

# **Turkey : Memory of murdered journalist raises awareness of hate crime**

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**Commemoration events will be organized in İzmir for young Turkish writer Baki Koşar, who was murdered because of his homosexual identity in February 2006. The Siyah Pembe Üçgen (Black Pink Triangle) Association, which organizes the event, invites everyone to gather against inequality and discrimination around the slogan 'more equal and freer world'**

Baki Koşar was killed at the age of 37 in 2006.

In remembrance of a writer murdered for his sexual preferences, supporters and loved ones of Baki Koşar are holding their second campaign to raise awareness of hate crime in Turkey.

Four years ago, a homosexual murder brought an end to the life of Turkish literature's promising writer and journalist, Koşar, at the age of 37. The murderer, who violently stabbed Koşar 20 times in his own house and offered the concept of "honor" as an excuse for the murder, claimed that Koşar had proposed a homosexual affair and took advantage of unjust provocation. His claims won him a reduced sentence and he will be freed a few years from now.

After years, the body of the young writer, who came to Istanbul from the southeastern city of Batman with big hopes, returned to his homeland, where he was met with a big love. His friends have never accepted the death of Koşar and the İzmir-based Siyah Pembe Üçgen (Black Pink Triangle) Association is organizing for the second time the "Baki Koşar Struggle Against Hate Crime Days" through Feb. 22. The event began Feb. 6. The goal is to raise public awareness against unjust provocation in homosexual or transsexual murders and highlight Koşar's writer identity once again.

'Do not close our association, arrest murderers'

Speaking to the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review, one of the founders of the association, Hülya Sur said : "This is a challenge against inequality and discrimination. Considering the memory of Koşar, we invite everyone to be with us during the week for a more equal and freer world. The only thing you have to do is to get in touch with us through [siyahpembe.org](http://siyahpembe.org) or [kaosgl.org](http://kaosgl.org)."

Sur said during preparations for the activity, the İzmir Governor's Office made a decision to close their association. "We have also added 'Do not close our association, arrest murderers' to our slogan 'Baki Koşar Struggle Against Hate Crime Days.'"

Sexual preference shadows talent

Koşar was not only an award-winning novelist, but also a reporter who produced news that marked the agenda. He started working as a journalist in the 1990s for Turkey's legendary magazine *Nokta*. In the early 90s his story about the involvement of the National Intelligence Organization, or MİT, in the death of a girl named Vildan caused the MİT to make an official public statement for the first time in Turkish history.

Another important story he covered was about the ancient city of Zeugma in the southern city of

Gaziantep. His reporting on Zeugma molded public opinion and carried the issue from Turkey's agenda to the world agenda. For this, sometimes Koşar is called "Mr. Zeugma."

Through all of his success, Koşar always had a handicap ; his sexual identity that he never hid. Only his 80-year-old mother, living in Batman, did not know his identity. She learned the truth only after his death.

"Koşar's sexual desires shadowed his talents and he faced a lot of discrimination," said Sur.

"Unfortunately, our social mentality is based on male dominance. The concept of 'honor' is a tool in our country for men to control women's bodies. Homosexuals are included in this perception and seen as a threat. The perception of sexuality is very problematic in Turkey."

During the "Baki Koşar Struggle Against Hate Crime Days," the concept of hatred will be highlighted. There will be exhibitions, panel discussions and conferences. Also, jurists and journalists who fight against hate crimes will be given Hate Crime awards.

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## **Sources**

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