



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Design and layout: revangeldesigns.co.uk

Design, typesetting and cover design copyright © Medya Production Center

Publication Editor: **Ruhi Karadađ**



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OUR MISSION

To broaden bases for public involvement in promoting peace and democracy.

Our unique model combines expertise and research with practical inclusive platforms for dialogue.



Kerim Yildiz

Chief Executive Officer
Democratic Progress Institute

A summary of eighteen timely and relevant events which paved the way for continued democratic advancement and opportunities for peace in Turkey.

2023 proved to be a pivotal year for Türkiye, not only seeing a general and presidential election, but also celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Republic. Throughout the year and these momentous events, DPI worked to keep peace and democratisation in the agenda in Türkiye across all sections of society from politicians to legal experts, to the art community. In a year which was dominated by elections and continued economic challenges, DPI did important work not only keeping peace as a part of the ongoing discourse but connecting peace to the key questions of the day in Türkiye and promoting peace as a part of the solution to these issues. This year not only saw a continuation of many parts of DPI's usual programming, especially as this year, the dividends and economic benefits of peace for Türkiye, and constitutions were both emphasized in our programming, but also additions to our programming, namely the beginning of our events series on arts and culture in conflict resolution.

Throughout the year, DPI was able to host timely events as a part of our programming, from Peace Tables to International Conflict Resolution Exchanges, and, as mentioned above, touching on diverse issues from the elections, to constitutions, arts and culture, and youth. Through these events DPI was able to continue to demonstrate its unique ability to bring diverse actors together to discuss the important issues of the day, as

through our activities, we were not only able to bring together and engage with members of political parties from across the political spectrum, but also lawyers and legal experts, civil society members, journalists, academics, and artists. Throughout the year, participants repeatedly highlighted the important, and unique role that DPI is able to play, by creating a platform for them together and discuss the important issues with people from across Turkish society in a trusted environment conducive to constructive dialogue.

It was an exciting year for DPI as we transitioned from our previous project, 'Voicing Peace and Fostering Inclusivity in Türkiye,' to our new ambitious project titled 'Supporting the Pro-Peace Agenda in Türkiye.' This transition signifies an important evolution in our work towards a more structured and impactful approach, with renewed objectives for our work to foster peace and inclusivity in the region. This year DPI also welcomed several new members to our Council of Experts: Dr. Esra Çuhadar, member of the UN Standby Team of Senior Mediation Advisors and academic; Dr Nazan Haydari, Associate Professor of Media School at Istanbul Bilgi University;

and Ahmet Mümtaz Taylan, acclaimed Turkish actor and director.

DPI's work would not be possible without the unwavering support of our generous donors and funders. I must extend my sincere gratitude to our donors and funders, namely the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, for their continued support and belief in our work. I must also extend my thanks to DPI's dedicated and hard-working staff, interns, Council of Experts and esteemed Board for their continued efforts in the pursuit of DPI's goals.

In sum, I reflect not only on the work that DPI has done this year, and all that we were able to accomplish with satisfaction, but also with optimism for the future, and excitement for the work that DPI will do and the results that we will achieve in 2024, building on the year we just had in 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Amidst the context of the 2023 general elections, DPI seized new opportunities to bolster dialogue among Türkiye's diverse political and social segments and maintain peace as a central focus across all sectors of society. With this overarching objective, DPI conducted a series of meetings, ranging from Peace Tables and Assessment Meetings to International Conflict Resolution Exchanges (ICREs) and the recent addition of Interactive Seminars within our framework. These initiatives were pivotal platforms for fostering understanding, collaboration, and sustainable solutions within Türkiye's dynamic political landscape. One of DPI's primary focuses throughout the year has been raising awareness about the dividends of peace and democracy, ensuring that the discourse on peace remained firmly entrenched in the public consciousness. Recognising that sustainable change requires widespread public involvement, DPI worked to equip stakeholders from various society segments with valuable insights to advance peacebuilding and democratisation processes and thus prepare for the prospective resumption of peace negotiations. Furthermore, DPI aimed to strengthen collaboration between a broad spectrum of stakeholders in Türkiye and influential actors in international peace processes, thus preventing polarisation from obstructing crucial communication channels. These initiatives proved to be timely, given Türkiye's context in 2023. Indeed, amidst Türkiye's challenges, the economic crisis emerged as another compelling argument for peace to return to the centre of public debates. Moreover, the second quarter of

2023 was marked by Türkiye's centenary of the republic and the general elections. Against the backdrop of devastating earthquakes and amidst economic turmoil and societal polarisation, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan secured another term as President and strengthened his position in parliament through the May Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Throughout the election period, DPI engaged with policymakers, leaders, and civil society key figures to reintroduce democratisation and the Kurdish resolution to the top of the political agenda. With all this said, the current window of opportunity for advancing peace and democratic progress in Türkiye is still significant. Indeed, the narrow margin of the election results has been widely interpreted as society's call for change, and DPI is well-positioned to provide a platform for comprehensive and strategic discussions of this resolution process.

In this context, DPI kept viewing the resolution of the Kurdish issue as a potential pathway to addressing internal and foreign policy challenges. Such a resolution would not only enhance Türkiye's political and economic stability but also help foster improved relations with neighbouring countries and international actors in the region. This strategic perspective underscores DPI's 2023 approach, which was structured around emphasising the benefits that could arise from resolving the Kurdish issue through a peace process involving various stakeholders such as peace workers, policymakers, media and business figures, women's groups, youth, civil society organisations, and the wider public. This

approach has motivated new participants to engage with DPI's initiatives and collaborative efforts.

This Annual Report aims to highlight DPI's activities throughout 2023, a year marked by a blend of virtual and in-person meetings. We facilitated a combination of online and in-person gatherings throughout this period, adopting a hybrid model. This strategy enabled us to engage with a diverse range of international experts and enhance the inclusivity of our events, in line with our commitment to fostering an inclusive platform conducive to peace dialogues.

During 2023, DPI hosted a series of meetings with well-known domestic and international experts to explore the social, political, and economic implications of the 2023 general elections, as well as their impact on conflict resolution. Overall, our events offered participants a comprehensive understanding of the election dynamics and provided a platform for meaningful dialogue on the challenges at stake. Topics ranged from the role of media during election periods to potential scenarios for peace in Türkiye, including the effects of democratisation on the broader region, specifically in Iraq and Syria, and the implications for minority groups. Additionally, DPI undertook various initiatives targeting women, youth, civil society, and the media, attracting more participants alongside globally recognised conflict resolution experts. Throughout these events, we focused on drawing lessons from Türkiye's experience

with conflict resolution and offering recommendations for the future.

Many participants expressed gratitude and emphasised the importance of DPI's work as a recognised and trusted organisation during these transformative times. Thanks to the collaboration of esteemed speakers and organisations, DPI has thus significantly expanded both the reach of its initiatives in the field and the public's interest in advancing democratisation and peacebuilding in Türkiye.

In summary, DPI's innovative approach has played a pivotal role in breaking down the barriers of previously exclusive exchanges among peacebuilders and welcoming a broader array of stakeholders into the conversation. This inclusive platform has provided a fertile environment for collaboration and engagement, allowing stakeholders from various backgrounds to participate in meaningful discussions on designated topics. This reflective engagement has been instrumental in fostering a collective understanding of the challenges at hand and paving a path towards constructive action. Indeed, through these exchanges, participants had the opportunity to delve deeply into pertinent issues, reflecting on lessons learned and potential future steps towards achieving sustainable solutions to advance democracy in the region. The year 2024 presents a significant opportunity for DPI to pursue our efforts, with the May municipal elections and an extended period without further elections, allowing for discussions in a less contentious environment.

ABOUT DPI

The Democratic Progress Institute (DPI) is an independent non-governmental organisation established in consultation with leading experts in conflict resolution and democratic advancement. The organisation's primary objective is to promote peace and support democratic development by encouraging public dialogue and engagement between adversaries. To achieve this, DPI provides a unique programme model using our knowledge and experience of peacebuilding to support practical approaches to harnessing dialogue such as Peace Tables, workshops, seminars, and other platforms for exchange.

OUR VALUE

DPI was founded on the principles that inclusive dialogue and open knowledge exchange will be conducive to promoting peace, democracy, and human rights. With nine years of experience running inclusive programmes in Türkiye, the organisation has cultivated the trust and active participation of key stakeholders from both the political and civil society sectors. Our dedication to these relationships and networks on the ground has been instrumental in ensuring the projects' sustainability and is essential to the success of our mission. The work we strive to achieve is rooted in values of respect and equality, through which we seek to foster strong relationships and a collaborative environment in which new ideas and expertise can come together to advance democracy. DPI is committed to professionalism, integrity, and impartiality at all levels.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The organisation is focused on providing expertise and practical frameworks to foster public engagement and discourse in support of peace and democracy building on a global scale. To achieve this, DPI aims to continue to promote a structured dialogue between public and private actors and to create new opportunities for discussions on peace and democracy building. We seek to encourage an inclusive, open, and structured discussion environment whereby different parties can share knowledge and concerns across multiple levels. Throughout these efforts, DPI strives to identify common priorities and develop innovative approaches to actively encourage democratic solutions. Additionally, our initiatives strive to support and strengthen collaboration between academics, civil society organisations, and policymakers. DPI especially aims to use comparative studies as an essential tool to avoid past mistakes and ensure democratic issues are shared and resolved globally.

OUR AIMS INCLUDE

As a ‘neutral’ and non-partisan organisation, DPI can extend invitations to senior political figures from across Türkiye’s political spectrum. We also have access to academics, civil society leaders and influential media representatives across Türkiye’s professional and political spectrum through networks built over ten years. Our commitment to inclusivity is reflected by the broad range of backgrounds represented by the participants who attend our events. Feedback from such events has repeatedly held that DPI is currently the “only organisation able to gather different groups of people to talk and think on peace and democracy in Türkiye” and that DPI’s activities have provided “the most inclusive platform so far” where: “people from different political tendencies [in Türkiye] can easily come together [...] and talk to each other and negotiate their differences”. We have a Council of Experts who actively contribute to all our work. Consisting of local and international experts, this council provides advice on human rights, constitutional law, transitional justice and truth commissions, international humanitarian law, mediation, and conflict resolution. Our strong working relationships in the region have allowed us to collaborate with experts, scholars, and universities. Together, we work on:

- Contributing to broadening bases and providing platforms for discussion on establishing a structured public dialogue on peace and democracy building.
- Providing opportunities for different parties to draw comparative studies and compare various mechanisms used to achieve positive results in comparable cases.
- Creating an atmosphere whereby different parties share knowledge, ideas, concerns, suggestions, and challenges facing the development of a resolution in Türkiye and the wider region.
- Supporting and strengthening collaboration between academics, civil society, and policymakers.
- Identifying common priorities and developing innovative approaches to participate in and influence democracy-building.
- Promoting respect for and protection of human rights regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political persuasion, or other beliefs or opinions.

OUR METHODS

DPI provides expertise and practical frameworks to encourage stronger public debates and promote peace and democracy building. To achieve this, DPI seeks to foster an inclusive and structured discussion environment whereby a range of actors can share knowledge, as well as concerns, and offer suggestions for resolving conflict, strengthening democracy across multiple levels of society. DPI programming is underpinned by a commitment to learning lessons from regional, national, and international examples using comparative studies as a tool for understanding and equipping stakeholders and stakeholder institutions. These processes guide our activities across all our focus areas and help ensure that preparations are in place for a resolution to the conflict in Türkiye. DPI activities include participants selected to represent their constituencies in consultation with our DPI expert advisers on the ground to address the need for equal representation and participation across all groups and perspectives. Our events (Peace Tables, International Conflict Resolution Exchanges, Interactive Seminars, Assessment Meetings and Briefing & Mentoring Sessions) engage diverse viewpoints and are structured to facilitate interaction between participants and leading international experts. A balance of attendees of past events as well as new participants ensures the continuation of memory and knowledge transmitted from previous DPI activities whilst also broadening bases for wider involvement in promoting peace and democratisation.



OUR KEY THEMES

Civil Society

DPI recognises the critical role of civil society in resolving conflicts and advancing democracy. In regions where official channels for conflict resolution may be limited, civil society can (and does) play a vital role in supplementing peace processes. As such, DPI emphasises strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations to contribute to conflict resolution and democracy building. In recent years, DPI has decided to particularly highlight youth organisations' contributions to achieving peace in the upcoming years. This focus has allowed us, as well as our participants, to consider more actors in the peace process and to discuss broader topics concerning the impact of war on different generations.

