

In Memory of Mr. Metin Can

Turkish Human Rights Advocate, IEC Delegate

It is with great sorrow and anger that IEC announces the kidnapping and murder of Mr. Metin Can (pronounced Jaan), a renowned lawyer and president of the Human Rights Organization of Elazig, Turkey. Mr. Can had been selected by hundreds of people from his community to be a delegate to the IEC Founding Conference in Germany. Several days before the Conference, he and another human rights activist, a medical doctor, Hasan Kaya, were kidnapped by what appears to be a government-sponsored death squad. After the capture, they called Mr. Can's wife and said if he abandoned his plans to go to the Conference to Defend the Life of Abimael Guzman, that they would let him go. She also received calls from his captors during which she was forced to listen to them torture her husband. Mr. Can's body was found 27 February, along with the body of Mr. Kaya. Mr. Can's body showed evidence of massive torture before he was shot to death.

One of Mr. Can's greatest contributions to the campaign was in helping bring news of the IEC campaign to the prisoners of Elazig Prison [photo left]. At great risk to himself, he smuggled in our Call to the prison, and he helped bring out word of the protest mounted by hundreds of prisoners in support of Dr. Guzmán. According to his many friends in Turkey, Mr. Can worked tirelessly for the campaign to defend the life of Abimael Guzmán. In the end, he gave his own life.

This is how important and threatening our Conference and our campaign is considered by the authorities in Turkey, a country where the campaign has become a truly mass movement: In the name of stopping it, they are ready to kill a beloved fighter for the people. The authorities must pay a very high political price for this barbaric crime. Mr. Metin Can's life and death will be made known around the world. (It should be noted that another delegate to the Conference, Serafetin Ozcan, Secretary of the Human Rights Organization of Elazig, Turkey, also never made it to the Conference because he was arrested at the airport on his way out of the country. He has since been released but continues to be harassed.)

A message of solidarity was sent from the IEC to the Human Rights Organization in Elazig Turkey.