



Arbeitsgruppe Anerkennung – gegen Genozid, für Völkerverständigung e.V. (AGA)

**Halklar Arası Anlayış, İnkâr edilen Soykırımların Kabulü
ve Yeni Soykırımların Engellenmesi için Çalışma Grubu**

Berlin, 1 July 2012

Message of Solidarity with Ragıp and Deniz Zarakolu and Prof. Büşra Ersanlı

At the occasion of the opening of the so called KCK Trial tomorrow we express our sincere solidarity with the internationally prominent Ragıp Zarakolu and the equally distinguished academic Professor Büşra Ersanlı. Both have been arrested in late October 2011 and charged in an indictment of 19 March 2012 by the Public Prosecutor Adnan Çimen with “aiding and abetting an illegal organisation” (R. Zarakolu) and with “leading an illegal organisation” (Prof. B. Ersanlı). The indictment demands a conviction of 7.5 to 15 years for Mr Zarakolu and 15 to 22 years for B. Ersanlı.

We hope that the forthcoming trial will not confirm this indictment but end with the full acquittal of the two indicted, for any other sentence would be contrary to the truth and subsequently burden Turkey's judiciary with international condemnation.

Our human rights organization knows Mr Zarakolu as a leading and internationally prominent human rights defender, as well as an outstandingly courageous publisher. The impact of the publications of his “Belge” Publishing House is tremendous, in R. Zarakolu's native Turkish society as well as abroad: In Turkey his editions and publications were groundbreaking and paved the way for an unbiased and objective dealing inside and outside the academia with some of the bleakest pages of the country's national past, helping to understand the present state of affairs and the origin of collective massive violence. At the same time R. Zarakolu's untiring insistence to confront the past and to take responsibility won the trust and respect not only of his human rights colleagues in Europe and the United States, but first of all among the descendants of the erstwhile victims. Subsequently he made a most welcome contribution to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, trust and confidence building.

It is against the background of such achievements that the Chair of the Freedom to Publish Committee (FTPC) of the International Publishers Association (IPA) reacted to R. Zarakolu's detention on 1 November 2011: **“This man does not belong to prison, he deserves a Nobel Prize. We demand that Ragıp Zarakolu, the recipient of IPA's Freedom to Publish Prize be released immediately.”**

At present several Swedish members of parliament suggested to nominate Mr. Zarakolu for the Peace Nobel Prize, and the *Working Group Recognition* has appealed to the German lawmakers to follow their Swedish colleagues in this proposal. In Armenia, Mr.



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Zarakolu has been honored with the Presidential Award for his achievements in human rights.

Although Mr. Zarakolu has shown remarkable resilience, courage and resolution in the face of threat and the numerous limitations by the particular situation of Turkey, the defender of human rights now needs to be defended himself. We therefore call upon international and national political institutions to call on Turkey to immediately stop the prosecution of political dissidents under the pretext of fight against terrorism. We likewise call in international and national human rights NGO to closely monitor the trial against Mr. Zarakolu, his son Deniz, Mrs. Ersanlı and 190 other accused under the current Anti-Terror Law only for being active in NGOs.

Dr. Tessa Hofmann
Chairperson