



**Shifting Dynamics:  
The International Order  
in a Post-Pandemic World**

— 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> of December | 2020 —

**Opening**

**TRT**  
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2020



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# Preface

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In December 2020, we hosted the fourth instalment of our annual TRT World Forum. While the event featured the expert speakers, dynamic debates, and high-level analyses that are now expected from the Forum, this event certainly differed from previous years. Holding a prestigious and ambitious event amid a global pandemic meant a shift in format from in-person, to digital. This unprecedented challenge required planning and problem solving to which our team impressively responded, successfully hosting a digital event with hundreds of participants across the world.

Fortunately, this atmosphere of innovation amid uncertainty not only translated into our team's response but also into the content of the Forum. TRT World Forum 2020 combined traditional topics in international relations with pressing questions raised by the Covid-19 pandemic. We hosted speeches from guests including President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Director General of the World Health Organisation Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. In accordance with our digitally adjusted format, TRT World Forum featured Public Sessions, Expert Roundtables, Keynote Speeches, Exclusive Talks and sessions dedicated to arts and culture.

Since its inception, TRT World Forum has sought to utilise its platform to initiate important conversations about our rapidly changing world. This year's Public Sessions embodied that ambition. With panels that analysed the influence of international media on the pandemic, the impact of Covid-19 on trade, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy, and the future of the global order in a post-pandemic world, TRT World Forum 2020 strove bring a measure of stability to a year defined by uncertainty with thoughtful and intelligent discussions. Our newly designed Expert Roundtable sessions also channelled this ambition. In these sessions, diplomats, researchers, medical experts, and academics offered insight into a diverse range of topics. To name a few, speakers and participants expertly navigated the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the wars in Syria and Yemen, and the future of the Arab World 10 years after the Arab Spring.

As I stated last year, the Forum is designed as a platform to not only diagnose the problems but also to create a meaningful and impactful momentum for their solution. This is perhaps more important than ever as we continue to navigate the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. While simultaneously battling the virus that has claimed the lives of millions and preparing for a post-pandemic future as a stronger and more informed global community, TRT World Forum 2020 combined the insight that allows us to identify our greatest challenges with the innovation needed to address them.

In fact, this success in the face of unprecedented circumstances speaks to not only the Forum's strength but its continued importance. As we look to the future, publicly accessible events that champion facts, insightful discussions and seek to advance solutions should be celebrated and nourished. In pursuit of this, I am confident that we will continue to pursue excellence moving forward.

İbrahim Eren  
Director General and Chairman, TRT



# Executive Summary

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Discussions on the world order, balances of power, and influence of global leaders often dominate international events like TRT World Forum. These subjects have been extensively discussed by expert academics, diplomats, public servants, and analysts who typically contribute to such successful and innovative intellectual gatherings. However, amid a tendency of these experts to seek familiar patterns, the events of the last 18 months have truly challenged the framework on which we base our analyses.

The overwhelming realisation felt by the international community of the lack of precedence for understanding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the global order has altered approaches to almost every major issue. For this year's forum, aptly titled "Shifting Dynamics: The International Order in a Post-Pandemic World", this new reality also meant a logistical shift: we successfully transitioned our event online from its traditional in-person setting. The prominent figures who then featured in our public sessions and expert roundtables, moreover, also reflected shifts prompted by the pandemic and the ever evolving needs to feature diverse perspectives on an international stage. While similar session topics naturally have carried over from either past Forums or similar events — such as those related to media, security, and humanitarian issues — these subjects were explored in novel ways.

The pandemic has also reiterated that it is the task of events like these, particularly in this era of uncertainty, to reflect on the future. Public health has been thrust into the spotlight and dissected through political, economic, and security lenses to unparalleled degrees. From expansive international institutions like the WHO to unilateral actions, understandings of health have transformed intellectual and operational capacities. Covid-19 has also redefined the language used around globalism, shifting an already-prominent subject into a spotlight that shines a very different light on many of the actors, organisations, and systems we thought we knew. In brief, this year's forum truly went above and beyond to identify and help explain the shifting dynamics in this newly emerging world.

TRT World Forum 2020 took place over two days and included nine Public Sessions, seven Exclusive Talks, and eight Expert Roundtables. We began with a speech from the guest of honour, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The President formally opened the Forum, greeting and welcoming guests and participants through the digital platform. Speaking about Covid-19 and the importance of events like the Forum, he focused much of his speech on the promises and challenges of the digital era. He shared insights on the ability of digitalisation to expand the scope of freedom, but also warned of new injustices, unfairness, and alienation that the digital age also threatens to bring about. Finally, President Erdogan took a moment to discuss bias and misinformation, as well as the need to combat attacks on cultural and religious diversity, particularly with respect to Islamophobia and xenophobia.

The President's speech was followed by an opening speech from Director of Communications for the Presidency Fahrettin Altun in which he posed the Forum's key thematic question: What awaits the international order after Covid-19? Mr. Altun outlined several lessons learned from the pandemic, including the widely felt realisation that there is no such thing as true isolation in our globalised world, and that because of this reality, people and nations are stronger together. He delivered a message of hope for the future but also offered a warning. Highlighting that humanity tends to point fingers in times of crisis, Mr. Altun discussed the dangers of distorting the truth and the importance of giving a voice to the voiceless — a mission he gave TRT's international channels particular credit for. Along with this, Mr. Altun prescribed a world with stronger international partnerships and a resilient world order driven by a robust multilateralism.

