

Enver Şimşek

“Abdulkerim Şimşek, son of Enver Şimşek, recounts:

My childhood ended exactly one week after my 13th birthday, on 9 September 2000. That was the day it happened. At the time, I didn't live with my parents but rather at a boarding school in Saarland. On that day, a teacher rushed over to me with a train ticket. I was told I needed to go to Nuremberg right away and that something had happened to my father. My uncle picked me up from Nuremberg station and explained that my father had had a fight. Nothing serious. That was strange, I thought. They wouldn't ask me to come just because of a fight. That was the first time I felt afraid. But I had no idea yet that my perspective of the world would never be the same from then on. I ceased to be a child overnight.

After arriving in Nuremberg, we went to the hospital. That is where I saw my mum. She was completely distraught and could only cry. She was surrounded by relatives, all weeping. That's when I knew something awful had happened. At some point, I was allowed to see my dad. Seeing my father there in the intensive-care unit was the worst moment of my life. He lay in a coma and was a terrible mess. Eight bullets had hit him, several in his face. I saw the bullet wounds. They ruined his face. I was there when the doctors in the end told our family that he probably wouldn't survive.

Can you imagine how that feels for a 13-year-old child? For me, it was simply inconceivable that my father would never be back. I was sure he would get up again and everything would be alright. Just like before. Then I'd go fishing with him again or help him with the barbecue.

After two days, my dad passed away and the machines were switched off. How he looked in the hospital bed and the pictures of us burying him in Turkey soon after – those are the final memories I have of my father.”