal Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi; BDP), although the BDP itself denied any such links (and thirty BDP representatives took their seats in the Turkish parliament on 1 October 2011). At the time of her arrest, Ersanlı was working with the BDP’s Constitutional Commission and she lectured to activists and officials of the BDP’s Politics Academy. On 1 November 2011, Ersanlı was formally charged under the Anti-terror Law (a law criticized for its overbroad definition of terrorism). The author of the book “Peace and History,” Ersanlı wrote extensively

on the history of Turkish historical writing since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. While she and Zarakolu were interrogated in the courthouse, hundreds of people, including many of Ersanlı's students, protested the latest wave of police custody. She was the victim of a slander campaign in some media circles. On 19 March 2012, the prosecutor charged Ersanlı with "leading an illegal organization" and demanded between 15 and 22.5 years for her.

[Sources: Bianet, "Prosecutor Demanded Arrest of Ersanlı and Zarakolu" (1 November 2011); Groupe international de travail "Liberté de recherche et d'enseignement en Turquie", "Une Situation critique pour la liberté de recherche et d'enseignement" (21 November 2011); Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Arrests Expose Flawed Justice System: Academic, Publisher Held in Crackdown on Pro-Kurdish Party" (1 November 2011); *Ifex Communiqué* (2 November 2011); Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2012* (Washington 2012), 504; International PEN, *Rapid Action Network 56/11* (31 October & 1 & 9 November 2011, 23 March 2012); International PEN, International Publishers Association, Index on Censorship, *Contribution to the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, 8th session of the Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review: Submission on Turkey* (9 November 2009), 4-5; International PEN, "For the Sake of Freedom of Expression in Turkey, IPA and PEN International Demand Immediate Release of Publisher Ragıp Zarakolu" (Geneva and London, 15 November 2011); "Urgent Appeal: Stop Arbitrary Detentions in Turkey!" (<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/detentionsinturkey>); V. Ziflioğlu, "Turkish Intellectuals Protest Arrest of Publisher", *Hürriyet: Daily News & Economic Review* (3 November 2011).]

PEN INTERNATIONAL RAPID ACTION NETWORK

23 March 2012

RAN 56/11 Update #4

TURKEY: Professor Büşra Ersanlı and Ragıp Zarakolu, formally indicted; face up to 22.5 years and 15 years imprisonment respectively.

Istanbul's chief prosecutor has ordered the indictment of Büşra Ersanlı and Ragıp Zarakolu this week. PEN International's Writers in Prison Committee protests the charges facing the writers and their continuing detention.

On 19 March 2012, Istanbul Public Prosecutor Adnan Çimen issued an indictment charging Professor Ersanlı with “leading an illegal organisation” and publisher Zarakolu with “aiding and abetting an illegal organization.” The prosecutor has demanded between 15 and 22.5 years for Ersanlı and 7.5 and 15 years for Zarakolu. The 2,400-page indictment was sent to the Istanbul 15th High Criminal Court and includes a total of 193 defendants, 147 of whom are currently under detention.

BACKGROUND:

Professor Büşra Ersanlı and Ragıp Zarakolu, were arrested on 28 October 2011. Forty-one people were also arrested around the same time under what is known as the Democratic Society Congress (Koma Civaken Kurdistan–KCK) operation that has been under way since 2009, leading to several hundred, some say over 1,000, arrests and trials. The KCK is seen as its civil/political wing front for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and thus also illegal.

Ersanlı is an academic based at Istanbul’s Marmara University’s Faculty of Political Science and International Relations. She is an expert on constitutional law and at the time of her arrest was working with the BDP’s Constitutional Commission.

Zarakolu, is a well known publisher and political activist, who has been fighting for freedom of expression and human rights in Turkey for over 30 years. Last month he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 2012 by Swedish Members of Parliament. He is facing trial under the ATL for “membership of an illegal organisation”, for a speech he made to the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and articles he has written.

Deniz Zarakolu, an academic and translator, was also arrested under anti-terror legislation after giving a lecture at the Political Science Academy of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy (BDP) opposition party. He was moved to Metris prison where his father, Ragıp Zarakolu, is currently being held. Several other scholars linked to the Academy have also been arrested under anti-terror legislation, including Ayşe Berktaş. Berktaş, a scholar, author and woman’s activist has been held on pre-trial detention since October 2011 and a formal indictment is yet to be issued.

Professor Büşra Ersanlı, Ragıp Zarakolu and Ayşe Berktaş are honorary members of PEN Turkey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

Hürriyet: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/prosecutor-seeks-jail-time-for-intellectuals-in-turkey.aspx?pageID=238&nID=16414&NewsCatID=338>.

International Publisher's Association blog: <http://freedomforragip.wordpress.com/>.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS:

****Expressing alarm at the continued detention of Ragıp Zarakolu, Professor Büşra Ersanlı, Ayşe Berktaş and Deniz Zarakolu and other writers and journalists detained because of their alleged affiliation with Kurdish political parties.**

****Referring to concerns that the arrests flout international standards protecting the rights to freedom of expression and association as guaranteed by both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the European Convention on Human and Democratic Rights, to which Turkey is a signatory.**

SEND APPEALS TO:

****Mr Sadullah Ergin**

****Minister of Justice**

****06669 Kızılay**

****Ankara**

****Turkey**

****Fax: 00 90 312 419 3370**

****Email: sadullahergin@adalet.gov.tr**

Also to the Turkish ambassador in your country.

****Please contact the Network of Concerned Historians if sending appeals 23 April 2012.****