Next, the Chairman and Director General of TRT, Ibrahim Eren, delivered an opening speech in which he took a moment to recognise the achievement of holding such an event in this tumultuous year. He also highlighted a similar theme to Mr. Altun, recognising the importance of giving a voice to the voiceless in an age defined by dominant media narratives and pandemic-related hysteria. He addressed some of the successes and developments of past forums and usefully brought a sense of continuity to this year's event by showcasing how the global nature of our problems discussed at last year's Forum continue to be relevant in 2020. As part of that recognition, he vocalised the importance of not only seeing mistakes and recognising changes in the global order but also growing from them.

We opened our Public Sessions with the first event, "Infodemic: How the International Media Impacted the Pandemic" and immediately commenced with dynamic debate. The session unpacked the role of media, particularly public broadcasters and digital spaces, in disseminating information during the pandemic. Dr. Javed Mottaghi, Secretary-General of the ABU, argued that Covid-19 heightened the role of public broadcasters, particularly in countering fake news. Amid an onslaught of panic and misinformation, some of the voices that needed to be heard most were not adequately highlighted. These voices included health care workers, medical experts, and scientists. Mr. Gregoire Ndaka of the African Union of Broadcasting offered multiple examples of this in Africa, where the disease, according to the WHO director, was predicted to create havoc due to a lack of healthcare infrastructure. However, this failed to materialise as predicted but still managed to create mass panic. Mr. Foa, President of the Board of Directors for RAI, described the behind-the-scenes role of pharmaceutical companies, explaining how corporate interests distorted media coverage on vaccine efficiency and preventative measures. Citing Italy as an example of the negative impact of misinformation, Mr. Foa embodied the sentiment of much of the group in reminding the audience of the continued value of public and reliable news services today.

Mustafa Varank, Minister of Industry and Technology for the Republic of Turkey, then delivered a keynote speech entitled "The Future of Technology in the Post-Pandemic World". Mr. Varank raised the issue of a lack of understanding as underlying many of the fears and concerns about technology. His speech offered clarity and concrete examples of the future of technology, particularly with regards to AI. He framed imminent technological advances around three concepts: "people centricity, location-independence, and resilient delivery". Crucially, he addressed the national technology initiatives taking place within Turkey that aim to be at the forefront of global developments for years to come.

The second Public Session, "Multipolarity in the Age of COVID-19: The Future of Global Solidarity" addressed key questions concerning the international balance of power. Professor Joseph Nye opposed the narrative of a less globalised future, arguing that although the pandemic shocked the global system, it would lead to closer global ties rather than increased isolationism. Mr. Ibrahim Kalin expressed concerns over Eurocentrism in dominant narratives of multipolarity and endorsed future efforts for a multilateralism that defies dependence on the assent of Western countries. Conversations on Eurocentrism were heavily featured throughout the thought-provoking session, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bisera Turković, disagreeing with Mr. Kalin, but emphasising the uncertainty of any predictions on the future of the world order based on the unforeseen global timeline of the pandemic.

Next, we explored the future of global threats to public health as part of the Public Session, "What's Next? Understanding Health Threats in Times of Hyper-Globalisation". This session opened with a keynote speech from the Director General of the WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. He addressed the global impact of Covid-19 on public health, economies, and lives. The session continued with cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz discussing the crucial roles medical data plays in public health and political decisions made today. The sessions' guests grappled with the issue of data overflow and the influence of social media, highlighting the need for qualified decision-makers to carry out coherent and objective policies based on science, and the challenges of this given the diversity of political regimes worldwide. Dr. Neil Squires, Director of Global Health for Public Health England, also remarked on the need to strengthen global collaboration and the failure of many states to understand the importance of this throughout the pandemic.

The fourth Public Session, "America vs China: Trade Wars, Covid-19, and Future Economic Relations" centred around the three main themes. Stephen Walt and Charles Kupchan took prominent roles in the session to highlight the historical roots of the competition between the world's two largest economies, and how the Biden administration is



unlikely to drastically change course. Director of the John L. Thornton China Center Cheng Li described how China's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic reflected simultaneous early government stifling with later effective response and recovery plans, while the US continued [at the time of the event] to struggle to curb the pandemic. Despite fundamental differences in their responses to the pandemic, panellists highlighted that the US and China are likely to continue their competition across the global stage, while also recognising that their own economic systems are deeply coupled. The panellists also identified climate change and the digital sphere as two key areas of focus in the short-term future.

From here, the fifth Public Session "New Realities in Foreign Affairs and Interstate Relations after Covid-19" prompted panellists to analyse the potential trends in global collaboration and competition in the wake of the pandemic. Many in the panel identified Covid-19 as a catalyst for accelerating existing patterns, including the rise of unilateralism, nationalism, and protectionism. The panel opened with a keynote speech from Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, who identified many of these trends in regional and global affairs. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi offered the example of his own country's multi-prong response to the pandemic, which included financial support for poorer countries, challenging the role of privatised companies in the pandemic, and ending stigmatisation. The Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto highlighted how the EU initially struggled to coordinate responses to the pandemic, but upon developing aligned efforts, can now showcase the success of effective cooperation in its response to Covid-19. Panellists also expressed concern over the trends of unilateralism and nationalism that so strongly appeared at the onset of the pandemic.