Conflict Mediation

To establish sustainable peace agreements, addressing the underlying grievances fuelling the conflict is essential. By providing a forum for diverse representatives to exchange their views and experiences, we aim to facilitate their future participation and readiness for mediation and negotiation processes. By engaging in these discussions and conversations, DPI helps to educate individuals on various aspects of the conflict and facilitates the formation of mutually acceptable agreements. Our efforts towards fostering open and inclusive communication serve as a crucial step towards achieving lasting peace.

Democracy

DPI is committed to ensuring effective democracy building, which involves the consolidation of democratic institutions, ranging from the justice system and security services to the development of civil society. DPI is also extremely attached to processes of creating, strengthening, and sustaining democracy. For democracy building to be effective, it must ensure the participation of the entire spectrum of stakeholders within a society and requires the education and engagement of disparate groups. Through all of DPI's activities, we strive to broaden bases for public engagement and support of peace processes at all levels of society by making our events as inclusive and diverse as possible.

Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Security Sector Reform

The disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of armed groups into the community, as well as security sector reform (SSR), are essential for a successful transition from conflict to a peaceful and democratic society where state security serves its citizens rather than oppresses them. DPI analyses global examples of DDR and SSR through comparative studies and, where appropriate, incorporates these into our activity programme to promote knowledge and facilitate informed debate.

Dividends of Peace or Economic Perspective

Peace and stability are considered key factors affecting a country's and region's economic performance. Indeed, they are positively associated with economic development, attracting both local and foreign investments and increasing the volume of exports within the region. Therefore, linking the economic costs of conflict to the benefits of peace can be instrumental in changing attitudes within the business community, among political figures and in the wider region.

Gender, Peace, and Security

DPI remains committed to addressing gender-related issues, focusing on the crucial role that women play in conflict resolution and promoting peace and security. We facilitate the active participation of women in peace negotiations and provide opportunities for both women and men from various countries and backgrounds to share perspectives and experiences. In 2023, we continued our commitment to gender equality and women's participation in peacebuilding by hosting meetings that emphasised the importance of women's involvement in conflict resolution.

Governance and Constitutions

The nuances and complexities in many contemporary international conflicts pose challenges for countries transitioning from conflict, including implementing the suitable form of governance and solving constitutional problems. DPI aims to research and share insights into the approaches taken by international cases and identify lessons that can be learnt from them.

Human Rights and Access to Justice

Human rights and access to justice are crucial during and in the aftermath of violent conflict, as they enable individuals to resolve disputes under the auspices of the state. At DPI, we recognise that meaningful democratic reform, peace, and stability require a foundation of human rights, equality, and the rule of law. Our work aims to promote these principles and address language and identity issues, critical in resolving conflicts and establishing a stable democracy. DPI aims to contribute to a just and equitable society for all by focusing on these crucial areas.

Media

The role of the media is imperative for reporting, reflecting, and influencing conflict resolution processes. The organisation places a strong emphasis on the role of the media, both traditional and social, in rapidly spreading information surrounding conflicts. DPI understands the power of social media and uses it as a channel to disseminate our work and expand our reach and breadth.

Transitional Justice

DPI focuses on transitional justice to address human rights violations, promote accountability, and encourage reconciliation in post-conflict societies. Our research and events aim to highlight the potential benefits of transitional justice measures, including recognising victims' rights, improving civic trust, and strengthening the rule of law, all with the hope of aiding democratic advancements.

OUR KEY THEMES

During 2023, we are proud to have continued facilitating inclusive dialogue processes even through challenging times. Individuals from diverse political backgrounds came together to share their perspectives and experiences. In 2023, DPI provided policymakers, academics, researchers, journalists, civil society actors, officials, and business actors with a platform to engage in discussions about peace processes from around the world and lessons learnt on behalf of the Turkish Peace Process, its trajectory, and future developments within Türkiye. We achieved this through our programme of activities, including Peace Tables, International Conflict Resolution Exchanges, Interactive Seminars and Assessment Meetings, as well as through the production of materials such as Assessment Papers and Research Reports. Following the earthquake in Türkiye in February 2023, DPI carried out online, in-person and hybrid activities in line with the seismic situation. Moving into 2024, DPI will continue to adopt a hybrid approach, combining the benefits of online meetings, such as greater access and participation, with the gains in understanding and trust from face-to-face interactions. Our impact has been recognised by our participants, who shared positive feedback after our events, expressing their gratitude for the opportunity to interact with a wide range of actors and to partake in discussions regarding the political processes in the region.

Feedback Report, DPI Interactive Seminar 'Youth's Perspective on Conflict Resolution in Post-Election Türkiye' - July 2023, Istanbul:

Participant 1: "As someone who is currently writing their master's thesis, I left the meeting with many articles and writing ideas. I will share these ideas with my colleagues at the Turkish Young Peacebuilders Association, where I volunteer."

Feedback Report, DPI International Conflict Resolution Exchange 'Post Elections in Türkiye: Opportunities and Obstacles for Peace and the Experience of Northern Ireland' - July 2023, London:

Participant 2: "I think it was a successful event. It may encourage participants to think about the role business can play in political reconciliation and dialogue."



ACTIVITIES

PEACE TABLE

Women in Peacemaking: Policymakers, Peacekeepers, Facilitators, and Mediators

- 23 March 2023, Ankara

On March 2023 in Ankara, DPI, in association with the Irish Embassy in Ankara, hosted a Peace Table event titled “Women in Peacemaking: Policymakers, Peacekeepers, Facilitators, and Mediators”. The meeting brought together a diverse group of women, including members of political parties, representatives of embassies, lawyers, journalists, academics and civil society members representing Türkiye’s broad spectrum of political affiliations in the south and southeast of Türkiye. The event welcomed new participants and attendees from prior events to ensure the continuity of knowledge and trust-building.

Following the opening remarks, Sonya McGuinness, the Irish ambassador to Türkiye, emphasised Ireland’s commitment to supporting women’s active and meaningful engagement in attempts to resolve conflicts. Ambassador McGuinness highlighted the great efforts that various actors went through



Participants at the Women in Peacemaking Event with DPI Staff

to end the seemingly intractable conflict with widespread violence; in their words, there was both ground-breaking political leadership and compromises, with the role of women being key.

The event was followed by the screening of the 2017 documentary “Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs”, which chronicles the formation of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) and its contribution to peacebuilding,

Following the screening, the event’s keynote speaker, Avila Kilmurray, co-founder of the NIWC, shared her experiences with the audience. She highlighted the importance of having a firm base of values which all members agree on to overcome political or ideological differences, as well as the power of grassroots organisations for bringing women leaders into political or peace processes, such as trade unions and community women’s movements, and teaching skills of negotiation and organisation. Additionally, Kilmurray spoke about the benefits of collective leadership whereby all women are trained in different leadership skills so that each woman’s strengths are maximised, and in case someone becomes unavailable, another member can take their place. Finally, she identified the need to ensure that the narrative surrounding peace deals is positive to enhance the deal’s sustainability. Questions that followed Kilmurray’s speech focused on how to overcome political, religious, and ethnic differences as well as how to break through the persistent political polarisation to pursue peace. There appeared to be a consensus on the need for women politicians to overcome what divides them to come together, like the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition, to aid Türkiye in moving towards a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish issue.



Participants at the Women in Peacemaking Event



Participants listening to Avila Kilmurray during the “Women in Peacemaking” event



Participants from AK Party, HDP, and Gelecek Party having a discussion during the coffee break, Women in Peacemaking Event

Most participants in the Q&A session that followed stated that they were inspired by and admired how the women who took part in the NIWC managed to come together from different communities, overcoming political and ideological divides to pursue peace. They thanked DPI multiple times during the event for providing a platform to discuss how women face conflict and space to come together across the political divide. DPI continues to prioritise this issue in its program as it views women’s active and meaningful participation in peace-making and conflict-resolution activities as essential.

Overall, this roundtable and discussion proved to be timely and allowed the politicians to reflect on how women frequently suffer the most from conflict hardships. The event provided the female politicians with an example of women successfully overcoming different divides to positively contribute to a peace process and a shared platform to discuss not only the role of women in politics and peacebuilding but also how women can contribute to the resumption of the parked peace process in Türkiye. The event and the film inspired the women politicians during a very important and polarised time in Türkiye before the elections in May.

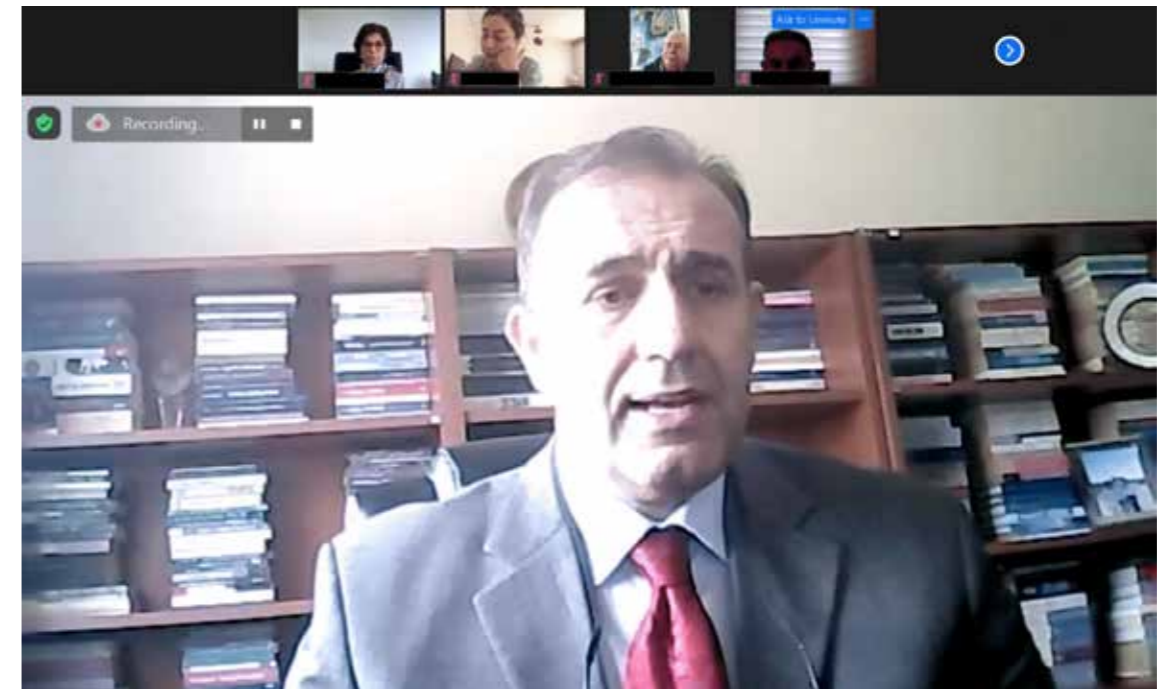
Political Dynamics in Türkiye Towards the Elections and Opportunities for Peace

- 26 April 2023, Online

On April 26, 2023, DPI held an online Peace Table event titled “Political Dynamics in Türkiye Towards the Elections and Opportunities for Peace”. The event aimed to hear analysis from and discuss with political policy advisors, journalists, and representatives from prominent public opinion research companies. The meeting brought together a diverse group of journalists, representatives from prominent public opinion research companies, academics and civil society representatives representing the diverse political spectrum in Türkiye and international experts. The event welcomed new participants and attendees from prior events to ensure the continuity of knowledge and trust-building.

The event’s keynote speaker was Vahap Coşkun, a Professor of Law at the University of Dicle in Diyarbakır. He has written for several online newspapers and published books on human rights, constitutional law, political theory, and social peace. Additionally, Coşkun was a member of the Wise Persons Committee in Türkiye in the team responsible for the Central Anatolian Region. Following an introduction about his interpretation of the possible results and outcomes of the upcoming General Elections in Türkiye, he also explained in more detail both the governments’ and the opposition’s priorities and strategies, as well as how these could impact the country in its entirety, depending on each scenario.

