

## Turkey Brings Another Case Against an Ethnic Armenian

By REUTERS  
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ISTANBUL, Dec. 25 (Reuters) - A Turkish court has opened a case against an Armenian-Turkish journalist for his comments on a six-month sentence it gave him earlier for denigrating Turkish identity, lawyers involved in bringing the case said Sunday.

The Istanbul court was acting after a group of nationalist lawyers asked the court to file a case against Hrant Dink, editor in chief of the bilingual Turkish and Armenian weekly Agos, and three Agos journalists, saying that the journalists "tried to influence the judiciary" through their editorials.

Mr. Dink, an Armenian who was born in [Turkey](#), was sentenced to six months in jail by an Istanbul court in October for comments in an article he wrote against Article 301 of a revised penal code, which allows prosecutors to pursue cases against writers and scholars for "insulting Turkish identity."

The case is now before the Court of Appeals, one of several such freedom of speech cases that have highlighted European Union concerns about Turkey's efforts to become a member.

European officials say that such court cases are likely to hinder Turkey's progress toward full membership.

About 1.5 million Armenians were killed by Ottoman Turks in 1915 during World War I. While historians are widely agreed that the 1915 massacres constituted genocide, the subject remains taboo in Turkey, which says the killings were related to World War I clashes after Armenian militants joined forces with Russia.

The nationalist Lawyers Unity Association asked the court to bring the case against the four journalists, who face jail terms of nine months to 4½ years, if convicted.

"The case has been opened because Dink and the other writers of the Armenian Agos publication have criticized a former sentence of the court in an effort to prevent a just lawsuit, which is against Article 288 of the code," said the leader of the association, Kemal Kerincsiz.

Mr. Dink told the Anka news agency that it was his right to criticize the earlier verdict, adding he would take the case to the European Court of Human Rights if the Court of Appeals upholds the court ruling.

Orhan Pamuk, a best-selling Turkish novelist, is also facing a jail term of six months to three years from the same court for violating Article 301 for his comments in February to a Swiss magazine on the 1915 killings and on the deaths of Kurds in last two decades in Turkey. The case against Mr. Pamuk was filed at the request of the same lawyers group.

Last Thursday, the Istanbul court fined a writer for breaching Article 301 in a book on the evacuation of Kurdish, Armenian and Syriac Christian villages in the past 100 years, and a publisher for an article on Turkey's Iraq policy.

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