

forum <sup>TRTWORLD</sup> | İstanbul  
2017

# Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty

TRTWORLD  
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18th -19th October | 2017 | İstanbul

# Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty

Edited by Selçuk Aydın

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**PUBLISHER**  
TRT WORLD RESEARCH CENTRE  
FEBRUARY 2018

**TRT WORLD FORUM 2017**  
**Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty**

researchcentre.trtworld.com/forum

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# Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty

This book includes summaries and highlights of keynote speeches, seven public and seven closed sessions of the TRT World Forum 2017. The views, themes and discussion points expressed in the TRT World Forum 2017 book are strictly those of the speakers and participants present at the Forum, and do not reflect the official view of the TRT World Research Centre.



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Memories from the  
TRT World Forum 2017

# Preface

**İbrahim Eren**  
Director General and Chairman, TRT

Since the launch of the TRT World project back in 2015, we have strived to be the voice of the oppressed. Within a short period of time, TRT World has transformed from an idea into a large media organisation, growing fast and without abandoning its principles. We have aimed to draw attention to the humanitarian angle of each story and be a catalyst for positive change. Humanitarian crises and conflicts causing human suffering have always occupied a central position in our coverage.

We have aimed to be brave, independent and inspirational in our coverage of humanitarian crises. Apart from capturing the news on the ground, we have reported human stories that would inspire positive action and evoke understanding and compassion.

I am now happy to announce that TRT World Forum has carried our media network to a new level, both in reach and in impact.

With attendance of more than 600 academics, journalists, policy makers, politicians and NGO representatives, we have laid the foundations of a new platform to address changing trends and discussions on global issues.

We live in turbulent times. The global order has been changing with the rise of new players and the unjust behavior of the old guards. The MENA region is as restless as ever and cards are constantly reshuffled, leaving some despondent and others hopeful for the

future of the region. The authority of traditional media is at a record low. The levels of xenophobia and Islamophobia are reminiscent of darker times. All of these events send shockwaves across the globe and create different trends in varying regions of the world.

'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty' the theme of TRT World Forum 2017, was chosen in recognition of these dynamics. As a result, the forum has tried to approach this phenomenon from different aspects, ranging from the role of media to corporate responsibility.

I believe this year's forum has been a success. With the public and closed sessions held, we believe that we have created a productive and vibrant atmosphere of discussion for the participants. We have tried to shed light on issues, which would otherwise have attracted less attention. Above all, TRT World Forum has provided each and every one of us a chance for mutual understanding that transcends borders and cultures.

İbrahim Eren  
Director General and Chairman, TRT







# Preface

**Murat Akgüç**  
Managing Director,  
TRT World and TRT Al Arabiya

*A growing disparity between communication and understanding between states and societies could be one of the most pressing reasons for most global issues today. TRT World Research Centre held its first annual international forum on 18-19th October, 2017, aspiring to address this pertinent issue.*

*TRT World Forum's aim is to provide academics, politicians, journalists, experts and representatives of civil society with a platform to provoke discussion on the global problems and challenges of our day. As such, the theme of this year's Forum was 'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty', which commenced with an opening speech delivered by Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and ended with a keynote address from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Over 600 guests attended the public and closed sessions combined, networked and engaged in the conversation.*

*The topics explored in the Forum this year ranged from shifts in the global order to the rise of xenophobia, political instability in the Middle East, humanitarian crises, corporate social responsibility and the rapidly changing landscape of the media.*

*I see the first ever TRT World Forum as a major success in bringing together diverse ideas and viewpoints from all over the world and highlighting mostly the voices of the disadvantaged. I hope the warm, courageous and positive ambiance of the Forum will be representative of the change we aspire to achieve.*

Murat Akgüç  
Managing Director,  
TRT World and TRT Al Arabiya





# Executive Summary

**Pinar Kandemir**  
Director of Research,  
TRT World

The TRT World Forum 2017, a two-day summit organised by the TRT World Research Centre, gathered academics, politicians, journalists, experts and members of civil society to discuss the most pertinent issues in the world today. This year's theme 'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty' sparked fierce debate around the hurdles that contribute to the creation of uncertainty across the world. The welcoming speech was delivered by the Director General and Chairman of TRT, İbrahim Eren, followed by opening speeches given by Turkey's Prime Minister, Binali Yıldırım, and Deputy Prime Minister, Bekir Bozdağ. On the second day of the Forum the Former Prime Minister of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and Foreign

Minister of Turkey, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, delivered a joint keynote speech on regional cooperation. The closing keynote speech was addressed by the Forum's guest of honour, the President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Forum held seven public sessions and seven closed sessions which explored a variety of issues - ranging from military conflicts to humanitarian aid, recent surges in xenophobia and Islamophobia, to the influence of media outlets: traditional and social, on current developments. The TRT World Forum aimed to highlight the following questions: What are the most demanding challenges creating uncertainty? And what are the solutions to these challenges?



## Emerging new world order

In recent years, the international arena has begun experiencing a transformation with the rise of new political and economic powers. A number of nations have developed substantially resulting in a challenge to the established hierarchy of greater powers, as well bridging the divide between developing and developed economies. As such, powerful countries once known for dominating certain regions are now being challenged by new players who are ambitious in playing a bigger role in regional and global affairs. The new players are confronting the very foundation of the international order that has been based on the principles and norms put forward by traditionally powerful states. Aspiring for a more representative United Nations Security Council (UNSC), countries like Brazil, Turkey, India and Mexico have called for a structural reform. It is in this context that Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, made his famous statement "the world is bigger than five" in order to draw attention to the unfair and undemocratic structure of the UNSC's system. The UNSC began losing its credibility not only due to the static structure of the council, but also due to the fact that it is no longer representative of the current world order today.

