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To the media

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Doğan Akhanlı

Press Release 05

First hearing in the Doğan Akhanlı case on 8 December 2010

The 11th Great Chamber of the Criminal Court in Istanbul has now set the opening date for the trial of writer and human rights activist Doğan Akhanlı. On 8 December 2010, Akhanli will for the first time be able to defend himself publicly, in court, against the charges levelled against him. By then, three months will have elapsed since his arraignment. Each day of these three months represents another 24 hours of unjustified imprisonment for Doğan Akhanlı.

In response to the state prosecutor's claims that Akhanlı not only participated in a 1989 robbery that led to one man's death, but was also at the head of an armed organisation attempting to overthrow the "constitutional order" Akhanli has issued the following statement via his lawyers:

"Murder, whether it is politically motivated or committed for other reasons, is a crime whose perpetrators have to be apprehended, tried, and punished. Not only do we owe this to the victims; it is also a human and social responsibility vis-a-vis the victims' relatives.

I don't want the charges against me to be dropped because the statute of limitations has expired on the crimes I am accused of committing. In this country, in which unsolved murders are the rule rather than the exception, I do not intend to invoke the statute of limitations in defending myself against the charges against me. I want to demonstrate the baselessness of those charges, so the court will finally have no choice but to free me."

According to Akhanlı's lawyers, the indictment – similar to the earlier arrest warrant – contains no solid evidence against him.

We request that you publish and circulate this press release.