

UNESCO DIRECTOR-GENERAL CONDEMNS VIOLENCE IN TURKEY AND ALGERIA

Paris, 29 April - UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor today denounced the murders of three teachers in Turkey and a teacher and newspaper employee in separate attacks in Algeria.

"I am horrified by the recent violence in Algeria and Turkey," Mr Mayor said. "There is no justification for killing teachers or those who work in journalism. Educators hold the key to nurturing critical thinking and tolerance. As World Press Freedom Day approaches this Friday 3 May, we must recall the courageous work done by all those who work in newspapers, radio and television to keep us informed. The international community must reaffirm its commitment to tolerance and the respect for differing views and opinions. Only through a free exchange of ideas in the media and in classrooms can we start building peace and democracy."

Three gunmen walked into a high school in the Blida region of Algeria last Tuesday and slit the throat of Ouardia Chekiret, 44, a teacher, in front of her horrified pupils, according to press reports released Saturday. On Wednesday night, gunmen entered the Algiers home of Djamel Bouchibi, an employee of the El Moudjahid newspaper, shot him and then slashed his throat as his wife watched.

Last week, three teachers were shot dead at a village primary school in south-east Turkey, according to press reports.