In his opening speech, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, addressed global injustices claiming that world leaders have failed to fulfill their promises on fair and democratic governance. Their involvement in global crises or issues, for the sake of their own vested interests, has created a distance between them and other countries. Many countries in the world have begun turning to regional solutions and powers in order to solve their problems. One can see this from two angles: the first being that the once main powers of the world have failed in their responsibility to secure global development, peace, stability and justice; the second being that their lack of success in finding solutions has advanced regional cooperation and agency amongst the once smaller powers who were dependent upon the aid of others. With this in mind, the TRT World Forum 2017 hosted a panel session on 'Redefining the Global Agenda: Old-Guards vs New Players', which discussed the current global order by focusing on country-based developments and exploring the players in the international arena that have the potential to change and shift the power equilibrium. The topic was touched upon again in President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's closing speech, when he reinforced the need for change in the structure of the UN by

giving more voice and leverage to other states in the international arena. A closed session titled: 'Turkey's Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges', further discussed this notion through the perspective of the general landscape and contours of Turkey's foreign policy – its main pillars and changing dynamics.

## The Rise of Xenophobia and Islamophobia

The recent upsurge of xenophobia and Islamophobia, particularly in Europe and the US, has drawn attention to the problematic discourses that operate within the public and private sphere. 2017 saw certain societies growing apart and disintegrating through the various elections that took place across the world, as the far-right began increasing in popularity. Animosity towards Muslims has risen – and as a result produced fear amongst ethnic minorities who have been trying to navigate their way towards a solution with varying degrees of public support. Given the discrimination and inequalities different segments of certain societies have been facing, there has been a general consensus in addressing this problem. Far-right discourses have in-part risen due to economic and cultural insecurities within European societies, and have manifested in the form of fear that foreigners will take over their countries. Far-right parties and leaders have taken advantage of the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric by using it in their political campaigns, and have emerged successful over the last few years – even gaining seats in the parliaments and being part of governments in certain European countries. Such events have indicated to the gradual normalisation of far-right rhetoric and hate speech, which despite promises for real discussions and solutions remains an increasingly worrying trend for the development and concord of community cohesion.

Within this framework, the session 'Capitalising on Fear: the Politicisation of Xenophobia and Islamophobia' discussed socio-political, cultural and economic contexts that facilitated the rise of the far-right in Europe, with a particular focus on the role of the media and politicians. This was in addition to the closed session titled 'Developing Counter-Narratives to the Far Right' which focused on the roots of far-right movements, approaches

to the struggle against xenophobia, civil right movements in the West and seeking new models for governance.

## MENA: A region in limbo

The Middle East and North Africa have long suffered from political instability, lack of economic development and societal clashes due to both domestic and international factors. The waves of hope brought by the Arab uprisings for toppling down authoritarian regimes marked a historic turning point in the struggle for freedom, a hope that is slowly fading away with the ensuing sequence of events leaving the uprising nations vulnerable to further oppression, instability and insecurity.

The war in Syria that destroyed an entire nation, created millions of refugees and internally displaced people has become one of the primary sources of turmoil in the region. The involvement of extraterritorial powers in the conflict with self-interested motivations has prolonged it, giving little hope for reconciliation and rebuilding in the near future. As with the case of many wars, terror organisations such as DAESH (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and PKK (The Kurdistan Workers' Party) affiliated groups – SDF (The Syrian Democratic Forces), PYD (The Democratic Union Party), YPG (The People's Protection Units) – took advantage of the power vacuum in Syria and Iraq to spread their ideologies and terrorism. As such, the Syrian people have become the main victims of these groups, despite the lack media coverage, as have neighbouring countries – who were left helpless in the face of the increased cost and adverse effects of the ongoing war. The continuation of war in other parts of the MENA region such as in Yemen, ethnic and religious conflicts between nations and states in other countries as well as the recent Gulf crisis have all reduced the prospect for peace and stability in the region. That said, however, the defeat of DAESH in an international effort and the ongoing battle to defy the terrorism of the YPG/PYD in Syria sights a temporary relief. It is against this backdrop that the panel session 'Emerging Trends and New Threats in the MENA Region' was hosted, touching upon a wide range of issues: from the democratisation process of Arab countries to Western intervention in the region, concluding that countries in the region should establish a level of unity and solve their

own problems through regional cooperation, based on mutual trust. The closed session 'Shockwaves of the War in Syria' also discussed the future of Syria with a specific focus on Syrian, Turkish and Iranian perspectives, whilst another closed session on 'The Gulf Crisis and Geopolitical Tensions in the Gulf Region' focused on the implications of the recent Gulf crisis on the relationships between the GCC countries.

## Politics of terrorism

The various forms in which terrorism can be defined in this day and age, encompassing both the rhetoric surrounding the concept of 'terrorism' and actual terror inflicted upon certain nations and states from specific groups, has complicated matters and further spread uncertainty in the world. With security being one of the most significant and basic needs for a human being, the rise of terrorism and its transformation into a global character has made the concern for 'security' one of great distress for both states and ordinary people. Whilst domestic terrorism has always been a factor within borders and countries, its global potential has come to light during the last few decades. As such, radicalisation and the appeal of extremist ideologies have gained much attraction, and the number of people joining terrorist networks has increased rapidly. To properly defeat terrorism, countries all over the world are required to cooperate on developing comprehensive strategies and alliances. The current state of the united effort against terrorism has taken an incredibly self-centred form, where states abstain from doing anything or being considerate to networks that operate outside of their borders unless they become a target. This, of course, is if the countries do not completely disregard the terrorist groups – or even favour them – for the sake of the pursuit of their own political interests. As such, this is the biggest indication of the lack of mutual understanding among countries resulting with inconvenient and inefficient counter-terrorism measures, which has in fact empowered terrorist actors as opposed to crushing them. Against this backdrop, the closed session 'Confronting Global Terror' dealt with the question of how counter-terrorism has transformed into a complex structure and how it should be deconstructed to help eradicate the notion of terrorism without harming entire communities. In addition, a closed session on 'The Impact of the July 15th Coup Attempt on the Turkish State and Society' discussed the



coup attempt plotted by FETÖ (Fethullah Terrorist Organisation) a terrorist network lead by Fethullah Gülen, who lives in self-imposed exile in the US.