After the opening remarks, Vahap Coşkun opened the floor for participants to ask questions, comment, and give their opinions about the elections. From these conversations, most of the attendees agreed that the most important topic was not only the outcome of the elections but rather how it would impact fundamental and critical issues in Türkiye, such as identities, the Kurdish issue, the economy, the political system, and more broadly the whole country’s future. While replying, Professor Vahap Coşkun emphasised that it would be a head-to-head election, with the opposition close to winning but not certain to do so, as well as a possibility of a second round. Following these statements, it has been expressed that it was also important to focus on establishing a majority in the parliament in the name of stability for the country.



In the Q&A section, the participants asked specific questions about how the election results would impact the Kurdish issue and a potential resolution process. A common theme across the participants’ points of discussion was the need to consider normalisation, which included resolving the dispute to improve the economic crisis, democracy, regional dynamics, and the reconstruction of Türkiye. On both sides, the importance of the Kurdish voters is recognised; however, it was highlighted that there are discrepancies in the government’s rhetoric toward them, their rights and their freedoms. Moreover, there was apprehension that the smaller, more extremist parties could harm the discourse and the post-election policy toward the Kurds.

Overall, this roundtable and discussion proved to be timely and provided the participants with an overview of the election’s dynamics. Participants expressed gratitude for being gathered around such an engaging topic; they all learned a lot and understood more about the issues at stake, the potential scenarios, and the possibilities for peace to return to Türkiye. Very importantly, it was mentioned that although May 14 will mark the end of elections campaigns, the atmosphere will remain as tense as now until changes are implemented. This gave DPI hopes and beliefs that whatever the results are, Türkiye is going through a unique window of opportunity that will impact the course of action concerning conflict resolution for the better.

Türkiye's Search for a New Constitution

- 30 September 2023, Ankara

This meeting, held in conjunction with the Interactive Seminar 'An Inclusive Constitution-Making Process: How can Civil Society Play a Meaningful Role in Constitution-making', was organised under the series titled 'Constitution Making and Conflict Resolution in Türkiye', which aims to understand the role that constitution-making processes can play as part of possible conflict resolution efforts in the country. DPI organised this event to explore the reasons surrounding Türkiye's ongoing pursuit of a new constitution, assess the societal need for constitutional reform, examine the political vision for a new constitution, and evaluate the potential of political parties to address this demand. The event brought together a diverse group of individuals from various sectors, including academia, legal professionals, policymakers, civil society representatives, journalists, and senior political officials with responsibilities pertaining to legal and human rights matters, representing different political parties in Türkiye. While all political parties were invited, representatives from New Green Left, Future Party and DEVA attended this event. The group included both returning and new participants to ensure continuity while increasing diversity.

The Peace Table was opened by DPI's Senior Regional Strategy Analyst, Dr Esra Elmas, before the keynote speakers, Prof Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem and Prof Sevtap Yokuş, lecturers and professors of constitutional law, began by providing a concise overview of the previous year's DPI meeting series and publications on the constitution and conflict resolution. The speakers then drew attention to the possible opportunities emerging from the constitution discussion through a conflict resolution and peacebuilding perspective. Prof Erdem mentioned that whilst previous endeavours for a new constitution had been undermined by them being exploited for political purposes, this should not stop key actors from providing

critical analysis and innovative input. Both the current constitutional debate and the possible constitutional process in Türkiye necessitate a resumption of dialogue between the government and opposition, including the Kurdish movement, which is significant in and of itself.

They mentioned that the constitutional process may be an avenue to overcome polarised politics, re-normalise criminalised political actors, and establish a dialogue platform between parties. Prof Sevtap Yokuş emphasised that the only thing that will prevent this process from being instrumentalised for political purposes is civil society and the opposition's ownership of the process, and she invited political party representatives to present at the meeting about the preparations they are making on a new and civic constitution.

Following the presentations, participants discussed several issues, including the underlying reasons behind the search for a new constitution, lessons learnt from prior attempts, the most effective model for the constitution drafting process, and the potential opportunities in resolving the Kurdish issue that a constitutional process may offer. Opposition representatives expressed the need to prepare for the development of a new civic constitution. They argued that such an endeavour could offer the opposition a strategic opportunity to navigate the prevailing crisis. Additionally, they asserted that the forthcoming constitutional discussions should encompass a wide range of pertinent topics, including but not limited to the economic crisis in Türkiye and various human rights concerns.

Overall, this event, carried out during a difficult time in Türkiye, proved to be timely and provided the constitutional experts and civil society members with a platform to discuss constitution-making and conflict resolution with parliamentarians representing different political parties in the country. The participants, particularly the members of political parties, expressed a high level of appreciation for the opportunity to engage in discussion in an environment that facilitated a common ground for discourse, which may be translated into parliamentary action.



DPI's staff and constitutional experts after the meetings in September



DPI's poster for the Peace Table in September



Discussion during the meetings in September

Looking Ahead:

Where is Türkiye heading? - A Discussion on the Upcoming Local Elections and Opportunities & Obstacles for Conflict Resolution in Türkiye

- 14 December 2023, Online

On 14 December, DPI hosted an online Peace Table titled Looking Ahead: Where is Türkiye Heading? - A Discussion on the Upcoming Local Elections and Opportunities & Obstacles for Conflict Resolution in Türkiye. During this, the last event of 2023, the keynote speaker was Bekir Ağırđır, Board Member and former Director of the KONDA Research and Consultancy Company, and columnist. Ağırđır gave an overview of the last year and discussed the important political trends and dynamics in the lead-up to the 2024 local elections, as well as the opportunities and challenges for peace and conflict resolution in Türkiye. Participants included academics, civil society and political party representatives, and journalists from across the political spectrum, as well as international experts.

Evaluating the past year, Ağırđır mostly focused on the election results and how polarisation and securitisation dominated both the election campaigns and, eventually, voting behaviour. 6 out of 10 people who voted for the ruling bloc did so because they prioritised security concerns despite feeling the effects of the worsening economic situation and acknowledging that politics cannot go on as it is. This is also why Ağırđır was critical of the opposition for not being able to produce politics that could create a sense that they were a credible alternative. Instead, the opposition was trapped in discussions about forming political party alliances and who would or would not be included. In line with this, hypothetical scenarios where a pro-Kurdish party could determine the outcome of the presidential elections or

could sway the absolute majority in the parliament created consternation among people across the political divide due to nationalist sensitivities.

The election results boosted the morale of the government, which started to prepare for the local elections immediately after. Meanwhile, the opposition has been presenting a fragmented and bitter image, with inter and intra-party fighting. In this sense, the election of the new CHP leader, Özgür Özel, was perceived as a positive development that could signal change.

Ağırđır mentioned that there were 3 Türkiye's:

- 1) Coastal regions with people with more secular lifestyles, who mainly vote for CHP;
- 2) more conservative regions of the Black Sea and inner Anatolia, people who mainly vote for MHP and AK Party;
- 3) Kurdish-majority East and Southeast regions, people who mainly vote for the pro-Kurdish party (currently DEM). Similarly, there are also three different economies in these regions.

During the discussion, participants talked about the role of media in Türkiye during election periods, how to create a common and unifying dialogue, and the increasing sense of hopelessness regarding the future amongst young people.



INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION EXCHANGE

Post Elections in Türkiye: Opportunities and Obstacles for Peace and the Experience of Northern Ireland

- 12-14 July 2023, London

On 12-14 July 2023, the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI) held an International Conflict Resolution Exchange (ICRE) titled Post Elections in Türkiye: Opportunities and Obstacles for Peace and the Experience of Northern Ireland in London. Carried out during a highly polarised political context in Türkiye, the event, organised during a highly polarised political period in Türkiye, brought together high-level representatives from Türkiye's ruling AK Party and the two main opposition parties, CHP and Green Left (formerly HDP). Distinguished speakers who played crucial roles in the Northern Irish peace process, with the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement this year, were featured. The event aimed to have an in-depth conversation about possible future movements regarding conflict resolution in Türkiye in a post-election period. In Türkiye, there is also the added factor that this term will most likely be President Erdoğan's last term, bringing about discussions regarding legacy. Despite disagreements on various topics, participants reiterated that they agreed on how the Kurdish issue needs to be resolved politically, through dialogue, and not militarily. They also agreed that the previous peace process in 2013 was a valuable experience and a foundation for future attempts. The post-election period was discussed as a narrow window of opportunity for conflict resolution in Türkiye, and opposition representatives indicated they would have a constructive approach to any initiative the government took.

Participants discussed the newly announced cabinet, Türkiye's support for Sweden's accession to NATO, and specifically President Erdoğan's



AK Party Politician Ömer Serdar during the International Conflict Resolution Exchange in July

remarks regarding the EU membership process as positive steps towards normalisation, even though opposition parties remain cautious about whether concrete changes would follow these in policy. A matter that was extensively discussed was the polarising political rhetoric, heightened specifically during election periods, and increased nationalism in Türkiye, factors that can be seen across the two main alliances. Here, the constructive role that both government and opposition need to play was underlined; criminalisation of (association with) HDP and taboos built around addressing the Kurdish Issue need to be addressed while being aware of and not ignoring the increased nationalist sensitivities. That is why participants highlighted the importance of publicising the idea of peace and strengthening civil society. They encouraged DPI to continue providing an inclusive discussion platform and focus on capacity-building efforts for civil society.

While election periods were acknowledged as challenging and potentially polarising times, the upcoming 2024 local elections were also mentioned as a narrow window of opportunity for the government to demonstrate a willingness for normalisation, specifically regarding the Kurdish issue. In this sense, the practice of appointing trustees was discussed. A signal from the government indicating they will not continue this practice after the election could influence Green Left/HDP's local elections strategy. HDP already indicated that they would not follow the same strategy of de facto aligning with the opposition as they did during the presidential elections

and are considering putting candidates forward in big cities such as Ankara and Istanbul. This move would divide the opposition vote and indirectly benefit the AK Party, which is eager to regain these cities.

Participants acknowledged that, after the local elections, there will be a long period without elections, creating an opportunity to have discussions in a less contentious context. Furthermore, the current parliament is the most diverse and representative parliament that Türkiye has seen in decades, giving it an enforced legitimacy to have inclusive discussions on contentious issues. Participants recognised that matters related to the rule of law, human rights, and democratisation should be considered above party politics, and the parliament should be a platform for discussions on matters such as constitution-making and the Kurdish issue, which are highly interlinked. Parliamentary commissions were mentioned as opportunities for cross-party conciliation and progress on these matters. Here, while the ruling party's crucial role in setting the tone was underlined, the opposition's pivotal role in seizing the opportunities and taking risks was also acknowledged. In this sense, relations with the EU were singled out as a potential starting point for such discussions where progress can be made.

Participants valued the opportunity to engage with representatives from different political parties and discuss Northern Ireland's case and Türkiye's peace prospects in polarised times. DPI pledged to continue organising events that foster dialogue on conflict resolution in Türkiye, bringing together high-level representatives from diverse political backgrounds.



Politicians, Ömer Serdar, Meral Daniş Beştaş, and Oğuz Kaan Salıcı from the AK Party, HDP/Green Left, and the CHP respectively, discussing possible opportunities for peace during the International Conflict Resolution Exchange in July

Role of Business in Peacebuilding

- 23 - 25 November 2023, London

From November 23 to 25, 2023, DPI hosted an International Conflict Resolution Exchange (ICRE) in London titled "Role of Business in Peacebuilding" in cooperation with the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DTSO). This event brought together representatives from major political parties in Türkiye and the business community to discuss and explore how business can affect conflict resolution and play a role in peace.

The event included discussion sessions with the participants and presentations from Derek Mooney and Glyn Roberts, who discussed business's role in conflict resolution and how conflict and peace have affected business in Northern Ireland. Mooney, a former advisor to the Irish government and a communication consultant, spoke about the history of the conflict in



Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive of Retail Northern Ireland, discussing the dividends that peace has had on the Northern Irish economy at the ICRE.



Northern Ireland, how the Troubles affected business in Ireland, and how business could promote and contribute to the peace process, which led to the Good Friday Agreement. Roberts, the Chief Executive of Retail Northern Ireland, a business organisation that represents independent retailers in Northern Ireland, spoke about the dividends that peace has had on the Northern Irish economy, the revitalisation of the Northern Irish economy, and how Northern Ireland has been able to leverage peace for prosperity.

