Turkey to bury activist shot in West Bank

AFP – Mourners will gather in southwest Turkey Saturday for the funeral of a US-Turkish activist shot dead while protesting Israeli settlements in the West Bank.
The killing last week of 26-year-old Aysenur Ezgi Eygi has sparked international condemnation and infuriated Turkey, further escalating tensions over the war in Gaza that began with Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel.

Eygi's body, wrapped in the Turkish flag, arrived at its final resting place in the Aegean town of Didim on Friday following a martyrs' ceremony at Istanbul's airport.

Eygi was a frequent visitor to the seaside resort.

The family wanted Eygi to be buried in Didim, where her grandfather lives and her grandmother has been laid to rest.

Ankara said this week it was probing her death and pressed the United Nations for an independent inquiry.

Turkey is also planning to issue international arrest warrants for those responsible for Eygi's death depending on the findings of its investigation.

The Israeli military has said it was likely Eygi was hit "unintentionally" by forces while they were responding to a "violent riot".

A large crowd is expected at the funeral, including members of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Islamic-rooted AKP party, as well as activists advocating the Palestinian cause.

The burial is scheduled to take place after midday prayers.

– 'Seek justice'-

The young woman’s body arrived in Istanbul on Friday morning before being transferred to Turkey’s third-biggest city Izmir, where an autopsy was carried out.

Turkish officials said the findings from the autopsy would be used as evidence for Turkey’s own probe.

Eygi was shot in the head while taking part in a demonstration on September 6 in the northern part of the occupied West Bank, near Nablus.

Her mother Rabia Birden on Friday urged Turkish officials to pursue justice.

“The only thing I ask of our state is to seek justice for my daughter,” she was quoted as saying by Anadolu news agency.

Erdogan, dedicated to the Palestinian cause, has vowed to ensure “that Aysenur Ezgi’s death does not go unpunished”.

The United Nations said Eygi had been taking part in a “peaceful anti-settlement protest” in Beita, the scene of weekly demonstrations.

Israeli settlements, where about 490,000 people live in the West Bank, are illegal under international law.

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday called for Israel to provide “full accountability” for Eygi’s death.

The Israeli army has acknowledged opening fire in the area and has said it is looking into the case.

An autopsy carried out by three Palestinian doctors pointed to a direct hit that passed through the victim’s skull.

“Aysenur was a very special person. She was sensitive to human rights, to nature, to everything,” said her father Mehmet Suat Eygi, on Thursday outside the family home in Didim.

AFP