

**OSCE CONFERENCE ON COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING
MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING**

**Session 3: Combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing on
intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions**

RIGHT OF REPLY

Mr. Moderator,

There have been references to the heinous murder of three persons in Turkey, some oblique some explicit. That there has been more than one delegation to address this brutal act does not alter the fact that it remains isolated and that it cannot, indeed should not, be presented to constitute a trend as it would run against the legislation and traditions of a historically non-discriminating and tolerant culture and a nation. Herein are the facts:

This heinous murder of three employees of the Zirve Publishing House on 18 April 2007, namely Tilman Ekkehard Geske, Necati Aydın and Uğur Yüksel, has prompted a profound reaction in all segments of the society in Turkey conveying the powerful message that perpetrators must remain isolated from the nation. The political leadership of the country without exception and unequivocation condemned this brutal act in the strongest terms. It must be a source of consolation that the perpetrators of this crime were captured soon after the incident. The law enforcement officials were able to intervene immediately and apprehended the suspects on the scene, together with the weapons used in the crime. A judicial investigation was immediately launched in connection with the murder. The four suspects, who were arrested after the incident, are currently in prison in Malatya on charges of murder, complicity to murder, depriving a person of liberty as well as terrorist charges under the Anti Terror Law. The fifth suspect, who was injured when he fell from the third floor of the building in an attempt to escape from the police, was later arrested and taken into the same prison following his treatment completed in hospital in Malatya.

During the investigation, the families of the deceased persons reported to the authorities that they had not received any threats prior to their murder.

The investigation is ongoing. The relevant Turkish law does not allow me at this stage to say more than what I have shared with you.

Thank you.