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**Human Rights in Turkey at Stake:
New Trial Against Publisher Irfan Sancı Begins Tomorrow in Istanbul
IPA Calls for his Immediate Acquittal**

Geneva – 5 July 2011 - **For Immediate Release**

Publisher Irfan Sancı (Sel Yayıncılık/Publishing), recipient of the “2010 IPA Freedom Prize—Special Award” and his translator are being prosecuted under Article 226 of the Turkish penal code (TPC; obscenity) for publishing William Burroughs’ *The Soft Machine*. This is the latest in a series of trials targeting publisher Sancı and his translations of contemporary foreign literature. On the eve of the first court hearing (*tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. in Sultanahmet 2nd penal court of first instance*), the International Publishers Association (IPA) calls for his immediate acquittal.

IPA Freedom to Publish Committee Chair Bjørn Smith-Simonsen says: “That the recipient of our “2010 IPA Freedom Prize — Special Award” is again facing obscenity charges – this time for having published 2500 copies of William S. Burroughs' novel, *The Soft Machine* in Turkish translation - is simply mind-blowing and disappointing. IPA calls for Irfan Sancı’s and his translator’s immediate acquittal”.

He adds: "Last year, Irfan Sancı was sued under Article 226 of the Turkish penal code (TPC; obscenity) for having published several books, including Guillaume Apollinaire's *Adventures of the Young Don Juan*. IPA campaigned for his acquittal, recalling the Turkish authorities that the European Court of Human Rights had already condemned Turkey in February 2010 for violating Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Freedom of Expression) for having banned Apollinaire in 1999. IPA again considers that the obscenity charges that publisher Sancı and the translator of Burroughs' *The Soft Machine* face violate Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Like last year, the Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications decided that Burroughs' work was not literature! The process that is being applied and the decision itself by this governmental board are undemocratic, anachronistic and unworthy of a modern and open society. Sancı is being harassed for doing his publisher's job. At a time when freedom to publish conditions deteriorate again in Turkey, it is urgent to stop these practices and to leave Irfan Sancı alone”.

Note for Editors:

Publisher Irfan Sancı (Sel Yayıncılık/Publishing), recipient of the “2010 IPA Freedom Prize—Special Award”, and the translator of Guillaume Apollinaire's *Adventures of the Young Don Juan*, were acquitted by an Istanbul court on 7 December 2010. IPA, which observed the trial, had welcomed their acquittal, hoping that this would lead to other publishers' acquittals and a significant decrease in freedom to publish trials in Turkey. Sadly, this has not happened yet.

The owner of Sel publishing, Irfan Sancı, was being sued under Article 226 of the Turkish penal code (TPC; obscenity) for having published this book by Apollinaire, as well as Ben Mila's *The Fairy's Pendulum*, and *Letters of a Learned and Well-mannered French Bourgeois Lady* by P.V., facing up to 9 years in jail.

In May 2010, despite an experts' report from the Galatasaray and Bahcesehir Universities concluding that these three books published by Sel were works of literature, an Istanbul court decided to send these books to the Prime Ministerial Board for the Protection of Children from Harmful Publications for review, deciding whether they constitute literature or obscenity. This was a first for this Board established in 1927. In February 2010, the European Court of Human Rights had condemned Turkey for violating Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights for having banned and condemned, already under Art. 226 TPC, another book by Guillaume Apollinaire: *Eleven Thousand Rods* published by Rahmi Akdas in 1999, ruling that censorship of this book “hindered public access to a work belonging to the European literary heritage”.

More about IPA:

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global non-governmental organisation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing worldwide. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for cultural and political advancement worldwide. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate. IPA currently has 65 member associations in 53 countries.

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