"A World Without Travel: The Impact of Pandemic-Related Technological Adaptations on the Future of Industry" turned to the disruption to international travel and the subsequent transformation a number of sectors have experienced in the past year. Julián Guerrero Orozco, Colombia's Vice Minister of Tourism, reiterated that the tourism and hospitality industries have been severely affected by restrictions on international travel. He brought up a common theme of the session that access to advanced technology and internal versatility allowed certain businesses to survive the pandemic. Tony Wheeler, co-founder of Lonely Planet, also highlighted that technological innovation has not only allowed some parts of the sector to survive but could also prompt the beginning of a longer-term transformation across the tourism industry. Finally, Tom Jenkins, CEO of the European Tourism Association, also emphasized that different governments' approaches to Covid-19 had drastically affected the impact of the pandemic on tourism sectors.

The seventh Public Session, "Covid-19: An Impasse or an Opportunity for a Sustainable Global Order?" focused on issues related to international cooperation, multilateralism, unilateralism, and various forms of inequality and polarisation. Former Austrian Foreign Minister Ms. Karen Kneissl noted a general shift away from multilateralism to unilateralism in diplomacy. Professor Ikenberry seconded this view, however, he suggested that US President Joe Biden may offer a divergence from this trend. Both Former Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and Somali Minister Gamal Mohammed Hassan highlighted the need for the effective voice of developing countries in multilateral institutions such as the UN. Promoting these voices may also include initiating reforms of the UN and other key institutions, as well as a redefining of leadership and cooperation from powerful countries as part of these reforms.

Public Session number eight, entitled "Politics and Pandemics: Humanitarian Aid in the Time of COVID-19", painted a worrying picture for humanitarian and charity work today. Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, stressed the need for governments to initiate and support efforts to reduce medical aid and vaccine inequality. He warned that discrimination against vulnerable populations would exacerbate global harm and ultimately prolong the pandemic. Drahoslav Štefánek, Special Representative of the Council of Europe's Secretary-General on Migration and Refugees, echoed this sentiment and brought particular attention to the impact on migrants and refugees. Overwhelmingly, the session highlighted the widely felt concern for vaccine and health inequality and the crucial role of the media in shining light on this disparity of care.

From here, TRT World Forum 2020 hosted an Exclusive Talk by the Head of the Digital Transformation Office for the Turkish Presidency Ali Taha Koç. In his speech, "Digital Transformation and Innovation in the Post-Pandemic Era", Mr. Koç advocated for a holistic approach and sustainable model of innovation to guide technological development. He stressed the need to be prepared for the unpredictable and discussed this year's Forum theme through three key pillars: integration, data governance, and digital protectionism. Additionally, Mr. Koç defined a successful digital age

as one that is a “seamless and spontaneous convergence of life and critical ecosystems [...] inspiring and connecting human intelligence and how governments regulate and conserve resources within their own ecosystems.”

The ninth and final Public Session, “The Future of Work and Education: Preparing for a Post-Pandemic World”, raised questions concerning the vulnerabilities of education systems around the world exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Kathleen deLaski expressed the need to make learning more flexible, affordable, visible, and relevant, arguing that an entire generation is being challenged by the pandemic. Professor Yin Cheong Cheng added to the discussion on the pandemic’s global impact on education systems, labelling it a “destruction” of the traditional education style. Professor Selçuk Şirin also pointed out the inequality and vulnerability felt by many, and how existing inequalities have been exacerbated to unprecedented levels throughout the pandemic.

The expert roundtables, held in this format for the first time at TRT World Forum, offered stimulating and intellectually challenging discussions on a diverse range of subjects and a unique model that allowed for exchanges between experts in different fields from across the world, holding divergent ideological commitments. The first session, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Israel’s Engagement with Arab States” featured a debate over the viability of a one or two-state solution as well as a more general discussion on the role of the international community in mediation and conflict resolution. His Excellency Marwan Muasher stated that the recent normalisation agreements should be evaluated within the framework of bilateral interests, not as ‘peace deals’ as they have been framed by their proponents. He also highlighted the international imbalance favouring Israel, which allows it to ignore the rights of Palestinians while establishing relations with other countries in the region. Journalist Gideon Levy argued that there is a long history and noticeable lack of Israeli parliamentarians who genuinely want to end the occupation, noting that this lack of domestic political flexibility renders most international dialogue useless for the time being. Dr. Ahmad Azem went further, stating that there needs to be a total paradigm shift in the understanding of the Palestinian issue.

The second expert roundtable “War and Peace: The Fate of the Azerbaijan-Armenia Conflict” discussed the latest developments in the South Caucasus, the Second Karabakh War, and the future of regional relations. Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, emphasised the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict — deeming it an end to a 30-year old status quo — and called for the beginning of a new era of foreign and security relations for the region. He also highlighted the importance of Russia and Turkey in the region. Dr. Laurence Broers drew attention to Russian peacekeeping in Karabakh but offered a more tentative approach within his regional assessment in predicting a ‘new era’. Finally, Dr. Farid Shafiyev emphasised the historical nature of the conflict and focused on the failures and passive approach of international organisations in the region’s affairs.

The session “War and Disease: Living with COVID-19 in Syria and Yemen” revealed the extent to which the global pandemic has impacted two of the most war-torn and vulnerable countries in the world. Dr. Nadwa Al Dawsari focused on the devastation the pandemic has caused to the already struggling status of Yemen’s health and economic systems. She commented on how she believed that Yemen had effectively become an experiment in herd immunity at the cost of thousands of lives and livelihoods. Dr. Nasr Al-Hariri described Syria in a similar vein, depicting crumbling health systems and a lack of focus on the pandemic amid ongoing fighting and political instability. Alongside this commentary, discussants focused on the failures of the international community, both before and during Covid-19, to respond to the needs of civilians.

