

## **ESU closely monitors the cases of the Syriac-Chaldean Diril couple and monk Aho**

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**Turkey** – The trial against Syriac Orthodox monk Sefer Bileçen - monk Aho - of the Mor Yahqoub monastery in the Tur Abdin region in southeast Turkey continued at the end of September in the fourth Heavy Penal Court in Mardin. Monk Aho is accused of membership of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) for giving bread and water to PKK fighters. The PKK is designated a terrorist organization in Turkey.

The Syriac monk denies the charges but does not deny giving bread and water. He said in his defense statement, "I give food to everyone who comes to my door – whoever he is." The trial against monk Aho will continue on November 3. If found guilty by the Turkish court he will face a minimum prison sentence of 7.5 years. ESU closely monitors the case of monk Aho and continues to bring it to the attention of the European Parliament and human rights organizations. ESU sees the trial against monk Aho as another harassment by the Turkish state to scare away the little remaining Syriacs in southeast Turkey.

**Turkey** - The Syriac-Chaldean couple Hurmüz (71) and Shmuni Diril (65) disappeared on January 11, 2020 in their village Mehre, Şırnak Province, southeast Turkey. On March 20, the lifeless and mutilated body of Shmuni Diril was found in a riverbed near their village. There are no new developments regarding the whereabouts of Hurmüz Diril. Local Turkish authorities have allocated little search capacity and detectives to the case. The case is labelled confidential and to date, to our knowledge, no autopsy report on the body of Shmuni Diril has been released.

ESU closely monitors the Diril case and has had contact and met with several authorities and politicians both in the Turkey and in Europe with the request for more urgent action and transparency. ESU demands a full and comprehensive investigation into the murder of Shmuni Diril and the kidnapping of Hurmüz Diril.

