

Understanding the Motivations behind the Assassination of Turkish Armenian Journalist, Hrant Dink

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Abstract : Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist, and editor-in-chief of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos was assassinated in Istanbul on January 19th, 2007 by a nationalist extremist, Ogun Samast. Dink had been voicing the atrocities against the Armenians between 1915 and 1922 during the Ottoman rule, and his comments on the issue appeared in the Turkish media many times before his assassination. It has been argued that the suffocating atmosphere created by the Turkish news media targeting Mr. Dink made him a target of an extremist Turkish juvenile. This study analyzes the media news to understand and explain why Hrant Dink became the target of a nationalist extremist. In this research, content analysis of news articles (N= 170) is conducted to identify whether there is a link between hate speech against Hrant Dink in the Turkish media and his assassination. The content of the newspaper articles is categorized and coded according to the hate language being used. The analysis suggested that Turkish media paved the way for Dink's assassination. Hate speech against Hrant Dink on the media had risen gradually before the assassination. The study also found that the number of news stories covering hate speech and racist discourse against non-Muslim citizens of Turkey also increased dramatically before the assassination. Therefore, hate speech against minorities in media narratives and news reports should be monitored, and political figures or leaders of social groups who are targeted by some media outlets should be protected.

Keywords : Hrant Dink, assassination, Turkish Armenian journalist, media

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