The fourth Expert Roundtable “The Disillusion of the American Dream: COVID-19 and the Politics of Healthcare” exposed the fragilities of the American healthcare system. Dr. Halit Yerebakan articulated the extent to which the American public health infrastructure failed to identify and respond to the threat of the pandemic, highlighting the role of the Trump administration and domestic politics in preventing appropriate responses. Dr. Kılıç Buğra Kanat went further, suggesting that the fundamental disconnect and failures in the American response reflect a growing dysfunctionality that will soon culminate in a national crisis. Professor Richard Falk discussed how the pandemic has exposed deep socio-economic inequalities and called for the American example to prompt a deeper transformation of the global health and economic systems.

The fifth Expert Roundtable, “Energy and Security in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Libyan Conflict” took a pause from discussing the pandemic to focus on tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The panel also analysed the Libyan conflict and offered their perspective on the details of a potential solution. Nikolaus Meyer Landrut, EU Ambassador and Head of the European Union Delegation to Turkey, discussed how the EU has urged de-escalation in the Eastern

Mediterranean for years. He emphasized that the bloc has hoped to create an environment in which fruitful diplomatic conversations can take place. Dr. Mustafa A.G. Abushagur stated how the ongoing political and military violence in Libya has prevented any long-term solution from being struck. Former diplomat Peter Millet countered this narrative with suggestions of positive developments in Libya over the last several months. Mr. Egemen Bağış concluded the session by stating that both Turkey and the EU aim to play important roles in the region for years to come.

“Great Power Competition in the Balkans” unpacked a variety of modes of competition between great powers in the region. Citing the US, Russia, China, and Europe, the session revealed how the region has become a playground of rivalries between great powers. Former President of Croatia Ivo Josipović stressed that Balkan countries that wish to align with the EU must make the necessary adjustments to do so, while also being aware of the growing influence of China and Russia in the region. Ambassador Vesko Garčević described two trends over the last decade: a retreat of the EU and a rise of China and Russia. Marton Ugrosdy, Director of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade in Hungary, argued that the EU is simultaneously facing a problem of credibility in the Western Balkans on a governmental level, while also retaining long-term desirability. Overall, panellists described an increasingly tense situation in which Balkan states face challenging choices over partnerships, with membership in economic entities and strategic alliances at stake.

“The Future of the Arab World: 10 Years After the Arab Spring” featured a retrospective and forward-thinking discussion on the ongoing impact of the protests across the Arab world on political realities today. Across the board, panellists emphasised the need to discuss this subject through a long-term lens. Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani focused his remarks on the tumultuous future of the region, drawing attention to the threat of religious extremism to the development of democratic institutions. This sentiment was echoed by Dr. Shadi Hamid. He highlighted that, at least in the short-term, the region would likely see successful efforts to prevent democratisation, however, the long-term run would likely see the ultimate failure of repressive regimes. Journalist Jamal Elshayyal concurred, emphasizing the role of colonialism in this historical narrative and the subsequent need to adjust timelines. A second prominent theme of the session was the so-called ‘Islamists dilemma’, in reference to the oft-repeated assertion that democratisation efforts across the Arab world inevitably involve Islamist parties — a realisation that has arguably prompted Western states to fail to support democracy and revolutionary movements.

The eighth and final Expert Roundtable was entitled “Turkish Foreign Policy: Tradition, Geopolitics and Ideology in a Changing World Order”. The panel focused on the US-Turkey partnership, with panellists painting varying pictures on the future of the relationship. While some argued that common interests and mutual NATO membership would ensure a working relationship, others worried that too much optimism would prevent a realistic understanding of bilateral ties. With respect to the Turkey’s relationship with the EU, panellists agreed that the two actors required an updated and refreshed understanding of their partnership, but ultimately had key common interests that would maintain their relationship and keep accession on the table. Finally, the session emphasised Turkey’s prominent role in key regional and global challenges, including Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Caucasus.

In summarising the events of this two-day gathering, one is immensely aware of the unique ability of this platform to combine a diversity of subjects with a depth of debate. TRT World Forum 2020 embodied versatility in crisis and the ever-growing need for informed and challenging discussion that features voices often excluded from mainstream narratives. As we conclude this event, we also look to the future. TRT World Forum 2021 plans to retain the style of this year’s event, building off the lessons learned of hosting a global conference amid a global pandemic. As we embrace these plans, we hope to grow both our platform and the standards of our work, ever-grounded in the understanding that we are building a home for the wide range of voices that make up our global community.

Pınar Kandemir  
 Founder and Director, TRT World Forum

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# Speech by the Guest of Honour



## Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

**President of the Republic of Turkey**

TRT World Forum's dear participants, esteemed business people, journalists and members of the academic world. Ladies, gentleman, dear youth, I send you my warmest greetings.

I want to express how pleased I am to be among you at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual TRT World Forum even if it is via video conference. I hope that the former successes of TRT World forum, which I consider a platform for productive discussions for our world, region and country, will continue.

This year, the forum will be organised under the theme 'Shifting Dynamics: The International Order in a Post-Pandemic World'. During the two-day forum, which will be conducted virtually, discussions will be held on essential topics ranging from digitalisation to technology, from trade to Syria, Yemen and the Karabakh conflicts.

I want to thank all the national and international scholars, journalists, and politicians who will contribute to the Forum with their knowledge and experience. I would also like to congratulate TRT's management and all the other institutions contributing to this wonderful event and wish them continued success.

