



Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Assistant
From: Kate Nahapetian, Government Affairs Director
Date: September 1, 2005

Re: ***Turkish Writers Criminally Prosecuted
for Speech on Armenian Genocide***

I thought you would be interested in the attached *Washington Post* article describing Turkey's flagrant violation of free speech rights. The Turkish government is criminally prosecuting people for just **SPEAKING** about the Armenian Genocide. They face up to 3 years in prison.

"Under Turkish law, people can be jailed for differing with the government's line on the [Armenian Genocide], as well as on the presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus, which Turkey invaded in 1974, and other 'fundamental national interests.'"

-- Washington Post, 9/1/05

The Washington Post

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WORLD

Turkey Charges Acclaimed Author

Pamuk Could Face 3-Year Term for Remarks on Taboo Topics

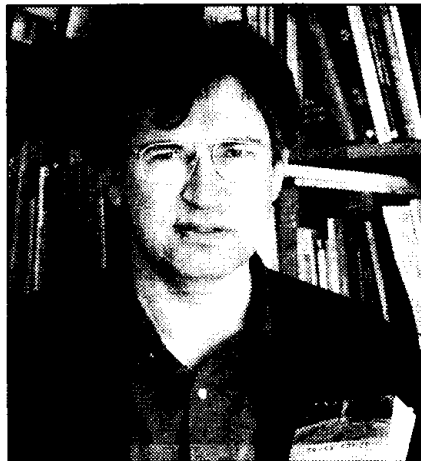
By KARL VICK
Washington Post Foreign Service

ISTANBUL, Aug. 31 — An acclaimed Turkish novelist, Orhan Pamuk, has been charged with the “public denigrating of Turkish identity” and faces a possible prison sentence of three years, his publisher said Wednesday.

The charge stems from an interview that Pamuk gave to a Swiss newspaper in February in which he said certain topics were regarded as off-limits in Turkey. As examples, he listed the massacre of Armenians in 1915 and the ongoing war between Turkish security forces and Kurdish guerrillas.

“Thirty-thousand Kurds were killed here, 1 million Armenians as well. And almost no one talks about it,” Pamuk told the newspaper, *Tagess-Anzeiger*. “Therefore, I do.”

Turkey considers the Armenian deaths a consequence of war, with severe casualties on both sides, while Armenians say the deaths constitute a genocide. Under Turkish law, people can be jailed for differing with the government’s line on the deaths, as well as on the presence of Turkish troops in Cyprus, which Turkey invaded in 1974, and other “fundamental national interests.”



Orhan Pamuk, 53, had discussed the 1915 massacre of Armenians and the war against Kurdish guerrillas.

Turkey’s penal code was revised this year in hopes of bringing laws on freedom of expression closer to international standards, as demanded by the European Union, which Turkey wants to join. Organizations representing writers and journalists say more changes are needed.

Pamuk was “just trying to point out that first you have to face it — a tragedy or a dispute or a problem, at least,” said Tugrul Pasaoglu, Pamuk’s publisher and an editor at *Iletisim Yayinlari*, a publishing house in Istanbul. “If you don’t talk about it, then you can’t find a solu-

tion.”

Pamuk, 53, is the most acclaimed novelist to emerge from Turkey in at least a generation. His books, including “My Name Is Red,” have been translated into more than 20 languages. His latest novel, “Snow,” explores the tensions between Turkey’s rigorously secular military establishment and political Islam by stranding a love-sick poet in a snowbound eastern Turkish city during a coup.

In Turkey, however, Pamuk’s international success has been overshadowed by his comments in *Tagess-Anzeiger*. The remarks incensed ultranationalists, a powerful force in a country that opinion polls show may be the world’s most patriotic.

“There is nothing that constitutes a crime in this interview,” said Nazan Senol, an attorney representing Pamuk, whose court date was set for Dec. 16. She noted that another state prosecutor’s office also investigated the allegations and decided against filing charges.

Turgay Evsen, the prosecutor who went forward with the case, earlier this year filed the same charge against a Turkish journalist of Armenian heritage, Hrant Dink. Evsen declined to comment on the Pamuk case.