

**P E N
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PEN Norway's hearing report in the case of "We Will Stop Femicide" Platform

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Today PEN Norway's Turkey Adviser, Caroline Stockford, was in Istanbul to monitor the third hearing in the case aimed at bringing down the platform that secure pro-bono women lawyers and support the families of murdered women. Present in the courtroom were diplomatic representatives from the Consulates of Finland, Ireland, Holland and France.

According to the "We Will Stop femicide" Platform's January 2023 report, 31 women were killed by their husbands or ex-partners in January alone and 25 died in suspicious circumstances. A group known as 'Victims of Alimony' opened a case against the platform in 2016 stating that they were 'immoral' and 'denigrate the fabric of the family in Turkey' and that the platform had not acted strictly in accordance with laws governing associations in Turkey.

At today's hearing, which began one hour late at 12.02, the judge heard petitions from NGOs, women's organisations, Turkey's Human Rights Foundation, the Union of İstanbul Woman Organisations and Bar Associations from all over Turkey to join the case. The Ankara Bar stated, "We work for women and for all LBTQI rights and support cases on this basis. Ahmet Yıldız and Hande Kader were activists for these rights and were killed in our country. Women are not protected sufficiently by the government and this struggle of the 'anti-femicide platform' goes on because women keep on getting killed."

The hearing lasted for two hours and saw testimony from seven witnesses, who were family members of murdered women. These included Mustafa Damar, father of law student Ceren Damar who was killed by a male student in the law faculty of her university. He, like all other witnesses testified to the solidarity and support offered by the 'We Will Stop Femicide' Platform, who had secured pro bono lawyers for all the families present and had supported them psychologically throughout every hearing, in legal cases that lasted for up to five years or more.

"They showed me, as a woman, what my rights are!"

Witness Figen Yetişkin, whose daughter Deniz Aktaş was killed by her boyfriend on 4 Mart 2015 said: "The platform reached out to me, they found me a free lawyers and attended 16 hearings with me. They were always with me in the court cases in Antalya. I want to see this platform better supported. They showed me, as a woman, what my rights are and what rights murdered women should have to get justice. I will walk with them to the end."

Defence lawyer Leyla Süren told the judge that they had a further 9 witnesses to bring, but that 5 were not present today due to the varied and distant locations from which they had to travel. The judge



“ PEN Norway’s Turkey Adviser spoke at the press conference outside the court, saying: “PEN Norway continues to stand in solidarity with you all. Of the many cases we have observed over the past 8 years alone, this is one of the most important. We send our condolences to everyone here today who has lost a mother, sister or daughter and we continue to call for an end to the killing of women in Turkey and an end to the police violence against women that we have witnessed of late.”



agreed to hear the final 9 witnesses on 13 September at 11.00, at what is widely considered to be the verdict hearing in this case.

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PEN Norway will continue to monitor the case.

You can access the details of the lawsuit filed against the platform in the article we published earlier: [PEN-Norway_Stop_Femicides_Article_eng.pdf \(norskpen.no\)](#)

For our report on previous hearing: [We will stop femicide platform Arkiver - PEN Norway \(norskpen.no\)](#),