Dear friends, coronavirus is leaving deep marks on all parts of our lives. With the pandemic, our bilateral meetings, economy, shopping methods, and many other areas have undergone radical changes. We are also witnessing the effect of these changes on media, politics and international relations. New media tools that are already on the rise, have become even more widespread in the course of the pandemic. Along with trade, digitalisation has also become prominent in the media. Of course, we cannot claim that the influence of traditional media is lost completely. However, we cannot deny the fact that we are facing a new reality. In

this respect, I believe that the discussions at the TRT World Forum, which will be carried out by experts, will broaden our horizon.

As a politician, I would like to highlight one subject in particular. Like everything else, technology exists to facilitate our lives. Digitalisation, which considers human beings in their entirety with both their material and spiritual existence, can bring forth beneficial results. However, when it is perceived as an arbitrary area outside the law, where there is no control, rules or supervision, digitalisation will lead us to fascism. Therefore, while digitalisation expands the scope of freedom, it should not lead to new injustices, unfairness and alienation. Unfortunately, with the rise of social media use in recent years, there are serious issues in this area. A completely unsupervised area under the basis of unlimited freedom results in new victimisations. A situation where even the current legal system may be insufficient, may lead to social and psychological problems such as cyberbullying. Most of the time, victims cannot find an interlocutor to submit their complaints to or a legal medium to seek their rights. A system in which the perpetrator of evil and the perpetrator of a crime is not held accountable, cannot be called 'free'.

Another aspect of this issue is that social media platforms do not even attempt to prevent increasing victimisation. What is more, the state's favourable steps to protect its citizens are quickly condemned under the notion of protecting freedom of expression and are [therefore] made futile.

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***Therefore, while digitalisation expands the scope of freedom, it should not lead to new injustices, unfairness and alienation. Unfortunately, with the rise of social media use in recent years, there are serious issues in this area.***

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As Turkey, we have been pointing to the injustices occurring with regards to this issue for some time. We continuously emphasise that no person or company is above the law. With a regulation that entered into force in the past months, we made it obligatory for social media companies to have representatives in our country. While doing so, we have aimed to protect the freedom-security balance within the scope of the jurisdiction provided to us by international law. We aim to protect our citizens, especially our children, who are more vulnerable than adults. We hope that these institutions that do not feel the need to follow the law, will voluntarily support our country's well-intentioned steps, otherwise Turkey will continue to protect the rights of its citizens under every condition.

Dear Participants,

In today's world, the importance of representing the latest developments in our country to the international public is increasing. However, as Turkey, we have been suffering from the issues of these representation methods for a long time in the sense that Turkey's success in the international arena and the immense transformation within the country have not been covered fairly by the international media. Our achievements are disregarded or distorted and conveyed in a way that is far from the truth. The global media look at Turkey not to discover the truth, but to find answers that are in accordance with their orientalist mindsets. Especially with the Gezi incidents that started in 2013, our country has faced severe injustices and double standards. During the Gezi Protests, international media organisations that were on air for 24 hours a day, presented those that destroyed the streets as peaceful protestors. Members of the separatist terrorist organisation (PKK/YPG), who shed the blood of hundreds of thousands of civilians in Syria, decorated the front covers of Western so-called prestigious magazines.

However, when similar incidents occurred in other European countries, those that gave us lessons on freedom of the press saw no evil, heard no evil, spoke no evil. They ignored the Yellow Vest protests, which lasted for weeks in the heart of Paris. They also failed to mention the disproportionate interventions of the French police that blinded demonstrators and did not articulate a single word that criticised French state organs' blockade against the media.

We see a similar double standard in the practices of the Israeli security forces against Palestinians that almost resemble state terrorism. Palestinian children who are murdered in the streets while their hands are in the air are not even considered newsworthy for these so-called independent media outlets. The recent incident of an ambulance, which was carrying a wounded Palestinian, that was stopped and the patient abruptly arrested, did not cause any reaction in the international press. I do not even need to repeat the countless disrespectful headlines that personally attack me almost every day.

As someone who has become familiar with this bias, what hurts and offends us the most is the attacks on our sacred values. It is shameful to see media outlets as the standard-bearers of anti-Islamism and xenophobia. The disrespectful comments exhibited under the guise of freedom of the press are poisoning the will of people who want to live in harmony among people with different religious and cultural backgrounds. If these crude remarks are not brought to an end, humankind, including Europe, will suffer.

In this respect, TRT, especially our international voice TRT World, carries important responsibilities. I find TRT World's aim to retell the story with new language, extend the microphone to the voiceless, and turn the camera towards the unseen, immensely valuable. In an age where the international media has become uniform, TRT World has become the voice of the righteous against inequality, the oppressed against the oppressors, and the just against injustice. In the four years since its establishment, I believe that TRT World has filled a significant gap with its qualified staff, including world-renowned journalists. I wish them success in their arduous but honourable mission that they have shouldered. Therefore, I sincerely congratulate all TRT employees, from the general manager to the reporter, and the technical staff.

While I end my speech with these thoughts, I wish the 4<sup>th</sup> TRT World Forum success, and I would like to thank everyone who contributed on behalf of my country and nation.

I hope to welcome you all to our country soon.

I greet you all with love and respect.

Stay healthy.

