



**As Protests Continue in Turkey, Human Rights Trials Keep Dragging On
IPA Calls for Immediate Release of Publishers and Writers**

Geneva, 10 June 2013 – **For immediate release**

At the latest hearing of the trial of Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu, which concluded on 7 June, no defendants were released. This decision is incomprehensible. In a context where civil society and publishers (Editors' Platform [Fr.](#), [Eng.](#)) ([Turkish Publishers Association](#)) demand more freedoms, the International Publishers Association (IPA) continues to urge the Turkish authorities to drop all charges against both publishers and release Deniz Zarakolu, who has been detained for close to 600 days without a verdict, immediately, without waiting for the next hearing of this part of the KCK case, which is due on 9 September 2013.

Publishers Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu were among more than 40 people arrested in October 2011 under the then Koma Civaken Kurdistan (KCK) investigation, a crackdown on pro-Kurdish circles, which has seen scores of writers, journalists, and publishers detained following thousands of arrests over the past two years.

IPA believes that Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu, and several other writers and intellectuals, including academic Büşra Ersanlı, linguist Mulazim Ozcan, writers Aziz Tunc and Ayşe Berktaş, are charged solely because of their publications, which violates Turkey's international human rights obligations.

Deniz Zarakolu, a publisher, writer, translator, and PhD student specializing in political science at Bilgi University, is charged with 'being a member of an illegal organisation' and risks up to twelve years in prison if found guilty. He was arrested on 7 October 2011, and has been detained ever since, 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. His father, iconic publisher 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. He risks between 7.5 and 15 years in prison.

IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee Chair, Bjørn Smith-Simonsen commented: "The decision not to release any defendant on 7 June in this branch of the KCK trial is simply incomprehensible. IPA urges the Turkish authorities to drop all charges against Deniz and Ragıp Zarakolu as soon as possible, and calls on the Turkish authorities to secure the immediate release of Deniz who spent close to 600 days in prison without a verdict. Lengthy trials are a huge problem in Turkey, and the next hearing is not due until 9 September.

International Publishers Association

“Turkey is a signatory of international human rights treaties and is therefore under the obligation to observe individuals’ human rights. 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. The definition of terrorism in Turkey’s Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL) should be seriously narrowed so as to put an end to abuses”.

Background Information:

- **Deniz Zarakolu** wrote books on Thomas Hobbes and the Turkish justice system. He also translated Hobbes’ *De Cive* (“*On the Citizen*”). He worked at the Belge publishing house. 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.
- 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. The definition of terrorism in Article 1 of ATL should be narrowed and several other provisions of ATL should be either repealed (Article 6/2) or amended (Article 7/2).
- The various cases against the Kurdistan Communities Union (**KCK**) are ongoing. In Istanbul there are two KCK cases, including the **KCK Press Case** where all of the defendants are journalists or media workers and the evidence against them is strictly related to their normal, daily journalistic activities. 44 people have been charged, 24 of them are still in prison. The next hearing is scheduled for 17-19 June 2013 in Silivri. In the **other Istanbul case**, concerning the Zarakolus, a total of 205 defendants are standing trial. The next hearing is scheduled for 27 May-7 June 2013 in Silivri.

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 currently has 65 member associations in 53 countries. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate.

For further information, please contact:

Alexis Krikorian

Director, FTP

IPA

23, avenue de France

CH – 1202 Geneva

Tel: +41 22 704 1820

krikorian@internationalpublishers.org

www.internationalpublishers.org