

Network of Concerned Historians					NCH
Campaigns					
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names	
2007		48	Turkey	Hrant Dink, writer	

Announcement

International PEN issued a statement after the appalling murder yesterday of Armenian-Turkish writer Hrant Dink. Below it is reproduced and preceded by a NCH summary of Dink's case.

In addition, NCH wants to draw your attention to the fact that, sadly, historians and others concerned with the past are sometimes assassinated. Some recent examples from Iraq, Sudan, and Colombia:

**Last week, NCH circular #47 contained details about five historians assassinated in Iraq. Please sign the petition to protest this violence at the homepage of the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), London: <http://www.academic-refugees.org>.

**On 6 September 2006, Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed ([1956]-2006) was kidnapped and beheaded by masked gunmen near the capital Khartoum, Sudan. For details, see the NCH Annual Report 2006 (NCH #45).

**On 21 March 2006, Jaime Enrique Gómez Velásquez ([1950]-2006) disappeared in Bogotá, Colombia. He was assassinated. On 23 April 2006, his mutilated remains were discovered. For details, see the NCH Annual Report 2006 (NCH #45).

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NCH SUMMARY OF THE HRANT DINK CASE

On 7 October 2005, journalist **Hrant Dink** ([1955]-2007), editor-in-chief of the Turkish-Armenian weekly *Agos* (Ploughed Furrow; established 1996), Istanbul, was given a six-month suspended sentence for "insulting and weakening Turkish identity through the media". In February 2004, Dink had written a series of articles dealing with the collective memory of the Armenian genocide and its impact on the present-day Armenian diaspora. He called on Armenians to overcome their historical enmity toward Turks. In April 2004, he had declared at an international panel discussion that Turkey was preparing new curricula and textbooks in which

the Armenian genocide thesis was rejected and that the Ministry of National Education had sent to all schools, including Armenian ones, a circular demanding that schools organize conferences and composition competitions dealing with the struggle against “unfounded Armenian genocide claims”. On 1 May 2006, Dink’s appeal was overturned and a new trial ordered. The rejection of the appeal led to hundreds of people signing a petition in his defence. In July 2006, the Supreme Court upheld the six-month suspended prison sentence. Dink reportedly submitted his case to the European Court on Human Rights. Meanwhile, in December 2005 charges of “attempting to influence the judiciary” were opened against Dink, **Serkis Seropyan**, co-editor of *Agos*, and **Aydin Engin**, journalist and author, for an article challenging Dink’s October conviction. The trial was postponed several times, the last time until April 2007. In September 2006, a third case was initiated against Dink on charges of “insulting Turkish identity” for an interview to *Reuters* on 14 July 2006 in which he had declared that the Armenian genocide had taken place and that he would not remain silent on this issue. This trial was scheduled for March 2007. Some of the hearings of the three trials were marred by violent scenes inside and outside the courtrooms, instigated by nationalist activists calling for Dink to be punished. On 19 January 2007, Hrant Dink was murdered.

[Messages from International PEN about Dink (and other Turkish writers): “Statement on the Trial of Orhan Pamuk” (16 December 2005); *Rapid Action Network, 06/06* (9 February 2006) and *17/06* (3 May 2006); *Defamation and “Insult”: Writers React* (15 November 2006); “Turkey Defamation Campaign: Hrant Dink” (15 November 2006); “Statement on the Murder of Hrant Dink in Turkey (19 January 2007). Other sources include Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2007* (Washington 2007), 426; *Ifex Communiqué 14-47* (22 November 2005); Index on Censorship, 4/05: 145; 1/06: 122; 2/06: 196; 3/06: 82; 4/06: 200; “When history hurts: Times are tough for outspoken scholars”, *Economist*, 4 August 2005. See also NCH Annual Report 2006 (NCH #45).]

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PEN STATEMENT ON THE MURDER OF HRANT DINK IN TURKEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The murder today, 19 January 2007, of Armenian-Turkish writer and editor Hrant Dink, the courageous and principled advocate for dialogue and understanding between the Armenian minority and the Turks, is an appalling act. Hrant Dink's fellow writers worldwide express their profound shock at this terrible loss.

Dink, whose campaign against the law making it a crime to insult the Turkish State, particularly as it relates to the killings of Armenians in the early years of the last century, has paid the highest price with his own life.

Jiri Grusa, International President of International PEN, the world association of writers, called the murder "a symptom of old hatreds that threaten the relationship of all Turkish people to the democratic values shared in Europe and the world." International PEN calls upon the Turkish government to do all in its power to apprehend Dink's killer and welcomes Prime Minister Erdogan's pledged commitment that those who ordered the killing be brought to justice.

Hrant Dink was well known to PEN members throughout the world and had received many awards for his courage, including, most recently, the Oxfam/Novib award for Freedom of Expression in November 2006. He was an honorary member of the English, American, Belgian Dutch and Norwegian PEN Centres, and friend to many more PEN Centres and individual PEN members around the globe. International PEN sends its condolences to Hrant Dink's wife and children.