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***It is shameful to see media outlets as the standard-bearers of anti-Islamism and xenophobia. The disrespectful comments exhibited under the guise of freedom of the press are poisoning the will of people who want to live in harmony among people with different religious and cultural backgrounds. If these crude remarks are not brought to an end, humankind, including Europe, will suffer.***

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# Opening Speech



## Fahrettin Altun

Director of Communications, The Presidency of the Republic of Turkey

Distinguished Guests,

Let me start out by congratulating our hosts for making this year's TRT World Forum a reality. I am sure that it took more effort to organise this year's event than the three previous forums combined. So, thank you for your hard work and extraordinary commitment. It is a pleasure to address this distinguished audience today.

Looking back, last year's Forum seems like a lifetime ago. Browsing last year's photo gallery, I found myself thinking that we took so many things for granted: Conventions, movie theaters, birthday parties etc.

The pandemic changed our lives in so many ways. Surgical masks and disinfectant bottles are now part of everyday life. We flinch at the sight of actors entering a crowded

room without their face masks on television. International air travel, once perfectly ordinary, has become nearly elusive. Even grocery shopping is something that requires planning.

Against the backdrop of these massive changes in our daily lives, the 2020 TRT World Forum focuses on a key question: what awaits the international order after COVID-19? Do we go back to business as usual? Do we let fear get the best of us? Or do we build more resilient political, economic and social systems? More specifically, what kind of future do we envision for our children?

Esteemed Participants,

Before answering these questions, let us take a step back and take stock of the lessons learned.

First, the COVID-19 pandemic established that no country can fully isolate itself from the world. The way that the virus spread to the most remote corners of the world, within weeks, would have been unimaginable in the past. From the global supply chain to local communities, we have witnessed the near-collapse of our global order. At the same time, we remembered that, deep down, we are all human.

The second lesson of the pandemic was that people and nations are stronger together. In the face of a once-a-generation crisis, we turned to each other for support. We counted on each other to flatten the curve and keep our healthcare systems going. Again, looking for a cure, we pooled our resources and brought together our top minds. Interconnectedness may have seemed like a weakness, but it also proved to be a source of strength.

During this difficult time, Turkey's actions reflected those lessons learned. From the United States and Europe to Africa and Asia, we answered the call of our friends and allies. The Turkish people shared their surgical masks and ventilators and personal protective equipment with fellow

humans around the world. Under the leadership of our president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, we delivered a message of hope to the world: "There is hope after despair. There are many suns after darkness."

On the home front, too, did the Turkish people rise to the challenge of COVID-19. Our medical workers, including doctors and nurses, have been on the frontlines against our invisible enemy. Our service sector, too, played an essential role in helping communities across Turkey to meet their needs.

Dear Guests,

The third and final lesson we must draw from history is that humanity tends to point fingers, rather than come together, in the face of crises. From the Inquisition to World War II, people told themselves that others were responsible for their problems. We face a similar danger today. Some societies blamed the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants. Others used the public health emergency to target, intimidate and alienate minorities – starting with Muslims.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, such developments are not taking place in the developing world. We witness similar efforts in countries like France, whose government is allegedly creating a register of Muslim children. Elsewhere in Europe, we see far-right extremists wielding enough power to dictate policy.

At the same time, Europe's Turkish community, a model minority, faces aggressive discrimination – even though Özlem Türeci and her husband, Uğur Şahin, discovered a promising vaccine.

For everyone's sake, we urge our European friends, in particular, to get in front of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment before history repeats itself. Instead of rejecting comparisons to the demonisation of the European Jewry in the 1920s, let us work together to reject racism and extremism.

The key to preventing future tragedies is to shed light on the facts. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work of TRT's international channels. TRT World, along with TRT Arabic, Russian and German, report the news with a focus on people and values. They have developed an authentic language in news reporting to give voice to the voiceless.

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***The Turkish people shared their surgical masks and ventilators and personal protective equipment with fellow humans around the world. Under the leadership of our president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, we delivered a message of hope to the world: "There is hope after despair. There are many suns after darkness."***

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Dear Participants,

Since the COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of life, we must augment our efforts to combat disinformation and hatred with complementary steps in other areas – including foreign policy.

Turkey believes in working together to overcome the COVID-19 challenge and to build a better future. International cooperation, however, can only thrive on the basis of equality, mutual interests and shared values. That is the message we send to our friends and allies, old and new, as humanity turns over a fresh leaf.

With the European Union, we desire and pursue a closer relationship. Our cooperation and collaboration is key to countering the message of hate and discrimination in Europe. Treating Turkey with respect is the Union's only way of proving that it has nothing against Muslims around the world. Friendship, however, is incompatible with double talk and condescension. Therefore, the idea that Turkey must earn Europe's friendship by making concessions is both unfair and unrealistic. Instead, we tell our European counterparts that dialogue is the only way forward.

Same goes for our long-standing strategic partnership with the United States. In recent years, Turkey, a NATO ally, has been treated with unprecedented hostility in Washington. Our unwavering commitment to fighting terrorists, whether they call themselves PKK or Daesh, has been incomprehensibly misportrayed. Ironically, U.S. foreign policy does not necessarily serve American interests either. It is our sincere hope that the United States, under its new administration, will repair its strained relationship with its traditional allies and show due respect to their vital interests. Only with respect can we start working towards a more resilient and more representative world order.

Dear Guests,

As humanity becomes less dependent on any single nation for political leadership and economic growth, we must build a new order that looks out for everyone's rights and interests.

In this new period, we must commit to promoting interdependence against domination. Solidarity against rivalry. And cooperation against competition. Going forward, humanity must focus on two key areas of improvement.

