

Turkey trial over murder of student Ozgecan who 'resisted rape'

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(BBC NEWS) - Three men have gone on trial in Turkey over the murder and attempted rape of a 20-year-old student that sparked protests about violence against women.

Activists staged protests in several cities across Turkey following the killing of Ozgecan Aslan in February

Police discovered the burnt body of Ozgecan Aslan in a riverbed in the city of Mersin in February.

Bus driver Ahmet Suphi Altindoken faces a life sentence alongside two alleged accomplices, his father and a friend.

Some 1,000 lawyers have requested to represent Ms Aslan, according to reports.

The courthouse in the southern Turkish city of Tarsus is not big enough to hold them all, but hundreds of supporters massed outside as the first hearing got under way on Friday.

'Monstrous'

Ms Aslan, a psychology student, was kidnapped after boarding a public mini-bus home from a shopping trip.

The driver allegedly tried to rape her. She reportedly fought him off with pepper spray, but was then stabbed to death. She was also hit on the head with an iron pipe.

The brutality of the murder caused an outcry across Turkey, with activists staging protests in several cities.

Ahmet Suphi Altindoken is accused of driving Ozgecan Aslan to a wood after all the other passengers had got off, and then attacking her.

His father, Necmettin Altindoken, and a friend, Fatih Gokce, were also arrested and charged with helping him hide the crime and conceal evidence.

Ms Aslan's body was found two days after she was reported missing.

The three men, who all appeared in court on Friday, face a life sentence if convicted of charges including "murdering with a monstrous feeling".

The trial comes amid calls for more action to stop violence against women in Turkey.

More than 280 women were murdered by men in the country in 2014, according to reports, while there is said to have been about 134 killings so far in 2015.

In another shocking attack in May, a 19-year-old woman who was competing in a nationwide televised song contest was shot in the head, allegedly by her ex-boyfriend. Mutlu Kaya remains in a coma.