Participants were able to discuss a variety of topics, including how business and enterprise can strengthen peace efforts and processes when they occur, how business can maintain and contribute to dialogue between conflicting groups, especially during periods of heightened tension or conflict, the potential benefits of peace and the growth of investment in Türkiye that would occur with conflict resolution and political normalisation, and a wide variety of other topics related to the economy, conflict resolution, and peace. Participants expressed gratitude and appreciation to DPI for creating an environment conducive to honest and constructive dialogue. DPI will continue its work on the economic dividends for peace in Türkiye with future events.



Mehmet Kaya, chairman of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speaking during the ICRE.



Derek Mooney, communications expert and advisor to the Irish government during the peace process, during his talk at the ICRE in November.

INTERACTIVE SEMINAR

Youth's Perspective on Conflict Resolution in Post-Election Türkiye

- 8 July 2023, Istanbul

In July 2023, DPI held an Interactive Seminar called Youth's Perspective on Conflict Resolution in Post-Election Türkiye. Carried out after a highly polarised election period in Türkiye, the event brought together a diverse group of young individuals, including researchers, civil society representatives, columnists, and public opinion research company representatives. With approximately 20 million individuals aged 15 to 29, 23.2% of the nation's total population, Türkiye has one of Europe's youngest demographics. As such, comprehending their political inclinations and voting patterns is pivotal, considering their impact on conflict resolution in Türkiye. The event aimed to understand their interests in the conflict resolution process to integrate these into DPI's evaluations and activities and to have an in-depth conversation about the youth's perspective on the election outcomes and possible actions to be taken to encourage their meaningful participation as active stakeholders in conflict resolution efforts in Türkiye.

Participants had an in-depth discussion on the voting patterns of youth and future takeaways. Speculation on 'Gen Z' voting before the elections included assumptions of divergence from the mainstream, which influenced particularly the opposition in their campaigns. However, reality showed that while youth critically assess parties, they tend to vote similarly to their families. Exceptions gravitate towards populist parties with authentic, outsider, and candid leaders.

Regarding Kurdish youth, research and voting trends challenge the notion that they are more radical than older generations. Contrarily, they distance themselves from armed conflict and lean towards identifying as opposition voters over Kurdish voters.

During the discussion, issues such as the economy, unemployment rate, low quality of education, and concern for the future were recognised as impacting youth irrespective of their political affiliations. Participants discussed the impact of polarising election rhetoric on youth, which fuels nationalist sentiments and anti-refugee, anti-Kurdish attitudes and contributes to criminalising HDP/Green Left Party and negatively shaping views of the 2013 peace process. Consequently, attendees emphasised promoting peace and strengthening civil society to facilitate a non-political dialogue. Safe platforms uniting youth from diverse backgrounds were highlighted, particularly in the current polarised climate. They also reiterated the importance of including young voices in the conversation.

An Inclusive Constitution-Making Process: How can Civil Society Play a Meaningful Role in Constitution-making

- 30 September 2023, Ankara

The meeting, part of the series ‘Constitution Making and Conflict Resolution in Türkiye’, focused on the role of constitution-making processes in potential conflict resolution in the country. DPI organized this event to focus on the factors behind Türkiye’s continuous efforts to create a new constitution, analyse the societal need for constitutional change, scrutinise the political objectives for a new constitution, and assess the capability of political parties to meet this demand. The event convened a varied group of individuals from different sectors, such as academia, legal professionals, policymakers, civil society representatives, journalists, and senior political officials responsible for legal and human rights issues, representing various political parties in Türkiye. Although all political parties were invited, only representatives from New Green Left, Future Party, and DEVA were present at the event. The group consisted of both returning and new members to maintain consistency and enhance variety.

The Interactive seminar entitled “An Inclusive Constitution-Making Process: How can the Civil Society Play a Meaningful Role in Constitution-making” was opened with DPI’s Senior Regional Strategy Analyst, Dr. Esra Elmas, who mentioned the importance of the constitutional debate and the need to foster inclusivity in a possible future constitutional process. The event then focused on the participants, who comprised civil society actors, constitutional experts, and political representatives such as MPs, views on the role of the opposition in the constitution-making process should be, and how to ensure that this occurred. The MPs agreed that they were unsure if this was the right moment for Türkiye to be working on a new constitution, given the numerous significant challenges currently facing the country, namely the ongoing economic crisis. They also discussed that the opposition must have red lines in the process and not allow the ruling party to violate them. Following this, participants discussed the role and ways civil society should engage in any constitution-making process. Participants agreed that the constitution-making process needs to be transparent and inclusive. They also agreed that the opposition had the power to effect and be important in the constitution-making process; the AK Party does not hold the votes to put a new constitution in place on its own and will have to work with the opposition somehow.

During a challenging period in Türkiye, this event provided constitutional experts and civil society members with an opportunity to discuss constitution-making and conflict resolution with parliamentarians from various political parties. The participants, especially the political party members, appreciated the chance to talk in a setting that allowed for common ground and may lead to legislative action.

Arts & Culture in Conflict Resolution

- 27 October 2023, Istanbul

On the 27th of October 2023, DPI hosted an Interactive Seminar in Istanbul, bringing together representatives from Türkiye’s influential art and culture community. The event aimed to discuss the role of art and culture in conflict resolution. The discussions revolved around the significance of artists, their creations, and the underlying messages, exploring how they contribute to resolving societal conflicts. During the meeting, participants assessed the current political landscape in Türkiye, focusing on the internal dynamics within the country’s art and culture community. Notably, artistic circles with differing political perspectives were identified as particularly isolated, lacking effective communication channels. The representatives underscored the urgency of bridging these



Participants at the ‘Arts and Culture in Conflict Resolution’ DPI event in October

gaps and fostering communication across separated art communities. They acknowledged DPI's unique position to facilitate this, citing its operating model and strategic approach. It was noted that engaging representatives from artistic and cultural institutions with institutional representation in DPI's activities is crucial. Additionally, involving prominent figures from the sector capable of reaching a broad audience was deemed necessary. The representatives proposed that DPI's activities should include a comparative study abroad. They believed it would benefit Türkiye's artistic and cultural community by removing them from their insulated environment and alleviating political concerns.

Participants agreed on the transformative impact of artistic and cultural programs in advancing peace across all phases of the conflict cycle, from prevention to post-conflict recovery. Using artistic approaches in conflict resolution provides the flexibility and creativity needed to explore novel avenues for a peaceful future. Research indicates that cultural initiatives foster community cohesion and challenge perceptions of identity, providing a platform for dialogue that resonates with a diverse audience.

These projects can soften entrenched positions in a conflict, paving the way for more open-minded consideration of potential solutions. The discussion underscored the pivotal role of artists like Kadir İnanır, a member of the WPC, during the resolution process in Türkiye. Such artists offer a significant opportunity to reach across the political spectrum and advocate for peace. However, the discourse also emphasised the necessity of overcoming polarisation within the art community in Türkiye to unlock the full potential of art and artists. Participants also affirmed that once dialogue is established within the art community and divisive barriers are overcome, a diverse range of tools can be used for conflict resolution. Examples include festivals, musical and theatrical performances, exhibitions, singing, various forms of theatre and cinema, paintings, murals, graffiti, oral history and storytelling projects, photography, textile art, poetry, and writing. Artistic and cultural initiatives can play a crucial role in amplifying the voices of the unheard, celebrating identities, fostering empathy, addressing the legacy of past conflicts, and envisioning the future.

Art as a medium can be influential in moving conversations forward and imagining what peace could look like, even in challenging times when a peace process is at a standstill. Thus, the primary objective of this Interactive Seminar was to comprehend the role of arts and culture

in conflict resolution and explore how art can initiate conversations and involve a wider audience. Despite the challenging circumstances in Türkiye during which the seminar took place, it was deemed successful, with participants expressing a high level of appreciation for the opportunity to delve into the often-overlooked benefits of arts and culture in fostering peace.

In the upcoming year, DPI will maintain its commitment to explore art's multifaceted roles and potentials in peacebuilding and advancing peace in Türkiye. This exploration will unfold through a series of meetings designed to scrutinise international conflict resolution experiences while evaluating Türkiye's journey in conflict resolution. These discussions will incorporate insights from prominent individuals and institutions within Türkiye's art community. The series on art and culture will significantly contribute to DPI's ongoing initiatives to prepare society for future peace processes in Türkiye. This approach underscores the importance of sustaining dialogue and broadening bases for participation in democratisation and resolution processes, even in the face of the most challenging circumstances. By delving into this new topic and involving new participants from the art world, we aim to broaden our engagement, extend the platforms for dialogue, and transcend conflict divides in Türkiye.



DPI's poster for the event

Communication of Peace: Media in Conflict Resolution

- 28 October 2023, Istanbul

DPI hosted an interactive seminar on October 28, 2023, in Istanbul titled “Communication of Peace: Media in Conflict Resolution.” This event brought together journalists from various media organisations in Türkiye to discuss and analyse political dynamics in the country following the 2023 elections and, in the lead to the 2024 local elections. The event aimed to discuss the opportunities and limitations for media to impact conflict resolution in Türkiye, specifically related to the Kurdish Issue.

Participants discussed various topics and how they linked to media and peace, beginning with a discussion of recent political developments in Türkiye. Discussed was President Erdoğan’s re-election in the spring of this year and the failure of the opposition to present themselves as a viable alternative to Erdoğan and the AK Party, all with the backdrop of economic crisis and earthquakes which hit the country before the elections. Other political developments discussed included the potential of a lack of opposition in the future, the effects of the Israeli-Gaza War on Turkish politics, and changes in the AK Party.

Participants also discussed the upcoming local elections and their possible effects. They believed that the Kurdish community, especially in the major metropolitan cities, could play a decisive part in determining the results of the local elections. Kurdish support for the opposition in the major metropolitan cities could be essential for the opposition. Participants also discussed the critical role DEM (formerly HDP) could play in creating a new constitution. As it currently stands, the AK Party does not have the votes in the Parliament to bring a new constitution into power or to bring it to a referendum. Participants thus discussed that the DEM could have significant bargaining power in creating a new constitution.

Participants then discussed the current media landscape in Türkiye. They talked about how the media in Türkiye has relied on the government for much of its history, but the current situation is radical. Very few mainstream media outlets remain outside government control, and these are extremely careful when discussing issues sensitive to the government. Social media and other alternative media remain somewhat more independent, but the government still exerts much influence. Participants discussed the challenges for journalists and media members to report on and discuss peace and place it at the forefront of the public agenda in this environment. The ownership structure of media makes it prone to nationalism and populism, and it is difficult for it to take a position contrary to or in opposition to the government’s position, especially regarding the Kurdish issue. Despite these issues, participants discussed how the media could make the issue of conflict resolution a part of discussions of the upcoming local elections, the constitutional debate, and the economic crisis, especially the economic crisis, as they could present the economic costs of conflict and make conflict resolution not only a moral or political issue but also an economic issue.

ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

Assessment Meeting -

The Current Situation in Türkiye: “Political Dynamics in Türkiye Ahead of the 2023 General Elections”, with Ali Bayramoğlu

- 23 January 2023, Online

On January 23, 2023, DPI hosted its first Assessment Meeting to examine the political landscape in Türkiye before the 2023 General Elections. The event aimed to gather various stakeholders for a comprehensive discussion ahead of the general and Presidential elections in May. The discussion encompassed social, political, and regional dynamics, conflict resolution, and the implications for the Kurdish issue.

The meeting was based on a recent DPI report titled “Türkiye’s Political Dynamics” by Ali Bayramoğlu, a writer and political commentator. Attendees included academics, lawyers, policymakers, civil society members, journalists, senior political figures from different parties in Türkiye, and international conflict resolution experts. Representatives from the AK Party, CHP, HDP, and DEVA Party were present, featuring a mix of returning participants and new voices to ensure both continuity and increased diversity in the discussions.



Participants during the online Assessment Meeting “Current Situation in Türkiye: Political Dynamics in Türkiye Ahead of the 2023 General Elections”

The event’s key speaker, Ali Bayramoğlu, emphasised the power of alliances among major political actors in the upcoming elections. Following the presentation, a Q&A and discussion provided an opportunity to delve into the challenges faced by the opposition in collaborating with the HDP, including matters related to selecting a presidential candidate and withholding funds for the HDP as a party.

