

Lawyer Erdal Doğan drew attention to links between the murder of Bishop Padovese and the murder of other non-Muslims

Funda Tosun

- **Is there a link between the murders of Priest Santoro, Hrant Dink and Zirve massacre, which were referred to as an ‘operation’ in the Cage action plan, and the murder of Bishop Padovese?**

The most obvious aspect of the incidents you listed is that they targeted non-Muslims. If we take on board the fact that in this country non-Muslims and minorities were always used as “prey” at times of critical political turning points, it would not be too far-fetched to assume that there is a link between the Padovese murder and the unsolved incidents referred to as an ‘operation’ in the Cage documents that have not been fully unravelled yet. Given that we and the public opinion think in this line, it is imperative for the government and other judicial and administrative institutions – having the duty of resolving this incident- to carry out an investigation by assuming that there is a link. But the current picture that we are facing today is just the opposite and the authorities who have the duty of investigating and resolving this murder started by announcing immediately that this was an ‘individual’ incident as they did in the three other cases. Such official announcements of official authorities constitute an offence under the current law.

The documents seized from Ergenekon suspects refer to these cases as an ‘operation’ aiming to topple the AKP government. The same documents also state that ‘the “operations” failed to reach the desired outcome’. While the “C” timeframe used for the operations is important in terms of revealing the previous timeframes and backgrounds of the murders, it is in the meantime necessary to deepen the investigation by assuming that there may be incidents corresponding to subsequent timeframes and one of them can be the Padovese murder. We can even go a step further and claim that the Pope’s assassination could have been planned in timeframes “D” and “E” as a “highly effective operation”.

In view of the current political climate and the rule of Gladio prevailing throughout the years, it would be naive to claim that this was an individual murder committed at a time of innocent insanity. Besides, such a statement can also be construed as a concrete step to camouflage the reality.

- **Can you talk about the unresolved/dark points in murders of non-Muslims in Turkey?**

In 2006, Priest Santoro from Santa Maria Church was shot by a 17 year old teenager who had never touched a gun in his life before and had a high degree of myopia. The initial statement made after the murder was again that it was an individual incident, this was followed by other statements. These statements went as far as alleging that the massacred priest had attempted to sexually abuse the teenager and that’s why he had shot him... So, such allegations were made. The murder case was hastily closed at the judicial investigation and prosecution phase, and was sent to the dark shelves of history. However, they failed to unravel how the assassin obtained the Glock pistol, which is hard to find, invisible in X-rays and is used in Gladio type

organisations or is known as the assassination gun of gangs. Furthermore, no effective or conclusive investigation was conducted as to who the persons and groups this teenager claimed to have met and chatted on the internet are. Another extremely important detail is that an Italian priest who previously worked in the same church had been beaten into a coma by Yasin Hayal. This incident also remained as an individual case...

No body took any notice of many important issues such as the wiretapping of Yasin Hayal's and their phones a day before the murder of Priest Santoro based on the decision of Erzurum Heavy Criminal Court with special powers, and no one investigated the links between those issues. Soon after the assassination of Hrant Dink, Fatih Genç -Trabzon's Chief Public Prosecutor of the time- attempted to re-examine this case and find out the relation between the teenager claimed to have assassinated Priest Santoro and Yasin Hayal, the suspect in Hrant Dink's case. The 6 year old son of Prosecutor Genç who attempted to re-open the case, died in an extremely tragic traffic accident on 23 August 2007 when a pickup truck hit the boy in front of the public housing for the members of the judiciary. It is well known that Gladio organisations around the world assassinate their victims frequently in traffic accidents with a vehicle.

*** It was covered in the press that the person, who provided the gun to Yasin Hayal, as claimed by him, died in a traffic accident...**

Many of Hayal's contacts were not investigated. For example the information regarding the confidential telephone line he used during the bombing of Mc Donald's were revealed by the report issued by the Inspection Board of the Prime Ministry. Right after he threw bomb at Mc Donald's in Trabzon on 24 October 2004 at 14:17 Yasin Hayal called Germany, and also the US and Switzerland consecutively from the same line. As a result of an intelligence probe 53 international calls were identified from the confidential line which could not be revealed by the Security. Hayal's telephone contacts vary from Germany in particular to Holland, Switzerland, Russia, Cyprus and even the US. The line is registered in Burdur-Yeşilova birth registry in the name of Esat Yorulmaz born in 1979. Moreover the line used by Hayal is not the only line that belongs to Yorulmaz. Many telephone lines registered in the name of Esat Yorulmaz were also revealed. Inspectors identified that the line belonged to Esat Yorulmaz residing in Denizli and wanted to speak to Yorulmaz however found out that he died in a traffic accident around 7 months before the Dink's murder. Similarly Yasin Hayal claimed that he got the hand made gun used in Dink's murder from a person who died in an accident 6 months before 19 January 2007.

Similarly there were many attempts to run over Ayla Eyüpoğlu - whose brother and niece were killed by Gladio-related persons - and her relatives on the streets of Trabzon. All of these incidents were covered up when in the judicial process they were considered merely as accidents.

*** Are there any other suspected incidents?**

Another suspected accident which took place in those days, is the train accident where Vatican's İstanbul representative Georges Marovitch escaped death but was heavily injured. While Marovitch was waiting at the train station in Rome on 24 July 2007 in order to visit the house where Pope 23rd John was born, he was kind of pushed from

the back and he fell down between the moving train and the platform. His ribs were broken, internal organs were wounded and he still can not walk.

