

Protestan Kiliseler Derneđi
Association of Protestant Churches (Turkey)



To the press and the public opinion:

Arriving at Zirve Publishing House in Malatya on 18 April 2007, Emre Günaydın, Cuma Özdemir, Salih Gürler, Abuzer Yıldırım, and Hamit Çeker severely tortured and brutally cut the throats of Uğur Yüksel, Necati Aydın, and Tilman Geske, who were on the premises at that moment.

They were caught red-handed, and an indictment was prepared in six months. However, in spite of the nine years that have elapsed, not a single centimeter of development has been registered. Today, when the verdict was being announced, it was significant for the judge to say that *these murders could not have been committed by five people without any connection to an organization*, though confessing that the court had failed to unearth such a connection. The court said: “*Yes, there is an organization [behind it], yet we could not find the connection.*”

Naturally, the expectation of the next-of-kin, friends, and relatives of our martyrs, who had filled the courtroom, was the arresting of the perpetrators of this massacre after the announcement of the verdict; this at least would have soothed their consciences to a small extent. It was going to be important that the murderers, who have been monitored for years in electronic bracelets, released pending trial, were arrested, since it would mean justice being served, albeit belatedly.

Emre Günaydın’s last remark, “I am thankful that I have not brought shame on my State,” was, in fact, telling.

We, as the Protestant community living in Turkey, have waged a struggle for this long both for the murderers to be punished and for the revelation of the inciters behind those murderers. In fact, even if this lawsuit had not been filed, the punishment of the perpetrators caught red-handed were already clear since the beginning. As the Protestant community, we have strived for the darkness that abetted these murders to be revealed.

However, with the ruling rendered today by the Malatya 1st Heavy Penal Court, even though the murderers have been handed down life imprisonment, they have not been placed under custody or arrested.

Next, of course, the legal process will operate. First it will be brought to the regional administrative court and then to the court of cassation. This process may last for years; and those murderers, who brutally massacred our brethren, may live their lives freely and roam comfortably without being arrested. The constant postponement of the penalty that they deserve has injured the conscience and severely damaged the trust in justice.

As the Protestant community, we want the process to run swiftly in order to ensure that this lawsuit is concluded as fairly and as quickly as possible, and we want the criminals to be punished as soon as possible. We hope that the darkness, which the judge articulated as “*there is an organization [behind it], yet our court could not find the connection,*” will soon be brought to light.

Association of Protestant Churches
İhsan Özbek