## Humanitarian crisis and assistance

Intra and inter-state wars, regional conflicts, authoritarianism, terrorism, the rise of xenophobia and natural disasters are, and have always been, causes for human tragedies. With over 63 million displaced people in the world, 5 million of which are Syrian refugees caused by the ongoing war – not counting the displaced Syrians within Syria, and the famine consuming Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan and North-East Nigeria – with other countries at risk too, the worst humanitarian crises since 1945 does not appear to be coming to an end anytime soon. Humanitarian assistance from more able powers is crucial to relieve and alleviate the damage of such calamities. Whilst recent developments in the humanitarian aid field have shown significant improvements compared to the past, there remains plenty space for improvement. As such, traditional humanitarian aid has been criticised for not providing aid effectively, and for exacerbating situations even further. More holistic and systematic approaches to humanitarian aid and assistance are being developed and implemented in certain parts of the world, but for effective solving of the very root of the humanitarian crises, the entire international community need to be involved and on track. The involvement of the international community comes not only in the collective application of a more holistic approach to humanitarian aid, but also in sharing the burden. With the ongoing humanitarian crises, certain countries have carried the burden of it more than others, indicating the need for more cooperation and solidarity between countries to better overcome the problem. The joint keynote speech by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the former Prime Minister of Spain, and Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, titled 'We are all in the Same Boat: Regional Cooperation to Address the Humanitarian Crisis', examined the importance of cooperation in addressing global issues. Moreover, the public session titled 'Transforming Humanitarian Aid: A Refined Approach' highlighted the challenges to the current humanitarian system expressing firmly the need for a transformed approach. The session 'Big Business, Big Solutions: Encouraging Corporate Social

Responsibility' also approached the issue albeit from a different angle and focused on social corporate responsibility in offering solutions to pressing humanitarian and social issues. This is in addition to the closed session titled 'Setting an Example: Turkey's Humanitarian Role', which approached the main pillars of Turkish humanitarian assistance and discussed models for the development of human centred efforts. Along with these public and closed sessions, TRT World took upon itself to launch TRT World Citizen at the Gala Dinner of TRT World Forum 2017. TRT World Citizen has designed campaigns such as Journalism For Juniors (J4J) which is a workshop project to train refugee children on journalism. World Citizens' signature campaign "Am I Not A Child?" which focuses on missing refugee children in Europe. Through this campaign, we are committed to raise awareness about the plight of these children.

## Change via media

As the power of the media expands, its role in impacting the trajectory of political, social and economic events becomes more significant. Recent examples have proved the importance of the media in affecting the outcome of events, such as the Arab Uprisings of 2011 which demonstrated how social media platforms were effective in mobilising people in their fight for freedom, prosperity and dignity. The July 15 coup attempt of 2016 in Turkey constituted another example of the importance of traditional and digital media – in preventing a coup. With the help of the media, people are becoming more aware of the development of global issues. It has become much easier to shed light on the inequalities people face and mobilise for protests and civic action. Social media has equipped ordinary people with the power to make an impact across the world by giving them a platform to receive, express and interact. Through their content, individuals and influencers are now able to garner international attention and act as agents for change. As such, the developing features of traditional and digital media offer opportunities to generate new discourses as alternatives to the existing ones. Director General and Chairman of TRT, İbrahim Eren, addressed the crucial role of TRT World in being the voice of the voiceless; Deputy Prime Minister, Bekir Bozdağ, similarly emphasised the role of the

media in promoting and inspiring change by placing the human at the heart of each story. The session titled 'Re-thinking Media: Responsible Reporting on Humanitarian Crises' touched upon media ethics and responsible journalism in conflict zones. Another session titled 'Digital Influencers and Their Role on Shaping Public Discourse' further focused on the role digital influencers have in shaping public discourse, and the way they would promote social change.

## Conclusion

The world is one of paradoxes, rhetoric and precariousness which motivated us to hold TRT World Forum 2017 under the theme of 'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty'. The gradual decline of the established order in the

face of new powers stating their place in their world and demanding more agency has been cause for both new opportunities and lost ones. The TRT World Forum 2017 aimed to shed light on the various crises and new trends we face collectively as a global village with the intention to spark some inspiration in an age where the right way forward remains uncertain. The topics we delved into require conferences for themselves, however with our dedicated team at the TRT World Research Centre we endeavored to give the participants a glimpse into the most pertinent issues we believe need more attention. As we prepare for TRT World Forum 2018, we keep in mind the most valuable discussion points of TRT World Forum 2017 – and seek inspiration from the ideas and perspectives that were explored, for better clarity and more certainty in approaching whatever this year has in store for us.





President of The Republic of Turkey

Guest of Honour

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President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

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# Summary of the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Speech

His Excellency President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan participated as the guest of honour in the TRT World Forum 2017 to give the keynote speech at the Forum under the moderation of Fatih Er, Director of News and Programmes at TRT World. President Erdoğan's remarks spanned from the failure of the current global order in sustaining the international peace to the humanitarian crisis around the world. Attitudes and actions of some of the European countries, namely Germany and France, and the United States vis-à-vis the FETÖ and PKK were also criticised by President Erdoğan. The war in Syria and the refugee crisis were discussed and crucial explanations and suggestions were laid out. 'Western understanding of democracy is under serious crisis,' President Erdoğan said when asked about the double standards of the West concerning the MENA region.