First, we must create new alternatives to the existing global supply chain to improve our economic order's ability to absorb future shocks. There is no reason to believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will be the last public health emergency in history. As the world becomes more and more interconnected, there is a good chance that we will experience similar challenges in the future. In anticipation of those crises, we must establish mechanisms that improve our odds. Obviously, the new global supply chain should serve to create opportunities and empower disadvantaged nations – to serve as a source of peace. Turkey, with its young and skilled population, is more than ready to contribute to that process.

Secondly, there is a need to double down on multilateralism and international organisations. Starting with the United Nations, we must reform and improve our organisations so that they can keep the peace and facilitate human progress for decades to come. Needless to say, there is clear and overdue need to reform the United Nations Security Council. As our president repeatedly said in the past, the post-World War II balance of power no longer reflects the realities of our world. To bridge that gap and make the United Nations relevant again, we must all accept that "the world is bigger than five." Only by reforming the Security Council can we ensure that change trickles down to other parts of our international system. Turkey, as a long-standing advocate of UN reform, is willing and able to contribute to a meaningful reform agenda internationally.

Once again, I appreciate this opportunity to address the TRT World Forum and offer my heartfelt congratulations to the organisation committee. I look forward to following the informative and interesting discussions over the next two days.

Thank you.

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# Opening Speech



## İbrahim Eren

Chairman and Director General, TRT

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to our fourth annual TRT World Forum. Due to the unprecedented situation in which we find our world today, we are unable to meet in person. However, with crisis comes opportunity. Thus, because we are hosting our Forum virtually this year, we have the opportunity to reach more people than ever, which perhaps makes this year's event the most global to date.

For those of you who are joining us for the first time, we at TRT and in Turkey would like to extend our warmest welcome. The Forum aims to provide a truly global platform for decision-makers, opinion shapers, thought leaders, academics, politicians, and members of civil society to convene and critically engage with the most pressing issues of our time.

Since the TRT World Forum was launched in 2017, we have made great efforts to emphasise that, as members of a

global community, we are all in this together. At the same time, we recognise that some voices are heard more readily than others. That is why, through all the issues we have covered over the years, we have striven, and continue to strive, to amplify the voices of those who are all-too-often ignored.

This is the core philosophy underlying TRT's global outreach, whether through our international news channels, TRT World and TRT Arabi or through our popular entertainment programming that has struck a chord with so many around the world. At TRT, we have internalised the value of being a voice for the voiceless, and we launched the TRT World Forum with the same sensitivity.

At TRT, we are deeply engaged with the issues of our time and believe that knowledge is the first step to overcoming them. We have pledged not to differentiate between the suffering of people regardless of their ethnicity, colour, or religion. Likewise, we do not compromise on people's rights to security and peace — security and protection not only

from physical harm but also from xenophobic and racist discourses that seek to vilify and dehumanise. We believe in inspiration and the power of ideas and recognise that knowledge is produced in a variety of ways in order to serve different purposes.

With this belief in mind, we launched the TRT World Forum, a global platform to discuss the most pressing issues of our time with some of the world's leading experts. Peace and security are, in our view, two fundamental human rights, which have largely been taken for granted in the post-Cold War era. Many believed that the world would experience an era of unprecedented peace in which humanity would subsequently thrive. However, in recent years our increasingly fragmented world has witnessed the aggravation of conflicts, in turn jeopardising the lives of millions of people. The coronavirus pandemic and its fallout, which represents perhaps the greatest threat to human security in a generation, has arguably deepened these divisions, while at the same time providing potential openings for the world to make great strides in dampening the flames of division.

It is with great pride that I can say that the TRT World Forum has carried our media network to a new level, in both reach and impact and, over the course of these last four years, we have built upon our successes. Each year, we have brought together more than 1500 speakers and participants to discuss, debate and develop innovative solutions to some of the most critical global issues.

With the attendance of over 120 speakers and 1400 participants from all over the world, TRT World Forum 2019, "Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities" hosted 6 Keynote Speeches, 3 Exclusive Talks, 8 Public Sessions and 15 Closed Sessions along with numerous meetings that took place between diplomats, participants and speakers. In addition to the conference itself, the forum's proceedings were documented in two books and more than a dozen conference papers as well as being live-streamed across the world.

The main question we pursued last year was related to the global nature of our problems and the lack of initiatives and capabilities to address them. The timeliness of our theme surprised even us. Approximately two months after the Forum, the novel coronavirus appeared in the city of

Wuhan, China. It spread quickly in the country, infecting and killing thousands. Subsequently, it spread around the world, disrupting the social and economic order and collapsing health systems, leading to hardened borders while simultaneously rendering them meaningless.

The incredible speed at which the virus spread exemplified how problems in one region cannot be easily contained. Unfortunately, the lack of a coordinated and effective response to the initial phase of the pandemic was not unlike how other pressing issues have too often been addressed. As borders closed and the flow of goods and people all but came to a halt, the institutions that make up the core of the international system seemed unable to develop a unified response, throwing many of our assumptions regarding globalisation and progress out the window.

This year's Forum, organised under the theme "Shifting Dynamics: The International Order in a Post-Pandemic World", is timely, not only because the coronavirus pandemic has acted as an accelerator of changes already underway, but, perhaps more importantly, because it has underlined the extent to which our world is truly a globalised society.

This year's Forum will consist of several keynote speeches and exclusive talks, 9 public sessions, and 8 expert roundtable sessions with the attendance of leading politicians, experts, specialists, policymakers, civil servants and journalists from diverse backgrounds to discuss topics including the future of multilateralism and global solidarity, threats to public health in a hyper-globalised world, emergent realities in foreign affairs and interstate relations and the future of work, travel, industry and humanitarian aid among others.