On 16 December 2007 Italian Priest Adriano Franchini was stabbed by a person named Ramazan Bay at Snt. Antuan Church in Bayraklı district of İzmir. The perpetrator of the attack stated that he was affected by the Turkish TV serial Kurtlar Vadisi/Valley of Wolves where Christian missionary activities were taken up in one of the episodes.

It is known to everyone of us that there are many dark sides to Hrant Dink's murder. In the Zirve massacre the process is continued without investigating the same dark sides.

In the latest murder it was claimed that the murderer of Padovese was a lunatic. Then it was claimed that he had severe psychological problems and was going through treatment. Another claim was that the murderer and the priest had a homosexual relationship. However the murderer was working in that church for four years and no signs of any mental disorder was detected during this time. In such murder cases mental disorder is used to legitimize the crime and it is also a profile of a perpetrator which is very often used by Gladio-type organisations. You would recall that Alparslan Aslan, the perpetrator of the attack against the Council of State, staged all kinds of drama at the hospitals and courts in order to prove that he has a mental disorder.

*** A news report covered by the European press involved a very interesting allegation according to which the real target was the Pope and that Padovese lost his life to stop the killing.**

This is indeed a very interesting allegation which should not be ignored at all. This news report is based on statements provided by an official from the Vatican and claims that a state official from Turkey called them and told that the perpetrator was assigned by them however that lately he was totally out of control. Moreover this person was planning to travel with Padovese to plot an assassination during Pope's visit to Cyprus. On the other hand in his first statement the perpetrator had said; "I was going to kill the Pope but instead killed the bishop." which indicates the real target.

If there's a plan against the Pope, the fact that Bishop Padovese knew about that, might have alone posed an important risk for him. If Padovese had cancelled his trip for this reason and if the perpetrator could not achieve his goal because of this, isn't it possible that the murdered brutally killed Padovese, who knew about all these, stabbing him 25 times?

When we consider this allegation, the killing of the Pope would have been an "operational" move causing the AKP government and Turkey to lose their current balance within a very short period of time. When we have a look at the case with such an outcome, if the Pope had been murdered with the utterances of *Takbir*^{*}, all reactions throughout the world and within Turkey would directly have resulted in with

* Arabic for "God is the greatest".

a toppled AKP government. This may sound extremely assertive, but the result would have been as such.

*** If we consider this allegation to be a fact, why does the government not disable/pacify an individual who is known to be out of control and who is known to have the goal of slaying the Pope?**

The source of the information is very important. Does the National Police Organization or the MIT-National Intelligence Agency provide it? These are important issues. Without knowing the answer to these questions, it is difficult to say something.

*** In terms of measures, what does it matter if this information comes to the AKP government from the National Police Organization or from the MIT-National Intelligence Agency?**

We do not know whether this information is directly in the hands of the government. If such info exists, and if it cannot reach the government, we can conclude that the AKP government is still not mastering intelligence.

*** How do you assess the statements made by Vatican?**

Tens of murders and attacks have been --and still are-- carried out in a very systematic fashion as per a requirement of the Cage Action Plan in the last five-six years particularly against the institutions, schools and worship places of the Armenian community and the protestant community in Turkey. Now everyone knows that all that has been done so far are the chaos actions to ensure the power for the Ergenekon organization.

In all these murders and attacks committed, different actors step in, trying to minimize the incident as if it were an isolated case of murder. Such an effort which constitutes an offence *per se* is there, standing as a serious qualm. Of course, as the Pope said the murder cannot be attributed to all Turks. However, if both the family of the slain priest and the authorities in Vatican forgive the perpetrator at once --just like in the previous cases and incidents-- and if they do not seek a probe [into the incident] there will be many other murders of this kind; because the prosecutors who have to investigate these incidents will not probe duly into the instigators behind the curtain. Vatican has to do its share to ensure that the necessary investigation is carried out into the matter. Besides it should not allow for being misguided. While it is clear that this murder will remain in the dark just like the previous ones, and that the Turkish State will not or will not be able to shed a light on this murder, what the Vatican has to do is to carry this murder over to the United Nations agenda, demanding the establishment of an inquiry or investigation committee. This is an imperative responsibility and duty of Vatican vis-à-vis its parishioners, whose lives are in peril.

*** What does it politically mean that Vatican does not insist on the clarification of these cases?**

Since these are not offences of individuals, and when we consider that they are crimes against the public order of both Turkey and the World, and that there is a highly

structured organization behind it, no one has the power to forgive anyone. You may forgive these acts in your conscience or due to your religious beliefs and this may be a virtue to be respected. We may consider that Vatican is politically acting in manner of "religious tolerance and dialogue" or there may be some other calculations that we are unaware of. However, when we think of the victims and the scale of the perpetrators' organized structure, it would be clear that the matter cannot be left to individual tolerance or beliefs or that it cannot be used as a trump-card in any political showdown.

*** So what is the responsibility falling on the government's shoulders?**

As we have clearly seen in the Cage Action Plan, all these murders aim at the creation of a political chaos, and have the goal of toppling the current government. It is observed that the judiciary and the state staff under the instruction of the government are insufficient and reluctant to illuminate these killings --and besides sometimes they resist doing that. The racist and discriminative stance towards non-Muslims prevents these murders to be solved at full. One of the victims of such incidents is this government. Nevertheless, if the government fails to do what it has to do in order to genuinely investigate these murders, it will be liable for these murders at the first degree.