NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Turkish church fears cover-up over bishopís murder

Jonathan Luxmoore Religion News Service | Dec. 14, 2010

WARSAW -- The head of Turkey?s Roman Catholic bishops conference has rejected medical findings that the man who brutally murdered his predecessor, Bishop Luigi Padovese, was insane.

?The Turkish Justice Minister seemed quite sincere when he promised the truth?but our church is being silenced by this manipulation of the court and public opinion,? said Ruggero Franceschini, the Archbishop of Izmir.

Franceschini was reacting to the report by a medical panel in the southern town of Adana, published in Turkey?s *Hurriyet* daily newspaper on Dec. 1, which said Padovese?s killer, Murat Altun, was mentally unbalanced when he stabbed the cleric in June. In an interview with the Rome-based AsiaNews agency, Franceschini said the finding by ?professors and lawyers? contradicts a separate medical report on Altun before the murder, which had declared him of sound mind.

?Unfortunately I cannot speak in court,? Franceschini told AsiaNews. He said the doubts and suspicions among local Catholics appear to have been ignored.

Padovese, Turkey?s best-known Catholic leader, was stabbed to death at his home by Altun, his driver, who was said by eyewitnesses to have chanted ?Allah is great!? after the killing.

The provincial governor of Anatolia, where Padovese worked, told journalists Altun had been treated previously for psychiatric disorders.

However, this was vigorously rejected by the church?s lawyer, Ercan Eris, who said the murder of the bishop, a monk with the Capuchin order, bore the hallmarks of Islamic militancy, and urged the authorities to widen their enquiries.

The murder was the latest of several acts of violence against Turkey?s 32, 000-strong Catholic Church. Christian minorities have frequently complained of discrimination and hostility in Turkey, most of whose 71.5 million inhabitants are Sunni Muslims, despite repeated warnings from the European Commission that the country must protect religious rights as a precondition for joining the European Union by 2015.

The Next Step FORWARD [2]

DONATE NOW [2]

Enjoy this article?

Help support more like it by **donating today!** [2]

Source URL (retrieved on *05/03/2015 - 06:44*): http://ncronline.org/news/global/turkish-church-fears-cover-over-bishop%C3%ADs-murder

Links:
[1] http://ncrnews.org/webathon/donate/in-content
[2] http://ncrnews.org/webathon/donate/article-end