



Freedom to Publish Mass Trial Continues in Turkey IPA Calls for Release of Academic and Publisher Deniz Zarakolu

Geneva, 28 September 2012 – **For immediate release**

As the second hearing of the trial of Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu opens on 1 October in Silivri, Turkey, the International Publishers Association (IPA) urges the Turkish authorities to drop all charges against both publishers and to immediately release Deniz Zarakolu who has been detained since 7 October 2011. Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu are among more than 40 people arrested in October 2011 under the Koma Civaken Kurdistan (KCK) investigation which has seen scores of writers, journalists, and publishers detained following thousands of arrests over the past two years. In addition, dozens of writers and publishers in Turkey are either held in prison, or currently on trial.

Deniz Zarakolu, a publisher, writer, translator, and PhD student specializing in political thought at Bilgi University, is charged with ‘being a member of an illegal organisation’ and risks up to twelve years in prison. He was arrested on 7 October 2011, after giving a lecture at the Political Science Academy of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy (BDP) opposition party. This party is legal, and such party-affiliated research academies are common in Turkey, with similar institutes run by the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

For his part, his father Ragıp Zarakolu is charged with ‘aiding and abetting an illegal organisation’ and is threatened with up to fifteen years in prison. He was released on 10 April 2012 following 160 days spent in a high security prison on pre-trial detention. IPA believes that he and several other writers and intellectuals are charged solely because of their writings and publishing, which violates Turkey’s international human rights obligations. Ragıp Zarakolu, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, risks between 7.5 and 15 years in prison.

In June 2012, the 29th IPA Congress adopted a resolution “rejecting the abuse of broad definitions of terms such as defamation, state security, state secrecy, or **terrorism** as dangerous inroads for censorship, harassment of the media, and undemocratic influencing (...)”.

Sadly, Turkey’s strict anti-terror legislation (ATL) illustrates the resolution above only too well. The broadness of ATL has allowed the Turkish authorities to curtail the freedom of expression of many in Turkey, including publishers who have for a long time advocated freedom to publish for all publishers and writers. This is particularly true of the Zarakolus.

International Publishers Association

IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee Chair, Bjørn Smith-Simonsen commented: "IPA emphatically protests the ongoing detention of publisher Deniz Zarakolu and urges the Turkish authorities to release him on Monday 1st October as the second hearing of the KCK mass trial opens in Silivri. At the end of next week, Deniz Zarakolu will have been detained for a year as he was arrested on 7 October 2011 on the eve of last year's Frankfurt book fair!

"Deniz and Ragip Zarakolu are outspoken, peaceful publishers who have worked to bring down the barriers of censorship in Turkey. Thinking that their publishing activity encourages the violent pursuit of political agendas is absurd. IPA therefore urges the Turkish authorities to drop all charges against Deniz and Ragip Zarakolu as soon as possible, and calls on the Turkish authorities to secure Deniz's immediate release.

"Turkey is a signatory of international human rights treaties and is therefore under the obligation to observe individuals' human rights, including in particular Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). IPA remains concerned that these rights will be denied to the Zarakolus, and several other intellectuals, including Büşra Ersanlı and Ayşe Berktaş who are also defendants in the KCK case. More writers are either in prison or on trial in Turkey than in any other country in the world".

Background Information:

Deniz Zarakolu has written books on Thomas Hobbes and the Turkish justice system. He has also translated Hobbes' *De Cive* ("*On the Citizen*"). He had previously been arrested and charged with "inciting revenge or hatred" over a speech he gave in 2002 at the funeral of his mother Ayşe Nur Zarakolu, a founding member of the Belge Publishing House, although he was later acquitted.

For more information, please visit: www.freedomforragip.wordpress.com

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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