

JOURNALISTS GÖRMÜŞ AND HAAS RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL DINK AWARD

Posted on September 17, 2009 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



By YONCA POYRAZ DOĞAN, Istanbul, [Today's Zaman](#), 17 September 2009

✘ Turkish journalist Alper Görmüş and Israeli journalist Amira Haas became the first recipients of the Hrant Dink International Award on Tuesday evening, given in the name of Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist who was murdered in 2007 by an ultranationalist youth allegedly for insulting Turkishness.

Ali Bayramoğlu, the head of the award committee of the International Hrant Dink Foundation established by the Dink family, said at the ceremony that "what we are looking for is what Hrant symbolizes," in reference to his ideals, which were "purified out of discrimination," and people who follow those ideals taking risks for a more just world.

By YONCA POYRAZ DOĞAN, Istanbul, [Today's Zaman](#), 17 September 2009

✘ Turkish journalist Alper Görmüş and Israeli journalist Amira Haas became the first recipients of the Hrant Dink International Award on Tuesday evening, given in the name of Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist who was murdered in 2007 by an ultranationalist youth allegedly for insulting Turkishness.

Ali Bayramoğlu, the head of the award committee of the International Hrant Dink Foundation established by the Dink family, said at the ceremony that "what we are looking for is what Hrant symbolizes," in reference to his ideals, which were "purified out of discrimination," and people who follow those ideals taking risks for a more just world.

Görmüş, a columnist for the Taraf newspaper and a faculty member at Bilgi University, said after receiving the award that he carries a great responsibility because he has fears that he could do something improper to undermine the meaning of the award.

"I saw Hrant Dink right after the Supreme Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision to convict him. I had gone to Agos for an interview with him. During the whole interview, he spent all his energy explaining why it was impossible for him to 'insult Turkishness'," Görmüş said.

The award committee recalled that Görmüş, the former editor-in-chief of the now-defunct Nokta weekly, was acquitted last year in April of charges of libel for running a story that featured excerpts from a diary, allegedly penned by a former naval commander, revealing plans by some generals to stage a military intervention. Görmüş said yesterday that he was not satisfied with the court's decision, even though he was acquitted of all charges. Although Görmüş was acquitted, he had said that his acquittal was not satisfactory because he was not given a chance to prove his publication's claims.

Haas, a correspondent for Israel's Haaretz newspaper, expressed her regret over Dink's death and that the award was named "after a murdered man." Born in Jerusalem, she is the daughter of Holocaust survivors. Reporting on the Palestinians since 1991 when Haaretz sent her to Gaza, she

became the first and only Israeli journalist to settle in Ramallah in the West Bank to live among Palestinians.

Dink's murder trial has been continuing, and the Dink family lawyers frequently refer to the series of mistakes made by the police in handling the case and official attempts to protect those who plotted the crime as previously reported by the press. Dink was shot dead outside the offices of the Agos newspaper, of which he was the editor-in-chief.

Dink's wife, Rakel, said in her emotional speech that Dink would have been 55 on Sept. 15 if his life had not been "usurped." She said establishing the foundation was a result of efforts from many "friends" and that it was difficult to heal the wound.

"The wound was deep in 1915; how is it going to be dressed?" she said, referring to the killings of Anatolian Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, which Armenians claim constituted genocide. Among the attendees of the award ceremony were State Minister Egemen Bağış, Parliament's Human Rights Committee head Zafer Üskül, independent deputy Ufuk Uras, British Consul General in İstanbul Jessica Hand, journalists Nadire Mater and Leyla Umar, author Adalet Ağaoğlu, conductor Cem Mansur and actress Lale Mansur.

Kardeş Türküler, a well-known folk music ensemble praised for its wide repertoire of ethnic music from Anatolia, and Arto Tunçboyacıyan, an internationally acclaimed Turkish-Armenian avant-garde folk musician, gave a short concert at the ceremony.