President Erdoğan kicked off his speech by criticising the established world order after the end of the World War II. 'The world is bigger than five,' he said, referring to the powerful positions of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. He urged the international community to take action to reform the Security Council. 'There is no justice in this world. We are living in a world where the powerful is right, not the right is powerful,' he said when asked on whether there is support from the international

community for Turkey's cause. Following this question, President Erdoğan gave the example of the West in applying double standards when it comes to PKK affiliated groups such as YPG and PYD in northern Syria. He mentioned that Turkey offered support to the US and its army in its war against DAESH in Syria. However, the US had chosen to support one terrorist group, YPG, to fight another terrorist group, DAESH - which causes us to question the unreasonable decision of the US. He said the European countries are no different in regards to PKK and condemned the rallies of the PKK in the capitals of Germany and France.

Considerable emphasis was given to the refugee crisis and the war in Syria. President Erdoğan said Turkey is hosting over 3.5 million refugees within its borders: 'Turkey has spent over 30 billion dollars for the needs of these refugees.' He continued to clarify that the help that Turkey is getting from the European Union and the United Nations cover only a fraction of the cost. Moreover, he criticised the current world order where especially those who are economically powerful are presented as righteous, which leads to injustice in the world. Concluding his speech, the President invited Western countries to be sincere and urged the international community to respect the democratic demands of the people of Turkey.



The Keynote Speech of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received great praise from the audience.



## President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Keynote Speech

First of all, I would like to address all guests - whether from Turkey or from outside Turkey who have been brought together to attend this symposium, thanks to the efforts of TRT World - welcome to Turkey. I believe the subject of the symposium is of great importance and sensitivity.

As Diogenes was looking for an honest man with a lamp in full daylight, we now are looking for justice in the world. Unfortunately, there is no justice in the world. We are living in a world where the powerful and economic elite are perceived as righteous, not in one where the righteous are perceived as powerful. It is a burden for us to live in a world where barrel bombs are dropped down on innocent people from as young as seven and as old as seventy. Witnessing such acts is a persecution for us.

What are you going to do by living in such a world? When we bring this up on the agenda, when we share it with powerful nations, no one stands up and says: 'yes you are right, we have to do something about it.' In the meantime, Turkey has been hosting

**“Unfortunately, there is no justice in the world. We are living in a world where the powerful and economic elite are perceived as righteous, not in one where the righteous are perceived as powerful.”**

nearly 3.5 million Syrian refugees. Until now, the amount of money spent has exceeded 30 billion dollars. Have we received any support for the amount of money we spent? No. In return, the EU (European Union) has sent approximately 800 million euros out of the 3 billion euros that it promised to pay. In the same way, the total assistance from the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) remains at around 550 million dollars. However, as of now, the amount we have spent is over 30 billion dollars. When we address all these issues to the relevant institutions, what response do we get?

The answer we receive is: 'Turkey is doing admirable work.' Okay, so what is your support to Turkey? They mention such comments during bilateral negotiations but they keep quiet when it comes to international meetings. As you know, I have a motto from the very beginning. What is it? 'The world is bigger than five.'

Some powers evaluate today's world by the circumstances of World War II. The world is no longer the same. It has moved on. Should such a change take place? Yes, it should. There are five permanent members and the rest of the world is left to depend on what comes out of the mouths of these members. Whatever they say goes. Yet there is also a very serious deception at play. They have put in place 15 non-permanent members. And all countries are racing to be one of these 15 non-permanent members. They are wondering what will happen if they manage to become a non-permanent member? Nothing will happen. You see, we were a non-permanent member once. And what happened? Did we have the power to enforce anything? No. You will become a non-permanent member at the United Nations Security Council and that is all there is to it - just a label.







The five permanent members are the truly effective ones. I am proposing, as mentioned earlier, that it is time for a change. All of the 196 states in the United Nations General Assembly must aim for this. They have to say that 'whatever right these five permanent members have, I want to have the same rights.' If there needs to be twenty members, there shall be twenty members. In a rotating manner, new members could be appointed every two years. At least every nation in the world will be able to have a say and a role in world affairs. The world has to embody this. If we want to establish a democratic and truly just world, we need to take concrete steps towards this.

Turkey's border with Syria is 911 km long. Which country should have a say here? It is Turkey of course. Along the Syrian side of the border, Turkey is engaged in an intensive fight against the bloodthirsty terrorist organisations of the region, such as the PKK and its affiliates PYD and YPG. Who uses the PYD as its ally in Syria to help combat the terrorist group DAESH? The United States. Now, is it logical to try to rehabilitate or destroy a terrorist organisation with another terrorist organisation? As I have spoken to Mr. Trump about this matter, I can clearly mention it here. I told the US government that we should work and unite in the fight against DAESH, that we should destroy it together. I also told them that we have prepared two brigades for this – let us do this job together. Their response was, 'we are going to do it with PYD and YPG.'

What is even more interesting and unfortunate is that the United States has sent 3500 trucks of armoured vehicles and weapons into northern Syria. 3500 trucks! So where in northern Syria will these trucks be located? The United States has 13 military bases in Syria. Terrorist groups like DAESH are benefitting from all these weapons. Let us assume that they do not benefit. Is this not a threat to my country in the future? No one can deny this. When Bush's administration entered Iraq, it was the same situation. They said that they are noting down

the serial number of all the weapons that are being sent, and when everything is over, the weapons will be returned.

