Statement by Ola Wallin at IFRRO AGM, Istanbul, Turkey

Wednesday 30 October 2013

My name is Ola Wallin. I am speaking to you as the chair of the IPA Freedom to Publish Committee, but I am also speaking on behalf of many authors and publishers and their organisations.

I would like to draw your attention to the situation of freedom of expression and freedom to publish in Turkey today. Writers, journalists, translators and publishers working in Turkey are threatened by scores of laws and regulations, specifically the country’s Anti-Terror Laws and Penal Code articles that pretend to defend the nation’s dignity, and pretend to combat racial hatred, obscenity and defamation.

As a result of the mis-use of these laws, many journalists, writers, translators and publishers are currently in jail or facing prosecution. I would like to mention three examples that stand for many: Deniz Zarakolu, Ayse Berktay, and Nedim Şener who are all currently in jail or threatened with jail for simply exercising their human rights.

We therefore ask all authors’ and publishers’ organisations around the world to take this issue home and alert your members to the plight of their Turkish colleagues. We ask that you publicize this plight through all available media.

Finally, I would like to ask all of you here today, in this room, to express your personal support for these courageous people who are defending a secular and democratic society, by giving them a round of applause.

Thank you

Ola Wallin is the Chair of the IPA’s Freedom to Publish Committee. He is the co-founder and managing director of the independent Swedish publishing house Ersatz. He is the international secretary of Swedish PEN and is a passionate advocate for the freedom to publish.

About IPA:
The International Publishers Association (IPA) is an international industry federation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing. Around the world, IPA actively fights against censorship and promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate.

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