Political party representatives concluded the event, expressing their commitment to democracy, willingness to cooperate with the 6 Party Alliance, and the need for a strong candidate to address societal issues. This assessment meeting and discussion proved to be timely, offering a comprehensive overview of the context surrounding the upcoming May 2023 elections. It provided a platform for various stakeholders to engage in a meaningful dialogue about the different dynamics at play in these elections, particularly emphasising their potential to serve as a window of opportunity to address the Kurdish issue. DPI remains committed to promoting peace and democracy-building through the facilitation of public dialogue and engagement, exemplified by events like these.

Assessment Meeting

Türkiye’s Foreign Policy Ahead of the 2023 Elections: “Implications for the Kurdish Issue and the Region”

- 26-27 January 2023, the Hague, Netherlands

The ongoing conflict in Türkiye is inherently interconnected to regional dynamics, specifically in Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Therefore, the resolution of the Kurdish issue holds relevance for both the region and the international community. Under the Chatham House rule, participants at the session discussed the implications of the upcoming elections for the Kurdish issue and the region. The Turkish government’s recent foreign policy moves to normalise relations and whether they are merely practical moves ahead of the elections to win or signal a genuine change were also among the topics discussed. Participants engaged in an exploration of the potential implications of normalisation and democratisation for the Kurdish issue and the region, specifically in Iraq and Syria, for other minorities as well, at present and in the post-electoral period.

Assessment Meeting

The Social, Political, and Economic Implications of the February 6 Earthquakes in Türkiye

- 21 February 2023, Online

On February 21, 2023, DPI conducted an online Assessment Meeting involving Türkiye-based Council of Experts members. The primary objective of this meeting was to evaluate the current situation in Türkiye following the disastrous earthquakes that occurred on February 6 in Türkiye and Syria. These earthquakes resulted in the tragic loss of over 50,000 lives and came at a time when Türkiye was grappling with unprecedented economic turmoil and political polarisation.

DPI's Council of Experts members engaged in a thorough discussion regarding the potential social, political, and economic implications of these earthquakes, as well as their impact on the organisation's operations. During the discussion, it was noted that the earthquake served as a significant test for the Presidential system, revealing its failure due to a delayed, inadequate, and poorly organised response. The discussion also covered the earthquake's impact on the upcoming election campaign. The



Participants during the Assessment Meeting "The Social, Political, and Economic Implications of the February 6 Earthquakes in Türkiye"



government emphasised promises of reconstruction, while the opposition spotlighted the government's shortcomings in response to the disaster. It was also discussed that the government chose not to postpone the elections despite the economic challenges, preferring to concentrate on future promises. On the other hand, the opposition was criticised for not offering a compelling alternative to attract new voters.

The assessment meeting provided a timely and comprehensive overview of the earthquake's profound impact on Türkiye's social, political, and economic landscape. DPI reaffirms its dedication to advancing peace and democracy-building through heightened public dialogue and engagement, exemplified by such events.

An Assessment of the Possible Implications of the Recent Elections in Türkiye on Conflict Resolution

- 25 May 2023, London

On May 25, 2023, DPI held an Assessment meeting in London with a Former MP and government representative during the Solution Process in 2013. During this meeting, attendees discussed the possible outcomes of the May 14 elections and how this would affect conflict resolution, democratisation, and normalisation in the country. The insights from this dialogue were used to assess the dynamics in Türkiye leading up to the General Election on May 28. Participants also had the opportunity to delve into the current government's plans for moving forward after the elections. It was noted that the election's outcome could provide a new window of opportunity for the resolution process, given the significant powers held by the President, which could potentially lead to a breakthrough.

Overall, the discussion during the assessment meeting indicated a high possibility that the government may engage in constructive dialogue. It was suggested that DPI should formulate a positive vision for the upcoming 100th anniversary and continue its efforts towards peacebuilding.

The Implications of the 2023 Elections on Conflict Resolution in Türkiye: A Conversation with Türkiye-based DPI COEs

- 09 June 2023, Online

On June 9, 2023, DPI held its fourth online Assessment Meeting titled. The objective of this meeting was to have a preliminary discussion on the implications of the 2023 general and presidential elections, specifically focusing on the opportunities and challenges for conflict resolution in post-election Türkiye, as well as the direction of DPI's work in the future. The discussion encompassed a range of topics, including the composition of the new cabinet, the state of the economy, post-election dynamics within the opposition, upcoming local elections, and the potential impact of all these factors on the Kurdish issue and, consequently, on DPI's work.

During the discussions, it was noted that the new cabinet seemed to be well-informed about contentious issues, particularly the resolution process. This familiarity raised the possibility of a return to rational economic policies and some form of normalization. While some caution was expressed, these developments were generally well-received by a broad segment of society. Although the security-based approach was expected to remain in place for the foreseeable future, the new cabinet created an opportunity for dialogues concerning the political resolution of the Kurdish issue. Participants from the region emphasized the lasting impact of the Solution Process in 2013, which generated a strong sense of change still remembered today. There was also a prevailing willingness to support such a process. Additionally, it was believed that normalization in foreign policy could influence domestic politics.

The discussion highlighted the importance of DPI's role during these transformative times and underscored DPI's advantage as a recognized and respected organization in the field. Recommendations for the upcoming period include focusing on regional dynamics and media-related initiatives as strategies moving forward.

DPI Social Media Material for the Assessment Meeting with the DPI's Turkish Council of Experts in June



Looking Ahead: Implications of the Elections on Conflict Resolution in Türkiye

- 08 July 2023, Istanbul

On July 8, 2023, DPI convened an Assessment Meeting titled “Looking Ahead: Implications of the Elections on Conflict Resolution in Türkiye” with its Türkiye-based Council of Experts, consisting of academics, policymakers, lawyers, and artists. The primary objective of this meeting was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the political dynamics in Türkiye following the elections and to examine the potential opportunities and challenges that these new dynamics pose in the context of conflict resolution. Additionally, the meeting aimed to explore future strategies for DPI within this evaluative framework.

Among the topics discussed, the emergence of heightened nationalism, particularly evident in the increased anti-refugee and Kurdish rhetoric, was identified as a possible obstacle to conflict resolution. The deliberations also



touched upon the ongoing debates concerning a new constitution and the state of EU-Türkiye relations as potential avenues for conflict resolution in Türkiye. A central theme of the discussion revolved around the necessity of promoting peace in Türkiye. This led to a consensus on the importance of understanding the dynamics driving this surging nationalism, particularly among the youth demographic. Additionally, participants discussed how Türkiye's economic situation is increasingly necessitating steps toward democratization and normalization. Since Türkiye lacks sufficient natural resources that would make it possible to sustain itself, it becomes imperative to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) by demonstrating the presence of economic and political stability and the rule of law. The worsening economic conditions exert pressure on the government to acknowledge this reality. Participants pointed out that if the government chooses to take action, it could represent a potential opportunity for conflict resolution in Türkiye, as the ongoing conflict remains one of the primary drivers of political instability and democratic backsliding. These discussions also aligned with considerations regarding EU-Türkiye relations as another potential avenue for placing conflict resolution on the political agenda.

Overall, participants emphasized the paramount importance of focusing on the promotion of the idea of peace through collaboration with civil society. They also highlighted the need to continue Briefing and Mentoring activities with policymakers, providing a platform for diverse stakeholders to come together to pursue conflict resolution efforts.



Some of DPI's staff and Türkiye-based Council of Experts after the Assessment Meeting in July

How to Build on Common Interests: Current Situation in Türkiye and Opportunities for Conflict Resolution

- 25 September 2023, Online

DPI held an online Assessment Meeting on September 25 titled How to Build on Common Interests: Current Situation in Türkiye and Opportunities for Conflict Resolution. In this event, participants heard from the Director of Istanbul Policy Centre, Professor Fuat Keyman, and UN Standby Team Associate Mediator, Associate Professor Esra Çuhadar. Keyman examined the impact of the election results on Turkish politics and international affairs, the geopolitical strategy of strategic autonomy, how Türkiye has pursued this strategy, and its effects on Türkiye's place in the international arena.

Professor Çuhadar then spoke to participants about the importance and role of civil society in peacebuilding and the different levels of peacebuilding. She spoke about the importance of inclusiveness in peace processes, and the importance of grassroots organisations in peacebuilding, especially women and youth organisations.

Following this, there was a Q&A session where participants had the opportunity to ask questions to the speakers. This discussion included a wide variety of topics including revitalising civil society in Türkiye, the role of the opposition in peacebuilding efforts, and the regionality of the Kurdish issue. A consistent theme in the discussion was that of an overall sense of hopelessness in society due to the economic situation, mainly prevalent among youth, and the political disillusionment of the opposition supporters. Participants brought up the feeling of collective dissatisfaction felt by many, and how this can be addressed. Speakers emphasised the importance of rekindling hope, and why that makes the work of organisations such as DPI that focuses on promoting democratisation and peace.



DPI's poster for the Assessment Meeting in September.

Recent Developments in Türkiye: A Conflict Resolution Perspective

- 9 October 2023, London

On October 9, DPI held an in-person Assessment Meeting at DPI's office in London with Gülçin Avşar, a columnist and founding member of DEVA (Democratic and Progress Party), known for her extensive experience as a lawyer in human rights issues in Türkiye. Avşar shared her valuable insights into various topics, including post-election political dynamics, the current state of the opposition, the upcoming local elections, the ongoing discussions of a new Turkish constitution, and the Ankara attack.

The central topic of discussion was the prevailing sense of melancholy within the opposition; the result of the pre-election optimism that the opposition could win, which was subsequently dashed by the results. A key observation was the lack of internal political discussions within the Table of Six alliance during campaigning, which was seen as a contributing factor to their defeat. Additionally, the emergence of far-right parties and their prominence during the election process had a substantial impact, particularly their ability to dominate the discourse through anti-Syrian refugee rhetoric.

The post-election cabinet changes were also discussed; they brought an air of optimism to the opposition, largely based on the possibility of normalisation of key sectors such as relations with Western powers, the government's judicial and legal system, and the economy. With this said, no concrete announcements had been made. The discussion also covered the role of DPI in civil society, shedding light on the significant stifling of civil society



Gülçin Avşar, lawyer, columnist, and founding member of DEVA Party at DPI's office in London during the Assessment Meeting in October.

since 2016 due to widespread arrests and the forced closure of associations, particularly in Kurdish regions. It was further highlighted that business circles displayed reluctance to engage with Kurdish issues, fearing potential economic sanctions. A strong emphasis was also placed on the vital role of social media, media accessibility, and the free flow of information in maintaining open channels and fostering meaningful dialogue. However, the government's influence over many media companies, limiting their independence and impartiality, was mentioned as a hurdle.