Indeed when the operation was over, we ended up seizing the weapons of US and Russia - which were in the hands of Barzani and PKK. Now we are being told the same thing. We are being told that the serial numbers are being noted down and that when operations against DAESH in Syria are over, these weapons will be seized. My response to them: you cannot seize the weapons. All of them will find their place. Consequently, the outlook does not seem well. We are following the developments in Syria very closely, especially in Idlib and Afrin, which are very significant regions. And PYD is present there too. So, can we stay silent against the PYD? We consider the PYD and the YPG terrorist groups to be the Syrian offshoots of the PKK - they are just different facets of the same group. And we will keep fighting them relentlessly until the very end.

Everyone should know the truth. I have given Germany 4500 files of suspected PKK terrorists living in Europe. We did not receive a single response on this matter, not one. And these people are walking freely in the streets of Europe, especially in Germany. Well, what happened to the fact that the PKK is in the EU's list of terrorist organisations? If indeed it is a terrorist organisation... I am supplying files about its members to you... these are files prepared by our Intelligence Agency. Unfortunately, there is no action taken against these people. This is the first example. The other is the FETÖ (Fethullah Terror Organisation). The situation is the same here, too. And this is not only in Germany. What happened in France recently? They organised a march, did they not? PKK, the terrorist organisation. They marched with posters and banners of the head of the separatist terrorist organisation. Under whose supervision? They did it under French police



supervision. The situation is the same in Germany. They declared my 'death warrant' under German police supervision.

With all due respect, on the basis of values, if it continues like this, the result does not seem positive. If this mentality does not change, democracy will be questioned. As of now, 'democracy' does not represent the ideas of humankind. So, we can also name this the failure of democracy.

Indeed, this topic is discussed across universities in America. Are we approaching the end of democracy? Why? If the votes are reflecting democracy, then why is this not being respected? Respect it. As we discussed earlier, it all leads to the same direction; the powerful are positioning themselves as righteous, ensuring that the righteous remain powerless. That is why we have entered an era of questioning. In the same way, what we will do as democrats against the ruthless activities of imperialism. You see, my party is winning the elections by far. I would doubt the intentions of the West if they are still judging my party's credibility, despite the fact that it has come first in the election by a high margin. Is this not democracy? Now I ask, was there a coup attempt in this country on the night of 15 July? Yes, there was. Against who? It was against us. Did we establish an authoritarian, totalitarian regime in this country? No.

We are the ruling party with the support of our people and we have been ruling the country for the last 15 years. We have transformed the economy by tripling the material power since coming into office. We are now talking about a developing Turkey in its infrastructure and superstructure. There was a coup attempt and countries who present themselves as 'Democrats' opted to wait and see how the crisis would play out - only calling after they figured that the coup was thwarted and averted. They offered their sympathies and support only for the sake of political correctness. Could such a thing happen? Now, I am speaking very candidly, the man named Fethullah Gülen (leader of FETÖ) who went to Pennsylvania in 1999, was allocated (or purchased on behalf of him) 400 acres of land. This man manages 170 countries from where he is based. However, he is symbolic and others in the background are pulling the strings. He does not have the power or the capability to mastermind the operations alone. But they have managed to operate this way and still are.

**Fatih Er**

**Your Excellency, the last two days have inspired dozens of academics, journalists, politicians to come together and be an inspiration of change in the age of uncertainty. Various people have come from different countries of the world and we have hosted over 450 people in our beautiful Istanbul. Your Excellency, it is an honour to have you participate in our program, in our forum. I offer my gratitude once more on behalf of the TRT family. Thank you.**

**Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**

**I would also like to extend my appreciation to the intellectual community, scientists, politicians and television broadcasters who attended this forum. Due to TRT World's efforts in accomplishing this forum in a determined and decisive manner, I would like to extend my gratitude to all who have contributed to the organisation of this event, starting with the Director General, and everyone working in TRT World at all levels. Thank you very much.**







# Opening Ceremony



## Summary of the Welcoming and Opening Speeches

Unceasing demands for change and potential threats today challenge the contours of the global political agenda and inevitably urge numerous actors to come up with a vision for change. By bringing together politicians, academics, diplomats and NGO leaders of all backgrounds, discussions varied from the redefinition of the global agenda to the politicisation of xenophobia and Islamophobia. The welcoming speech was delivered by the Director General of TRT İbrahim Eren and followed by Opening Speeches by Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ and Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım.

Throughout the speeches, speakers mostly emphasised the urgent need for objective and focused media, particularly in the current discourse. In his welcome speech, İbrahim Eren emphasised that the biggest motivation behind the establishment of TRT World was to

create a vision of giving a voice to the voiceless and empowering the powerless. While speaking to the early times of TRT World, Mr Eren pointed out how it was embraced in parts of the world where the truths were largely being ignored.

Stressing the need for multiple voices in the media, in a world where it is almost extinct, Bekir Bozdağ said that most of the happenings in various parts of the world were not able to find daylight. Therefore, TRT World's mission was to bring to the forefront not only what is visible, but to also shed light on the truth and act as a global base in the fight against discrimination, radicalisation, Islamophobia and various other global threats.

Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, in his opening speech, stressed that an anthropocentric approach should occupy the media, particularly in a world where the rough voices

of war and crimes against humanity mostly undermine the voices of human suffering. By aiming to place the human experience at the centre of their story without discrimination, TRT World intends to disrupt the global game and become the voice, mind and conscience of the oppressed. The Prime Minister added that by becoming a hub for these voices, Turkey is taking serious steps in the fight against terror and extremist acts that bring about further human suffering and displacement in different parts of the world.

'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty' appears to be a mission for those who encourage hope as a major component of the fight against terror and xenophobia. In a world under threat of pervading intolerance and extremism, TRT World Forum intends to shed light on the shadows of uncertainty and open up a space for all those who want to be a part of this change.







