

Our brother Selim Esen had been the victim of a homophobic serial killing in Toronto, Canada in April 2017!

Selim, as the youngest boy of our Kurdish family was born on 2nd July 1973 in Istanbul. He stopped his secondary school education and started working in his teenage years in order to contribute to the family's income. This didn't stop Selim's enthusiasm and passion for learning. After the 18 months compulsory army service and 8 years work in the textile sector, he managed to finish his schooling through his own efforts and later graduated from Hacettepe University studying sociology and philosophy.

As a gay person Selim wasn't happy living in Turkey. Initially, he went to Australia and lived there for nearly 3 years. He returned back to Turkey in 2011 and did his postgraduate studies to be able to teach philosophy. In 2013 he went to Canada to get married with his boyfriend and settle there for a new life. He completed a counselling course to provide help and support to people in the local community just days before he was reported missing.

He was very friendly, kind hearted, open, independent minded and curious, passionate about learning new things, gardening, exploring new places and meeting new people. People who met him for the first time would be surprised to see how open, friendly and kind spirited he was. His tender and kind humanity came before everything else. He thought, believed, felt and lived free as a bird, beyond any borders and any boundaries.

As Selim's brothers we find it hard to come to terms with our youngest brother's death. He was too young to leave us. He had things to do, friends to make, flowers to grow in hearts, life to share! We feel humbled and heartened with kind words and feelings expressed about Selim by his friends!

We feel equally saddened and want to send our sympathy and condolences to other victims' families and friends. We wish to express our thanks to the LGBT community, other victims' families and friends for their campaign work on this case putting pressure on authorities for a full investigation on the case. As yet we have more questions than answers. It is deeply worrying to see that it took years for the authorities to act upon the cases of missing persons reports.

Lastly, we hope that the memory of our beloved brother Selim Esen raises the spirit of friendship, kindness, solidarity, equality, respect and love that goes beyond boundaries of nationality, ethnicity, gender, sex and colour of skin.

Rest in peace brother Selim!

Forever in your loving memory!

Your brothers Ferhat Cinar and Omer Esen