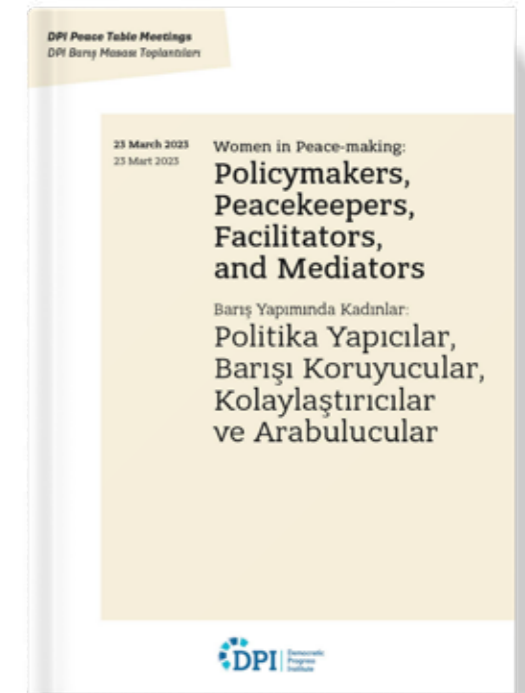
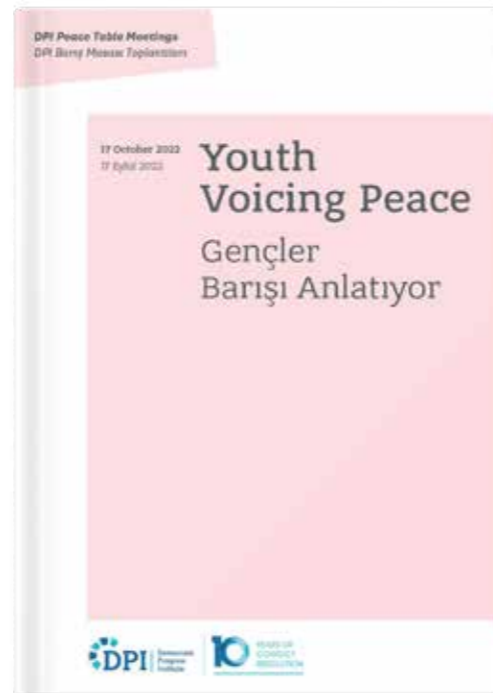
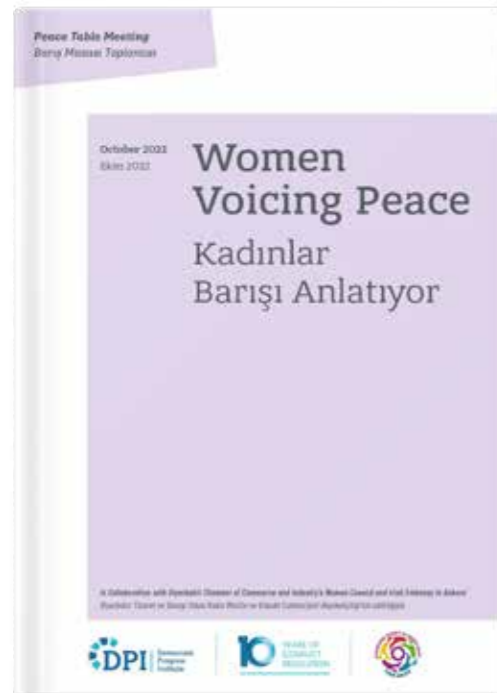
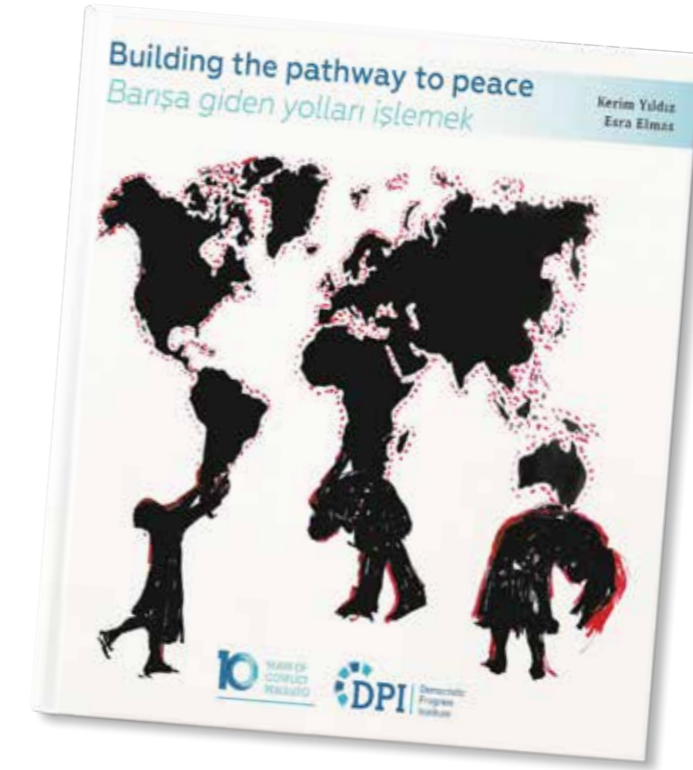
The recent Ankara attack was also discussed as, in contrast to previous attacks, this one did not lead to the typical hostile public debates. Whilst intentions behind the attack remain unclear, and although cross-border operations had intensified, there was not a shift in public attitude to the conflict. There was an expectation that the government would continue their polarising rhetoric, particularly in the local elections, with a particular emphasis on anti-LGBT policies. Following Avşar's assessment, there was a Q&A session with other participants and DPI Council of Experts members. Key points of conversation explored the despair within the opposition, the Ankara attack, the Kurdish issue, and the media's influential role. In summary, the meeting featured timely and insightful discussion, delving into the array of challenges and opportunities confronting the opposition in Türkiye.

Participants at the 'Assessment Meeting - Recent Developments in Türkiye: A Conflict Resolution Perspective' held at DPI's office in October.



ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH REPORTS IN 2023

DPI's panel of experts write leading briefings and assessments of the conflict resolution process in Türkiye and the wider region. Below is a selection of assessments and research reports that DPI published in 2023. Please note that these assessments do not necessarily reflect DPI's official position and opinions nor those of DPI's funders.





DPI's STAFF

Kerim Yildiz

Chief Executive Officer

Kerim is an expert in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, international human rights law, and minority rights, having worked on numerous projects in these areas over his career. Kerim has received several awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996 and the Sigrid Rausing Trust's Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005. Kerim is also a recipient of the 2011 Gruber Prize for Justice. He has extensive experience in human rights and actively works to raise awareness of human rights violations worldwide, assisting with many cases to the European Court of Human Rights, conducting training seminars in Europe and the Middle East, and regularly contributing to seminars and conferences.

Dr. Esra Elmas

Senior Regional Strategy Analyst

In addition to her role as Senior Regional Strategy Analyst at DPI, Dr Esra is co-founder of İstanbul Bilgi University Centre for Conflict Resolution Studies and Research, and she also worked as the Head of Türkiye Programme at DPI for five years. She received her PhD in Sociology from École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and Political Science (Department of Conflict and Development Studies) from Ghent University. Her publications cover areas such as Turkish modernisation, internal migration, civil-military relations, sacralization of politics and the history of Turkish media. Esra's 2007 book, 'My Dear Atatürk', examines the way in which primary school students in Türkiye perceive Atatürk, Türkiye's founder.

Katya Paus

Programme Officer

Katya joined DPI in January 2020 as Programme Officer. She holds a BA in Social Sciences (main areas of focus Anthropology and Sociology) from University College Utrecht and an MA in Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies from King's College London. Her academic work mainly focused on the militarisation of education in Türkiye and the relationship between public space and collective memory in the Middle East. Katya had previously interned at Agos Newspaper and the Truth, Justice and Memory Center in Istanbul. She is fluent in Turkish, English and Dutch.

Dieu Nguyen

Finance Manager

Dieu Nguyen has worked in the UK's not-for-profit sector, managing finance and funding development for the past ten years. Prior to that, she worked in the banking sector in Vietnam and Australia. In her current role as Finance Manager at DPI, Dieu works closely with the Board of Directors to recommend and implement improvements to financial policies and procedures, IT systems and facilities. Dieu has extensive experience in managing multiple complex international grants funded by the European Commission, the United Nations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Government of Ireland, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc

James Pleace

Funding and Development Officer

James Pleace has been working for DPI since June 2023 as the Funding and Development Officer. He is a graduate of Cardiff University for his undergraduate BSC in Politics and International Relations and Durham University for his MA in International Relations (East Asia). James' academic work has focused on Himalayan politics, ranging from Identity in Policy to Gender in Conflict and Peacebuilding.

Saniye Karakas

Head of Legal Programme

Saniye has been working with DPI since 2011. She is a graduate of the Dicle University Law Faculty in Türkiye. Between 2000 and 2006, she practised as a lawyer in the areas of criminal and human rights law in Diyarbakir, Türkiye. During this time, she also participated in numerous voluntary activities of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, the Contemporary Lawyers Association and the Human Rights Association's Diyarbakir branch. After completing an LLM in Human Rights at Birkbeck College, University of London in 2007, Saniye worked at the Kurdish Human Rights Project as a Legal Associate until 2011. She has been a researcher at the International State Crime Initiative, where she was involved in a project titled 'Civil Society Resistance to State Violence and Corruption-Comparative Study'. She has also contributed to failibelli.org, a website that monitors cases opened against perpetrators of crimes committed by state security officers in Türkiye.

Akinola Williams

Operations Manager

Akinola Williams joined DPI in March 2019 as the Operations Manager with 20 years of law, training, recruitment and management experience. He has worked in private legal practice, as well as at the Nigerian Ministry of Justice and RG World (also trading as Rail Gourmet UK Ltd).

BOARD MEMBERS

Kerim Yıldız - Chief Executive Officer

Kerim Yıldız is an expert in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, international human rights law and minority rights, having worked on numerous projects in these areas over his career. Yıldız has received a number of awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996, and the Sigrid Rausing Trust's Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005. Yıldız is also a recipient of the 2011 Gruber Prize for Justice. He has also written extensively on international humanitarian law, conflict, and various human rights mechanisms.

Nicholas Stewart KC - Chair

Nicholas Stewart, KC, is a barrister and Deputy High Court Judge (Chancery and King's Bench Divisions) in the United Kingdom. He is the former Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales and former President of the Union Internationale des Avocats. He has appeared at all court levels in England and Wales, before the Privy Council on appeals from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and the Bahamas, and in the High Court of the Republic of Singapore and the European Court of Human Rights. Stewart has also been the chair of the Dialogue Advisory Group since its founding in 2008.

Owen Bowcott

Journalist, was The Guardian's legal affairs and Ireland correspondent. He has previously been a general news reporter, foreign news editor and was Ireland correspondent during The Troubles. He studied history at Birmingham University and journalism at Cardiff University. He started off working for the Birmingham Post and later joined the BBC, working as a researcher and producer for BBC News and the current affairs programme Panorama. He has also been a reporter on The Daily Telegraph. He is co-author of a book, *Beating the System*, about the early years of computer hacking and the criminalisation of online activity.

Priscilla Hayner

Priscilla Hayner is co-founder of the International Center for Transitional Justice and is currently on the UN Department of Political Affairs Standby Team of Mediation Experts. She is a global expert on truth commissions and transitional justice initiatives and has authored several books on these topics, including *Unspeakable Truths*, which analyses truth commissions globally. Hayner has recently engaged in the recent Colombia talks as transitional justice advisor to Norway, and in the 2008 Kenya negotiations as human rights advisor to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the United Nations-African Union mediation team. Hayner has also worked significantly in the implementation stages following a peace agreement or transition, including Sierra Leone in 1999 and South Sudan in 2015.

Arild Humlen

Arild Humlen is a lawyer and Director of the Norwegian Bar Association's Legal Committee. He is widely published within a number of jurisdictions, with emphasis on international civil law and human rights, and he has lectured at the law faculty of several universities in Norway. Humlen is the recipient of the Honor Prize of the Bar Association of Oslo for his work on the rule of law and in 2015 he was awarded the Honor Prize from the international organisation Save the Children for his efforts to strengthen the legal rights of children.

Antonia Potter Prentice

Antonia Potter Prentice is currently the Director of Alliance 2015-a global network of humanitarian and development organisations. Prentice has extensive experience on a range of humanitarian, development, peacemaking and peacebuilding issues through her previous positions, including interim Senior Gender Adviser to the Joint Peace Fund for Myanmar and providing technical advice to the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General to the Yemen peace process. Prentice has also been involved in various international organisations including UN Women, Dialogue Advisory Group, and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. Prentice co-founded the Athena Consortium as part of which she acts as Senior Manager on Mediation Support, Gender and Inclusion for the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and as Senior Adviser to the European Institute for Peace (EIP).

COUNCIL OF EXPERTS

Bertie Ahern

Bertie Ahern is the former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland, a position to which he was elected following numerous Ministerial appointments as well as that of Deputy Prime Minister. A defining moment of Mr Ahern's three terms in office as Taoiseach was the successful negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. Mr Ahern held the Presidency of the European Council in 2004, presiding over the historic enlargement of the EU to 27 member states. Since leaving Government in 2008 Mr Ahern has dedicated his time to conflict resolution and is actively involved with many groups around the world. Current roles include Co-Chair of The Inter Action Council; Member of the Clinton Global Initiative; Member of the International Group dealing with the conflict in the Basque Country; Honorary Adjunct Professor of Mediation and Conflict Intervention in NUI Maynooth; Member of the Kennedy Institute of NUI Maynooth; Member of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Berlin; Member of the Varkey Gems Foundation Advisory Board; Member of Crisis Management Initiative; Member of the World Economic Forum Agenda Council on Negotiation and Conflict Resolution; Member of the IMAN Foundation; Advisor to the Legislative Leadership Institute Academy of Foreign Affairs; Senior Advisor to the International Advisory Council to the Harvard International Negotiation Programme; and Director of Co-operation Ireland.