## İbrahim Eren

Director General and  
Chairman, TRT

İbrahim Eren is the General Manager of TRT. Eren worked in executive positions for several important companies in the technology and media sectors. Beginning his career at Boğaziçi Group, he founded Who Pictures which operates internationally in documentary and animation. He served as General Manager of ATV Europe and Deputy General Manager of ATV, an Independent Non-Executive Director at Türk Telekomünikasyon A.S. He graduated from Boğaziçi University in International Relations and Political Science and holds master's degree from Westminster University in Media Management.



İbrahim Eren emphasised  
TRT World's vision and  
mission in telling the truth.

## Welcoming Speech

Distinguished Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and distinguished guests, welcome to TRT World Forum 2017.

As the most established broadcaster in Turkey, TRT has always been a pioneer in terms of content and technology. Since 1964, TRT has tried to be the centre of objective, balanced and accurate news, and done its best to achieve this. TRT which I am very proud to be the Director General and Chairman, has increased its impact in recent years with the development of our country. With all its units, TRT is able to sustain its presence in international competition conditions. In a time when the world is experiencing a crisis of communication, stability and trust and journalism is negatively influenced as a result, TRT has promised to give a new perspective to journalism, to become a new breath by initiating the TRT World international broadcasting field.

When positioning itself in a global media environment, TRT World's most important motivation - from the very first day was to create a vision that could see the unseen and be the voice for the voiceless. So our goal was not to be the winner; it was to listen to the oppressed and reflect their voice on screen, and to be cautious with the news brought to us. That is why, in TRT World, we have set out on this journey with journalists who are not afraid of finding the truth, with journalists who will bravely voice the realities of this world without fear. With the help of passionate, brave, visionary and powerful people from 51 countries,

we have risen to be competitors amongst international news organisations.

TRT World's opening was launched in November of last year, with the purpose of becoming a vital platform of truth. As TRT World, we are not even a year old. Yet, in this short period of time, the global audience has come to recognise our news and broadcasts. It is embraced and noticed from regions of the world where realities are ignored. While this is the beginning of our journey, we are determined to do all we can to excel and reach an international reputable standard.

When we set up TRT World, we promised our audience to give more than just the news. What brings us together today at TRT World Forum is precisely this vision. The forum, which will be held every year, will be an international discussion platform to bring together journalists, academics, politicians and influential members of society. Voices from all backgrounds, including those who are less heard, will come together. All of the topics discussed on TRT World throughout the year will be addressed annually in this forum and humanitarian understanding will be at the centre of the issues. What brings us together is this core belief.

Those people who are conscientious, and who are concerned, who have ideas and words to say, are those who can have an impact on the future of this world. Therefore, we have set the main theme of the first forum as 'Inspiring Change in an Age

***“When positioning TRT World from the first day, our most vital motivation was to create a vision that could see the unseen and be the voice for the voiceless.”***

of Uncertainty'. Throughout the forum, we will witness together with our experts in their field, that solutions and human-focused approaches to issues can be implemented.

We will have guests from various parts of the world and will be honored with an opening speech by Prime Minister Mr. Binali Yıldırım and a keynote speech by our President Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. I once again want to welcome you all to our beautiful Istanbul. I hope the upcoming discussions will be beneficial to both our participants and to the news perspective. We were expecting the participation of the Prime Minister of Somalia, Mr. Hasan Ali Hayri, but he was unable to attend due to the terrorist attack in Somalia. On behalf of the Prime Minister, I wish to offer my sincerest condolences to the people of Somalia and I curse all kinds of terror. I would like to thank all of our guests participating today and those that will attend tomorrow for the open and closed sessions of the TRT World Forum. It is your participation that will create ideas and be an influence for change. I hope that the TRT World Forum becomes a beacon of change and positivity for years to come and I also wish you all a successful forum.





**Bekir Bozdağ**  
Deputy Prime Minister  
of Turkey

Bekir Bozdağ is the current Deputy Prime Minister and former Deputy Prime Minister for the 61st Government of the Republic of Turkey, and served as Minister of Justice in the 61st, 62nd and 64th Government of the Republic of Turkey. He was elected as Member of Parliament from Yozgat for the 22nd, 23rd and 24th Parliamentary Terms. He was a member of the Justice Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. He also worked as a lawyer.

Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Bekir Bozdağ highlighted the role that TRT World plays in the international media in providing a unique perspective.



## Opening Speech

Distinguished Prime Minister, participants, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you all with love and respect on the occasion of the commencement of TRT World Forum organised by TRT World. My wish is that this will be a fruitful and successful meeting. TRT World has brought a fresh, new voice to world news making and broadcasting. It is a mirror that truly reflects the reality of our times. Its stories are built on a foundation of honesty, objectivity and diversity - reflecting nothing but the truth - whilst maintaining its independence and impartiality. The 'people' stand at the centre of rhetoric and the organisation's most important motivation is to create a vision for the oppressed, irrespective of where they are in the world.

Today, we all know and watch many of the powerful broadcasting organisations that publish in a global scale. It is very strange that many media organs which are very different from each other, convey the same opinion and footage over and over as if they were managed by a single source. The pressure, threat and other effects from dominant powers result in broadcasting the truth in a distorted manner. Unfortunately, this is the structure of the media we see all around the world today. However, despite all the challenges, there are some media organisations that try their best to convey the reality and broadcast the truth. Brave media members - with a different perspective, a different voice who are not afraid to reflect the truth and the harsh realities of this world - will certainly play a vital role in allowing

transparency and honesty to be at the forefront of society. I truly believe this in my heart. For us, one of the essential elements in establishing TRT World was to set a new and different voice to the existing singular voice. By placing the human at the heart of each story, TRT World hoped to promote a global conscience - revealing a deeper understanding of the diversity of lives around us.

