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Turkey: On the 4th anniversary of his murder, justice for Ahmet Yıldız

On the 4th anniversary of the murder of Ahmet Yıldız, Amnesty International repeated its call for those responsible for the murder to be brought to justice in a fair trial.

Ahmet Yıldız was shot dead on 15 July 2008 outside his home in Üsküdar, a district on the Asian side of Istanbul. The murder is widely believed to have been a so-called 'gay honour killing'. The case has come to symbolise the failure of the Turkish authorities to respond to incidents of violence directed at lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender individuals. Four years on, the only suspect accused of the murder by the authorities, Ahmet Yıldız's father, is still at large.

In the months leading up to his death Ahmet Yıldız made a criminal complaint to the authorities asking them to investigate threats he was receiving from his family, including his father. After the killing of Ahmet Yıldız, it emerged that the state prosecutor in the district of Ümraniye had issued a decision that there were no grounds to start a prosecution into this complaint. There is strong evidence that the prosecutor's decision issued in November 2007 was reached without a thorough and effective investigation. Eight months later, Ahmet Yıldız was shot dead.

Following the killing, despite the fact that Ahmet Yıldız had reported receiving death threats, no arrest warrant was issued until October 2008. By this time, Ahmet Yıldız's father, the sole suspect in the case, could not be found. Telephone records at the time indicate that he may have fled to Northern Iraq, though his current location is unknown. The trial that began in September 2009 was, and continues to be, stalled because the suspect identified by the Turkish authorities has not been apprehended.

Four years on, no one has been brought to justice for Ahmet Yıldız's killing. Amnesty International is calling on the Turkish authorities to ensure there are no further delays in the case, by promptly executing the recently issued international arrest warrant through all available means. The organization is also calling for an independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation into the failure of the Turkish authorities to act on the criminal complaint made by Ahmet Yıldız.

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