In organising an event around the theme of shifts in the international order in a post-pandemic era, we are seeking to not only elucidate the voice of the powerful but also of the disadvantaged and oppressed. While the pandemic undoubtedly has presented opportunities for positive reform, it has also exposed, and in some senses re-enforced, the growing chasm between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', both within countries and between them.

Thus, if we as the world fail once again to seize the opportunity to correct historic mistakes and withdraw into an insular and provincial 'us versus them' mindset, we will have squandered the chance to make positive change

come out of what has otherwise been a difficult and dark year. Ultimately, our world's most disadvantaged are the ones most at risk of feeling the severe impacts of this pandemic for years to come. Given this, we do not see discussion as merely an exercise in mental gymnastics, but rather as a concrete tool to address real-world problems.

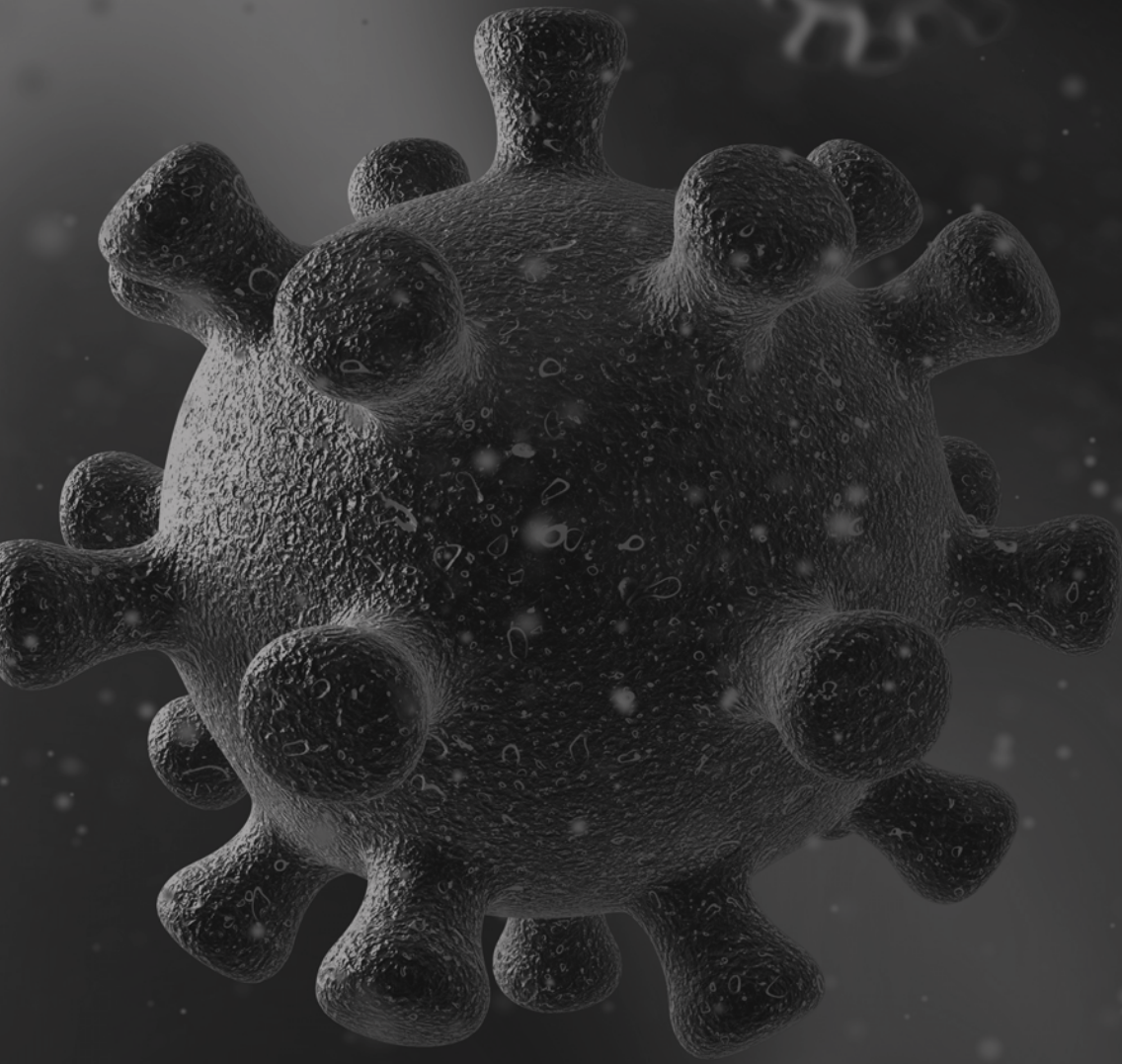
The global pandemic of 2020 revealed once again how the world is inseparably connected. It has motivated us to work even harder and speak even louder. It has renewed our belief that, whether we like it or not, we are all indeed in the same boat. In the years to come, we hope to emphasise this point further across many more TRT World Forums.

Before I end my speech, I would like to thank our President who is with us again this year. I also want to thank all my colleagues especially those who worked hard to create this year's Forum.

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***Thus, if we as the world fail once again to seize the opportunity to correct historic mistakes and withdraw into an insular and provincial 'us versus them' mindset, we will have squandered the chance to make positive change come out of what has otherwise been a difficult and dark year.***

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