Dermot Ahern

Dermot Ahern is a former Irish Member of Parliament and Government Minister and was a key figure for more than 20 years in the Irish peace process, including in negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement. He also has extensive experience at the EU Council level, including as a key negotiator and signatory to the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. In 2005, he was appointed by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, to be a Special Envoy on the issue of UN Reform.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Asutay

Professor Dr. Mehmet Asutay is a Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Political Economy & Finance at the Durham University Business School, UK. He researches, teaches and supervises research on Islamic political economy and finance, Middle Eastern economic development and finance, the political economy of the Middle East, including Turkish and Kurdish political economies. He is the Director of the Durham Centre for Islamic Economics and Finance and the Managing Editor of the Review of Islamic Economics, as well as Associate Editor of the American Journal of Islamic Social Science. He is the Honorary Treasurer of the BRISMES (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies); and of the IAIE (International Association for Islamic Economics).

Ali Bayramoğlu

Ali Bayramoğlu is a writer and political commentator. Since 1994, he has contributed as a columnist for a variety of newspapers. He is currently a columnist for daily Karar. He is a member of the Wise Persons Committee in Turkey, established during the peace process between 2013-2015.

Prof. Christine Bell

Professor Christine Bell is a legal expert based in Edinburgh, Scotland. She is Professor of Constitutional Law and Assistant Principal (Global Justice) at the University of Edinburgh, Co-director of the Global Justice Academy, and a member of the British Academy. She was chairperson of the Belfast-based human rights organization, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, from 1995-7, and a founder member of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission established under the terms of the Belfast Agreement. In 1999 she was a member of the European Commission's Committee of Experts on Fundamental Rights. She is an expert on transitional justice, peace negotiations, constitutional law and human rights law. She regularly conducts training on these topics for diplomats, mediators and lawyers, has been involved as a legal advisor in a number of peace negotiations, and acted as an expert in transitional justice for the UN Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNIFEM.

Oral Çalışlar

Oral Çalışlar completed his studies at the Ankara University Faculty of Political Sciences. Was President of the Club of Socialist Thought at the university, as well as Secretary-General of the Ankara University Student Union. Wrote for Türk Solu journal which was launched in 1967 and for the Aydınlık journal which was launched in 1968. Was member of the editorial board of Aydınlık journal. Was arrested after the 12th of March 1971 military coup. Remained imprisoned for three years until the Amnesty law adopted in 1974. Was Editor in Chief for the Aydınlık daily newspaper launched in 1978. Was arrested again after the 12th of September 1980 military coup and released in August 1988 after four years in prison. Lived in Hamburg between 1990 and 1992 upon the invitation of the Senate of Hamburg. Worked for Cumhuriyet daily between 1992 and 2008. Broadcast television programmes on different channels, including TRT, 24TV, 360, and SKYTÜRK. Transferred from Cumhuriyet daily to Radikal daily in 2008. Between 2004-2007, he was in board of Turkish Journalists Association. He has a permanent press card. Became Editor in Chief for Taraf daily in 2013. Was part of the Wise People Committee in the same year. Later had to leave Taraf daily alongside Halil Berktaş, Alper Görmüş, Vahap Coşkun, Erol Katırcıoğlu, Mithat Sancar, and Yıldırım Oğur, among others, after the intervention of the Gülen Congregation. Returned to Radikal daily. Started writing for Posta daily after 2016, when Radikal was discontinued. Continues work as a commentator on TV news channels. Has 20 published books, including The Leaders' Prison, Hz. Ali, Mamak Prison from the 12th of March to 12th of September, The Kurdish Issue with Öcalan and Burkay, My 68 Memoirs, The Alevis, When Deniz and Friends Were Executed, My Childhood in Tarsus, The History of Gulenism. Recipient of a large number of journalism and research awards. Married (1976) to author and journalist İpek Çalışlar. Father of author Reşat Çalışlar.

Cengiz Çandar

Cengiz Çandar is currently a columnist for Al-Monitor, a widely respected online magazine that provides analysis on Turkey and the Middle East. He is a former war correspondent and an expert on the Middle East. He served as a special adviser to the former Turkish president, Turgut Özal. Cengiz Çandar is a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies (SUITS).

Andy Carl

Andy Carl is an independent expert on conflict resolution and public participation in peace processes. He believes that building peace is not an act of charity but an act of justice. He co-founded and was Executive Director of Conciliation Resources. Previously, he was the first Programme Director with International Alert. He is currently an Honorary Fellow of Practice at the School of Law, University of Edinburgh. He serves as an adviser to a number of peacebuilding initiatives including the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative at the Graduate Institute in Geneva, the Legal Tools for Peace-Making Project in Cambridge, and the Oxford Research Group, London.

Dr. Vahap Coşkun

Dr. Vahap Coşkun is a Professor of Law at University of Dicle in Diyarbakır where he also completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in law. Coşkun received his PhD from Ankara University Faculty of Law. He has written for Serbestiyet and Kurdistan24 online newspaper. He has published books on human rights, constitutional law, political theory and social peace. Coşkun was a member of the former Wise Persons Commission in Turkey (Central Anatolian Region).

Dr. Esra Çuhadar

Dr. Esra Çuhadar, an associate professor at Bilkent University in Turkey currently works on the United Nations standby team of senior mediation advisers as a process design and inclusion expert. She has worked with various civil society and governmental actors and supported numerous dialogue and mediation initiatives in S. Caucasus, Ukraine, Turkey, Cyprus, and between Israel-Palestine, Greece-Turkey, Turkey-Armenia, and Somalia-Somaliland. She has more than twenty years of experience in researching, teaching, and practicing dialogue facilitation, mediation, and conflict assessment. She is a thought leader on designing inclusive peace processes with her extensive research and applied work in this area. She worked to advance the inclusion of civil society and women in places including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Turkey, and Venezuela. She contributed to women's capacity building in peacebuilding and co-founded the Turkey antenna of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network in 2019. Prior to joining the stand-by team, Esra worked as a senior expert on dialogue and inclusion at the United States Institute of Peace, as a regional mediator for the World Bank, advisor to the mediation support unit of the OSCE, senior research fellow at Inclusive Peace. Esra received and managed numerous research grants, received awards and fellowships, and published extensively in leading journals and books on inclusive peace process and dialogue design, and evaluation of peacebuilding. Dr. Esra Çuhadar received her MA and Ph.D. from Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University in the USA. She speaks English and Turkish.

Ayşegül Doğan

Ayşegül Doğan is a journalist who has conducted interviews, created news files and programmes for independent news platforms. She studied at the Faculty of Cultural Mediation and Communications at Metz University, and Paris School of Journalism. As a student, she worked at the Ankara bureau of Agence-France Presse (AFP), the Paris bureau of Courier International and at the Kurdish service of The Voice of America. She worked as a programme creator at Radyo Ekin, and as a translator-journalist for the Turkish edition of Le Monde Diplomatique. She was a lecturer at the Kurdology department of National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations in Paris. She worked on political communications for a long time. From its establishment in 2011 to its closure in 2016, she worked as a programmes coordinator at IMC TV. She prepared and presented the programme "Gündem Müzakere" on the same channel.

Vegard Ellefsen

Vegard is a Norwegian diplomat who retired 31 August 2019 from the foreign service when he left his last posting as ambassador to Ankara. He has been twice posted to NATO both as Permanent representative on the North Atlantic Council and deputy to the same position. He has earlier been posted to the Norwegian mission to the U.N. in New York and to the Embassy in Ottawa. In the Norwegian Ministry of foreign affairs he has been Political Director, Director General for the Regional division, Director of the Minister's secretariat and special envoy to the Sudan peace talks and special envoy to Syria and Iraq. Mr. Ellefsen has a Master in Political Science from the University of Oslo.

Prof. Dr. Fazıl Hüsni Erdem

Dr. Fazıl Hüsni Erdem is Professor of Constitutional Law and Head of the Department of Constitutional Law at Dicle University, Diyarbakır. In 2007, Erdem was a member of the commission which was established to draft a new constitution to replace the Constitution of 1982 which was introduced following the coup d'état of 1980. Erdem was a member of the Wise Persons Committee in Turkey, established by then Prime Minister Erdoğan, in the team that was responsible for the South-eastern Anatolia Region.

Prof. Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres

Professor Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres holds a PhD in Philosophy from Université Catholique de Louvain. He is Executive President of the Center for Democracy and Human Rights and Professor and Rector Emeritus of Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. He is former President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru. Prof. Lerner has given many talks and speeches about the role and the nature of university, the problems of scholar research in higher education and about ethics and public culture. Furthermore, he has participated in numerous conferences in Peru and other countries about violence and pacification. In addition, he has been a speaker and panellist in multiple workshops and symposiums about the work and findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru. He has received several honorary doctorates as well as numerous recognitions and distinctions of governments and international human rights institutions.

Prof. Mervyn Frost

Professor Mervyn Frost teaches International Relations, and was former Head of the Department of War Studies, at King's College London, UK. He was previously Chair of Politics at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa and was President of the South African Political Studies Association. He currently sits on the editorial boards of International Political Sociology and the Journal of International Political Theory, among others. He is an expert on human rights in international relations, humanitarian intervention, justice in world politics, democratising global governance, the just war tradition in an era of New Wars, and ethics in a globalising world.

David Gorman

David has more than 25 years of experience in the field of peacemaking. He started his career in the Middle East and he went on to work for international organisations on a wide range of conflicts around the world. David has been based in the Philippines, Indonesia, Liberia, Bosnia as well as the West Bank and Gaza and has been working in Eurasia for the last several years. He graduated from the London School of Economics, was featured in the award winning film 'Miles and War' as well as several publications and has published several articles on mediation.

Martin Griffiths

Martin Griffiths is a senior international mediator and currently the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) after previously serving as the UN's Envoy to Yemen. From 1999 to 2010 he was the founding Director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva where he specialised in developing political dialogue between governments and insurgents in a range of countries across Asia, Africa and Europe. He is a co-founder of Inter Mediate, a London based NGO devoted to conflict resolution, and has worked for international organisations including UNICEF, Save the Children, Action Aid, and the European Institute of Peace. Griffiths has also worked in the British Diplomatic Service and for the UN, including as Director of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (Geneva), Deputy to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (New York), Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes, Regional Coordinator in the Balkans and Deputy Head of the Supervisory Mission in Syria (UNSMIS).

Kezban Hatemi

Kezban Hatemi holds an LL.B. from Istanbul University and is registered with the Istanbul Bar Association. She has worked as a self employed lawyer, as well as Turkey's National Commission to UNESCO and a campaigner and advocate during the Bosnian War. She was involved in drafting the Turkish Civil Code and Law of Foundations as well as in preparing the legal groundwork for the chapters on Religious Freedoms and Minorities and Community Foundations within the Framework Law of Harmonization prepared by Turkey in preparation for EU accession. She has published articles on women's, minority groups, children, animals and human rights and the fight against drugs. She is a member of the former Wise Persons Committee in Turkey, established by then Prime Minister Erdoğan, and sits on the Board of Trustees of the Technical University and the Darulacaze Foundation.

Nazan Haydari

Nazan Haydari is Professor of Media Department at İstanbul Bilgi University, Turkey. Her research area consists of intercultural communication, feminist media studies, and critical media pedagogy with a particular interest in communication for peace building, community media, participatory action research and gendered radio histories. She is the director of Center for Conflict Resolution Studies and advisory board member for the Center for Intercultural Dialogue (<https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/>) She was involved in the development of various participatory media projects with street-involved children, and disadvantaged youngsters. She is the co-editor of Case Studies in Intercultural Dialogue (2015, Kendal Hunt). Currently working towards the completion of a co-authored book manuscript on an oral history project with women radio broadcasters of 1970s in Turkey. She holds a PhD in Telecommunications and MAIA in Communications and Development from Ohio University.

Dr. Edel Hughes

Dr. Edel Hughes is a Lecturer in Law at the School of Law, National University of Ireland, Galway. Prior to joining NUI Galway, Dr. Hughes was a Senior Lecturer in Law at Middlesex University and previously worked at the University of East London and the University of Limerick. She was awarded an LL.M. and a PhD in International Human Rights Law from the National University of Ireland, Galway, in 2003 and 2009, respectively. Her research interests are in the areas of international human rights law, public international law, and conflict transformation, with a regional interest in Turkey and the Middle East. She has published widely on these areas.