We believe that Turkey is greater than just Turkey itself. We keep reiterating that the world is bigger than five. All human beings are equal and worthy of respect. Regardless of their citizenship, ethnicity, country and the conditions they live in, each and every human being is valuable and should be given a platform to tell their stories. For this reason, TRT World will continue to be the voice and mirror of truth, not that of the sovereign powers. I believe that TRT World, with its team, mission and vision, can be one of the most powerful channels in the world. It will become a channel where people can genuinely follow and believe the content. Rooted in its core values, TRT World will maintain this philosophy as it continues to develop itself in the global arena.

Today more than ever before, the rise of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are among the foremost diseases that feed into extremism and threaten not only the countries in which they reside but the entire world. We wholeheartedly believe that it is the common duty of everyone to prevent terror on the ground and to do so with

***“Brave media members - with a different perspective, a different voice who are not afraid to reflect the truth and the harsh realities of this world - will certainly play a vital role in allowing transparency and honesty to be at the forefront of society.”***

common sense, wisdom, knowledge and courage. And it is with this intention that TRT World hopes to act as the central base of the global struggle against such diseases.

Perhaps in a world full of self-seeking interests, the blood and tears of human suffering can be redeemed through the power of the people. People who have a strong sense of obligation to see the truth, who use their voice and knowledge to drive meaningful conversations that empower. People who look beyond the false headlines and false perceptions and explore the reality behind the lies, the people behind the statistics and the issues behind each story. Many countries, including Turkey, find themselves in positions where they have to challenge false news and slander. Unfortunately, false perceptions affect all people and influences governments in making decisions. These false perceptions result in misleading the management. For this reason, the only way to create legitimate perceptions is by providing honest, open and transparent news.



## Opening Speech

Dear valuable guests, as you are aware, TRT World started broadcasting in November 2016. It has held an important place in its own field within a short space of time with the correct, neutral and pioneering journalism that sees the human condition as a focal point. We all know how much the world media has been indifferent to the human drama that occurs in our region from time to time. The lack of objectivity, the biased and prejudiced gathering and dissemination of news has been a cause for concern. The words of Malcolm X, a defender of justice and freedom, comes to mind here: 'If you are not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.'

This quote stated many years ago shows the extent to which the news in the world and communication has been manipulated. In this respect, TRT World has been established to tell people the truth and be a voice through true journalism for those who cannot make themselves heard. In a sense, TRT World was born in reaction to the existing media mindset. As a member of a political movement, and a country that has been subjected to great injustice in terms of journalism, I would like to indicate that in journalism, it is simply enough

to just tell the truth. The mission of Turkey is to serve the truth, to be the voice and conscience of the oppressed. We are witnessing TRT World undertaking this on a global scale. Turkey's geopolitical and geocultural positioning is indicative of its potential to see world events differently and therefore act as the conscience of the world.

Let us remember the date of December 17, 2010. The self-immolation of Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi triggered popular movements in the Arab world completely unexpected in their magnitude. Countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Jordan and Yemen were all affected from this situation. In the affected countries, governments had to change in some and leaders in others. This period of instability required a media that could be the voice of the surrounding geography but also speak the global language of the world. TRT, which comprises a thorough press release, has come out and responded to this need by forming TRT World.

TRT World has been able to translate our geography, our people, our politics and most importantly has been able to express our values into a global language. Likewise, developments that take place on a global

***“The mission of Turkey is to serve the truth, to be the voice and conscience of the oppressed.”***

scale are also transmitted to our people in an accurate and impartial manner and in accordance with universal communication values. As a result, TRT World has become an important platform for Turkey's recognition in the international media.

Unfortunately, global outlook and stability appears to be declining and poses as one of the biggest potential challenges the world is facing today. As we enter another year of global uncertainty, we can see an increase in terrorism and wars across the world. In addition to radicalisation, there is also a widespread increase in acts such as xenophobia and Islamophobia, which is marginalising people and making societies more divided and fragile. The very fact that this wave of radicalisation has begun in Europe - where democracy is said to thrive - is also a source of concern. As Turkey, we participate in many active works under the UN framework. Regardless of affiliation, we see



Prime Minister of Turkey, Binali Yıldırım exposed the disinformation and pollution of information that exists in the global media by referring to the injustices in the world.

**“We cannot establish a world-wide system of safe global unity by transferring the current concerns to our grandchildren.”**

terror as an enemy of humanity. Our country continues to actively contribute to the global coalition to combat DAESH. It is important to highlight the increasing number of foreigners coming to Turkey from the West and using our country as a means to cross over to Syria to join DAESH. What allures these people to abandon their relatively prosperous lives in a free society and join a terrorist organisation? Those who are coming are not only Muslims. There are Christians, Jews and also Atheists. It is for this reason why humanity should pause and reflect on where mistakes have been made. Leading nations could not fulfill their responsibilities. We could not provide global justice. Therefore, the gap between the rich and the poor, the relatively advantaged and the relatively disadvantaged has grown even larger. This has created a suitable global environment for terror to burst and spread. Instead of taking the responsibility on this issue, the international community is working on developing even more modern weapons and techniques to combat terrorism. With this type of understanding, terrorism cannot be removed. It is clear what needs to be done. We need to destroy the source of the problem through global co-operation.

Our nation continues to fight against terrorist organisations like DAESH, PKK, YPG and PYD - that is fed from the instability in Syria and Iraq - while also continuing to combat terrorist organisations that attempted to change our legitimate democratic government with a blooded coup. In this sense our basic expectation from our fellow countries is to fight terrorism with sincerity and more unity.

