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A Turkish publisher faces up to six years in jail for "insulting the Turkish identity"

By Daren Butler: First published by Reuters

A Turkish publisher faces up to six years in jail for "insulting the Turkish identity" by translating a book by U.S. academic Noam Chomsky, the publisher's lawyer said on Tuesday. The Istanbul prosecutor's indictment, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, sought publisher Fatih Tas' conviction over comments about the country's Kurdish problem in the book's introduction. The book, entitled "Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media", was written by Chomsky and Edward S. Herman in 1987 but the offending introduction by the same authors appeared only in a 2001 revised edition, the indictment said.

The introduction criticises Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish minority during the 1990s, at the height of a separatist insurgency. More than 30,000 people have been killed since the rebels in the mainly Kurdish southeast took up arms in 1984. "The case was opened because of comments in the introduction about the way the media presents the Kurdish problem," Tas told Reuters. Tas, owner of the Aram publishing house, has 21 court cases outstanding against him. He has been convicted in three of these cases which are now at the appeals stage.

Tas and two of his colleagues are charged with "stirring hatred among the public" under article 216 of the penal code, which carries a jail sentence of one to three years. They are also charged under article 301 of the same law for insulting the Turkish identity, the Republic and parliament. The prison term for this is six months to three years. His lawyer Inan Akmese said the court was still examining the indictment and it was not clear when the first hearing in this case would take place. He said responsibility for the publication should rest with the authors, but under Turkish law they cannot be prosecuted as they are not in Turkey. The indictment was prepared by the Istanbul prosecutor's office based on a new translation of the book published in March.....**THE END**

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