Kadir İnanır

Kadir İnanır was born in 1949 Fatsa, Ordu. He is an acclaimed actor and director, and has starred in well over a hundred films. He has won several awards for his work in Turkish cinema. He graduated from Marmara University Faculty of Communication. In 2013 he became a member of the Wise Persons Committee for the Mediterranean region.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet Insel

Professor Ahmet Insel is a former faculty member of Galatasaray University in Istanbul, Turkey and Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne University, France. He is Managing Editor of the Turkish editing house, İletişim, and member of the editorial board of monthly review, Birikim. He is a regular columnist at Cumhuriyet newspaper and an author who published several books and articles in both Turkish and French.

Aleka Kessler

Aleka Kessler works as Project Officer at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). Having joined HD in 2017 to work on Syria, Aleka has been coordinating mediation project in complex conflict settings. Previously, Aleka also worked with Médecins Sans Frontières and the United Nations Association Mexico. She holds a degree in International Relations from the University of Geneva and a Master's degree in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, where she specialized in humanitarian affairs, negotiation and conflict resolution.

Avila Kilmurray

Avila Kilmurray is a founding member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition. She was part of the Coalition's negotiating team for the Good Friday Agreement and has written extensively on community action, the women's movement and conflict transformation. She serves as an adviser on the Ireland Committee of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust as well as a board member of Conciliation Resources (UK) and the Institute for British Irish Studies. She was the first Women's Officer for the Transport & General Workers Union for Ireland (1990-1994) and from 1994-2014 she was Director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, managing EU PEACE funding for the re-integration of political ex-prisoners in Northern Ireland as well as support for community-based peace building. She is a recipient of the Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy through the European Foundation Centre. Kilmurray is working as a consultant with The Social Change Initiative to support work with the Migrant Learning Exchange Programme and learning on peace building.

Prof. Ram Manikkalingam

Professor Ram Manikkalingam is founder and director of the Dialogue Advisory Group, an independent organisation that facilitates political dialogue to reduce violence. He is a member of the Special Presidential Task Force on Reconciliation in Sri Lanka and teaches politics at the University of Amsterdam. Previously, he was a Senior Advisor on the Sri Lankan peace process to then President Kumaratunga. He has served as an advisor with Ambassador rank at the Sri Lanka Mission to the United Nations in New York and prior to that he was an advisor on International Security to the Rockefeller Foundation. He is an expert on issues pertaining to conflict, multiculturalism and democracy, and has authored multiple works on these topics. He is a founding board member of the Laksham Kadigamar Institute for Strategic Studies and International Relations, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Bejan Matur

Bejan Matur is a renowned Turkey-based author and poet. She has published ten works of poetry and prose. In her writing she focuses mainly on Kurdish politics, the Armenian issue, minority issues, prison literature and women's rights. She has won several literary prizes and her work has been translated into over 28 languages. She was formerly Director of the Diyarbakır Cultural Art Foundation (DKSV). She is a columnist for the Daily Zaman, and occasionally for the English version, Today's Zaman.

Prof. Monica McWilliams

Professor Monica McWilliams teaches in the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University in Northern Ireland. She currently serves on a three-person panel established by the Northern Ireland government to make recommendations on the disbandment of paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland. During the Northern Ireland peace process, Prof. McWilliams co-founded the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition political party and was elected as a delegate to the Multi-Party Peace Negotiations, which took place in 1996 to 1998. She was also elected to serve as a member of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly from 1998 to 2003. Prof. McWilliams is a signatory of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and has chaired the Implementation Committee on Human Rights on behalf of the British and Irish governments. For her role in delivering the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, Prof. McWilliams was one recipient of the John F. Kennedy Leadership and Courage Award.

Hanne Melfald

Hanne Melfald worked with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for eight years including as the Senior Adviser to the Secretariat of the Foreign Minister of Norway before she became a Project Manager in HD's Eurasia office in 2015. She previously worked for the United Nations for six years including two years with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan as Special Assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. She has also worked for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Nepal and Geneva, as well as for the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration. Melfald has a degree in International Relations from the University of Bergen and the University of California, Santa Barbara, as well as a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Oslo.

Roelf Meyer

Meyer is currently a consultant on international peace processes having advised parties in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Burundi, Iraq, Kosovo, the Basque Region, Guyana, Bolivia, Kenya, Madagascar, and South Sudan. Meyer's experience in international peace processes stems from his involvement in the settlement of the South African conflict in which he was the government's chief negotiator in constitutional negotiations with the ANC's chief negotiator and current South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa. Negotiating the end of apartheid and paving the way for South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Meyer continued his post as Minister of Constitutional Affairs in the Cabinet of the new President, Nelson Mandela. Meyer retired as a Member of Parliament and as the Gauteng leader of the National Party in 1996 and co-founded the United Democratic Movement (UDM) political party the following year. Retiring from politics in 2000, Meyer has since held a number of international positions, including membership of the Strategy Committee of the Project on Justice in Times of Transition at Harvard University.

Mark Muller Qc

Mark Muller, QC, is a senior advocate at Doughty Street Chambers (London) and the Scottish Faculty of Advocates (Edinburgh) where he specialises in public international law and human rights. Muller is also currently on the UN Department of Political Affairs Standby Team of Mediation Experts and is the UN Special Envoy to Syria in the Syrian peace talks. He has many years' experience of advising numerous international bodies, such as Humanitarian Dialogue (Geneva) and Inter-Mediate (London) on conflict resolution, mediation, confidence-building, ceasefires, power-sharing, humanitarian law, constitution-making and dialogue processes. Muller also co-founded Beyond Borders and the Delfina Foundation.

Avni Özgürel

Mehmet Avni Özgürel is a Turkish journalist, author and screenwriter. Having worked in several newspapers such as Daily Sabah and Radikal, Özgürel is currently the editor in chief of the daily Yeni Birlik and a TV programmer at TRT Haber. He is the screenwriter of the 2007 Turkish film, Zincirbozan, on the 1980 Turkish coup d'état, Sultan Avrupa'da (2009), on Sultan Abdülaziz's 1867 trip to Europe; and Mahpeyker (2010): Kösem Sultan, on Kösem Sultan. He is also the screenwriter and producer of 2014 Turkish film, Darbe (Coup), on the February 07, 2012 Turkish intelligence crisis. In 2013 he was appointed a member of the Wise Persons Committee in Turkey established by then Prime Minister Erdoğan.

Prof. John Packer

Professor John Packer is Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC) at the University of Ottawa in Canada. Prof. Packer has worked for inter-governmental organisations for over 20 years, including in Geneva for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organisation, and for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. From 1995 to 2004, Prof. Packer served as Senior Legal Adviser and then the first Director of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague. In 2012-2014, Prof. Packer was a Constitutions and Process Design Expert on the United Nation's Standby Team of Mediation Experts attached to the Department of Political Affairs, advising in numerous peace processes and political transitions around the world focusing on conflict prevention and resolution, diversity management, constitutional and legal reform, and the protection of human rights.

Jonathan Powell

Jonathan Powell is the founder and CEO of Inter Mediate, an NGO devoted to conflict resolution around the world. In 2014, Powell was appointed by former Prime Minister David Cameron to be the UK's Special Envoy to Libya. He also served as Tony Blair's Chief of Staff in opposition from 1995 to 1997 and again as his Chief of Staff in Downing Street from 1997 to 2007. Prior to his involvement in British politics, Powell was the British Government's chief negotiator on Northern Ireland from 1997 to 2007 and played a key part in leading the peace negotiations and its implementation.

Sir Kieran Prendergast

Sir Kieran Prendergast is a former British diplomat who served as the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs at the United Nations from 1997 to 2005 and as High Commissioner to Kenya from 1992 to 1995 and to Zimbabwe from 1989 to 1992. During his time at the UN, Prendergast stressed the human rights violations and ethnic cleansing that occurred during the War in Darfur and was involved in the 2004 Cyprus reunification negotiations. Since his retirement from the UN, he has conducted research at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (United States) and is a member of the Advisory Council of Independent Diplomat (United States). Prendergast also holds a number of positions, including Chairman of the Anglo-Turkish Society, a Trustee of the Beit Trust, and Senior Adviser at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Rajesh Rai

Rajesh Rai was called to the Bar in 1993 with his areas of expertise including human rights law, immigration and asylum law, and public law. He has been treasurer of IMCB Chambers (London) since 2015 and has also been a Director of an AIM-listed investment company where he led their renewable energy portfolio. Rai is a frequent lecturer on a wide variety of legal issues, including immigration and asylum law and freedom of experience (Bar of Armenia), minority linguistic rights (European Parliament), and women's and children's rights in areas of conflict (cross-border conference to NGOs working in Kurdish regions). He is also Founder Director of HIC, a community centred NGO based in Cameroon.

Sir David Reddaway

Sir David Reddaway is a retired British diplomat currently serving as Chief Executive and Clerk of the Goldsmiths' Company in London. During his previous career in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, he served as Ambassador to Turkey (2009-2014), Ambassador to Ireland (2006-2009), High Commissioner to Canada (2003-2006), UK Special Representative for Afghanistan (2002), and Charge d'Affaires in Iran (1990-1993). His other assignments were to Argentina, India, Spain, and Iran, where he was first posted during the Iranian Revolution.

Prof. Naomi Roht-Arriaza

Professor Naomi Roht-Arriaza is a Distinguished Professor of Law at the Hastings College of Law, University of California (San Francisco) and is renowned globally for her expertise in transitional justice, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law. She has extensive knowledge of, and experience in, post-conflict procedures in Latin America and Africa. Roht-Arriaza has contributed to the defence of human rights through legal and social counselling, her position as academic chair, and her published academic works.

Ahmet Mümtaz Taylan

Ahmet Mümtaz Taylan is a well-known Turkish actor and director. He graduated from the Hacettepe University State Conservatory of Theater's Department. He also worked at the Diyarbakir State Theatre from 1989 to 1993. He later worked in theatres with Roberto Cioli and Der Ruhr in Germany from 1993 to 1994. Since then, he has been in a number of dramas alongside Yucel Erten. He rose to the rank of general secretary of Devlet Tiyatrolar Sanatçılar Derneği, or DETS (Association of State Theater Artists), which he held until 2006. He also appeared in a number of well-known films. He starred in Nuri Bilge Ceylan's film "Once Upon A Time In Anatolia," which earned the Cannes Film Festival's highest honour, the Golden Palm. At the 15th Golden Ball Film Festival in 2007, Talan won the Film Writers' Association Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in Inan Temelkuran's "Made in Europe". In addition, in 2002, he received the İsmet Küntay Award for Best Director for the play "Misafir". In 2018, he won the "Best Actor in Drama" award at the 23rd Sadri Alışık Theater & Film Awards.

Dr. Mehmet Ufuk Uras

Mehmet Ufuk Uras is a co-founder and member of social liberal Greens and the Left Party of the Future, founded as a merger of the Greens and the Equality and Democracy Party. He was previously a former leader of the now-defunct University Lecturers' Union (Öğretim Elemanları Sendikası) and was elected the chairman of Freedom and Solidarity Party in 1996. Ufuk resigned from the leadership after the 2002 general election. Ufuk ran a successful campaign as a "common candidate of the Left", standing on the independents' ticket, backed by Kurdish-based Democratic Society Party and several left-wing, environmentalist and pro-peace groups in the 2007 general election. He resigned from the Freedom and Solidarity Party on 19 June 2009. After the Democratic Society Party was dissolved in December 2009, he joined forces with the remaining Kurdish MPs in the Peace and Democracy Party group. On 25 November 2012, he became a co-founder and member of social liberal Greens and the Left Party of the Future, founded as a merger of the Greens and the Equality and Democracy Party. Ufuk is a member of the Dialogue Group and is the writer of several books on Turkish politics.

Prof. Dr. Sevtap Yokuş

Professor Dr Sevtap Yokuş is a Law Faculty Member at İstanbul Altınbaş University in the Department of Constitutional Law. She holds a PhD in Public Law from the Faculty of Law, İstanbul University, awarded in 1995 for her thesis which assessed the state of emergency regime in Turkey with reference to the European Convention on Human Rights. She is a widely published expert in the areas of Constitutional Law and Human Rights and has multiple years' experience of working as a university lecturer at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level. She also has experience of working as a lawyer in the European Court of Human Rights.

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