



Turkish Town to Rename Streets in Honor of Local Christian Authors

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The municipal assembly of Diyarbakır's Sur district has decided to change the names of three streets to honor Armenian and Syriac authors who used to live on those routes.

In a Dec. 9 session, the council decided to rename Direkçi Street in the Hasırlı neighborhood and give it the name of Armenian author Mıgırdıç Margosyan. They also decided to name Paşucu 1st Street in the Ziya Gökalp neighborhood after Syriac author Naum Faik Palak and Yağcı Street in Fatih neighborhood after Ahmet Arif.

Sur Mayor Abdullah Demirbaş said the most fundamental reason for changing the streets' names was to recognize the importance of artistic people from Diyarbakır.

The mayor said Arif was a well-known poet and that the council would pay homage to his memory by renaming the street on which he was born.

Demirbaş said the renaming project promoted the city's values. "Margosyan contributed a lot to the promotion of Diyarbakır with his books. He was also a member of the Armenian community in Diyarbakır and represented a different cultural heritage."

He said giving the name to such a world-renowned author would be a fitting tribute to the writer. "In a similar fashion, Palak is one of the important names in our literature. He was a Syriac who died in America. We again gave his name to the street where he was born."

Demirbaş said: "Promoting the values of Diyarbakır as such demonstrates the peaceful harmony of the different cultures, identities and religions existing here. Peace, democracy and fraternity are what we have needed most in recently. In a sense, we want to announce this to all of Turkey once again through the streets of Diyarbakır."

Demirbaş said they informed the local district governorate about the council's decision. "The Sur District Governorate [only] accepted two of the names we offered. They said they relayed Palak's name to the Foreign Affairs Ministry to determine whether he was a Turkish citizen or not," Demirbaş said.

"We do not approve of this because there are many streets, avenues and buildings in Turkey that are named after non-Turkish citizens," the mayor said.

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