Why cannot the UN produce solutions to the problems that have been continuing for years in Afghanistan, Palestine, Cyprus and other such contentious regions? It is because the UN is taking sides and is not objective in its approach. There are five main countries in the UN Security Council. One of these five is taking sides and it is obstructing the route to a solution. We cannot reach anywhere like this. We cannot establish a world-wide system of safe global unity by transferring the current concerns to our grandchildren. For this reason, our President insists that the UN Security Council should be reformed. The current conditions are no longer the conditions of 1948. There are about 200 countries and global developments and communication have turned our world into a village.

We cannot turn a blind eye to 55 million refugees by weaving our boundaries with high walls. We have to deal with this issue in a comprehensive way and create a global

solution. The way to do this is to take steps to remove the civil wars and injustices, and also to launch a global mobilisation to destroy the regional developmental differences.

Unfortunately, discriminatory acts that are on the rise, such as racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are marginalising people and making societies more divided and fragile. We must all stand against such acts and come up with an embracing language that is grounded on respect and tolerance. We should never allow such trends that ultimately serve the interests of extremist and radical ideologies that eventually lead to violence. We witness the rising tide of xenophobia and anti-immigrant tendencies over the political landscape in Europe. This substantially confirms the concerns that we have been bringing forward.

Turkey as a nation has not kept silent regarding the human tragedy in Myanmar and carried the issue forward to the UN and the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation. Establishments such as Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent), AFAD (the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority) and Diyanet Foundation have sent their teams to Rohingya and helped people in need. We make continuous efforts in keeping the issue of Rohingya Muslims on the international media platform and seek to find solutions for the long term. Another region that we approach with a sense of historical

responsibility is the Middle East. As a result of the Syrian civil war that has been ongoing for 7 years, there is now a massive humanitarian crisis. Turkey hosts over three million Syrian refugees. On the other hand, we have initiated the Astana process for a peace settlement and a permanent ceasefire. We will continue to show our support in the process of building a stable and prosperous Syria, and when doing this, it must be done by respecting the democratic demands of the Syrian people. Our activities, as Turkey, are not limited within the territories of Turkey. Whenever and wherever people face disasters or seek help, Turkey lends a helping hand without wasting any time and continues



to be the moral compass of the world.

Dear distinguished guests; the topic of our forum is ‘Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty’. Our aim is to lead the change, regardless of the ambiguity. So, how can you be an inspiration for change? Here, we are talking about the solid steps Turkey has taken. We say that terror is an end product. We stress that there can be no solution to it, without reflecting on the causes and conditions that create terrorism. We clearly state out loud, that the United Nations cannot bring global peace and for that reason, change is a must.

We maintain our foreign policy on the basis of reducing our enemies and increasing our friends. As Turkey develops, the surrounding region will also develop and apply policies with an understanding of progress. Turkey is a meeting point between different economic and strategic basins. Its role is vital and brings reconciliation between the West and the East as it does between the North and the South. We have the widest representative network of the world’s richest 236 foreign missions. In addition, our partnership policy for Africa, Asia, Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean are important in our foreign policy agenda. In this respect, our relations with Africa have improved six fold in the last 15 years. It has improved seven fold with Latin America. I am talking about the commercial relationships.

Trade relations with ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nation) countries also showed much improvement, a six fold increase in fact. In the East Asian countries, there was a nine fold increase in trade relations. In other words, we are talking about a Turkey that is a permanent player in the Anatolian territory and looking for a future here; a Turkey that is trying to transform and develop in a wide hinterland extending from the Far East to Latin America, Balkans and Europe. Turkey is a country that has been in the course of civilisations for centuries. Is Turkey Western or Eastern? Turkey is both Western and Eastern. This is both geographically and culturally true. It is therefore a great ignorance to subject Turkey to a certain classification. Look at the history, look at the geography. Istanbul is a city that separates the two continents yet at the same time it also unites them.

With these feelings and thoughts, I believe that this vital global event organised by TRT World will contribute to global peace and brotherhood. I believe that TRT World will continue to be an international news platform broadcasting universal news using various sources. In addition, I would like to thank the entire team, owing special thanks to İbrahim Eren, our Director General. I also express my gratitude and respect to the politicians, scientists, speakers and valued experts that have come to join us from all over the world.





Joint Keynote Speech:

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**We are all in the Same Boat:**  
Regional Cooperation to  
Address the  
Humanitarian Crisis

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The former Prime Minister of Spain, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Mevlüt Cavuşoğlu speak during the joint keynote speech.

## Summary of the Joint Keynote Speech

The second day of the TRT World Forum 2017 opened with a joint keynote speech by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the former Prime Minister of Spain, and Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The main theme of their speech was the lack of international cooperation in addressing pressing global issues. They particularly focused on the need to deepen the cooperation between Turkey and the European Union to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria, the rise of anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiment in Europe, and the fight against terrorism.

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero highlighted the need to develop better global governance mechanisms to address current global problems. He emphasised the need to rebalance the UN and Bretton Woods institutions to reflect the economic change of developing countries now contributing more to the world's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in relation to developed countries. He explained that this economic shift has created worries amongst Europeans, which have resulted in anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments, but emphasised that a vast majority of Europeans want an open and inclusive Europe. Zapatero called for a new understanding of the relations between developed and developing countries, which can only occur through dialogue and by respecting the different identities, cultures, and religions. Zapatero argued that Turkey, as an international and regional player, performs a vital role in the stability and peace of the Middle East and the world at large. Finally, he underlined the importance of strengthening the relationship between Turkey and Europe, highlighting Turkey's role as

a bridge between the East and West and its vision in understanding the pressing issues occurring in the region.

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, also called for more cooperation between Turkey and Europe, in addressing the needs of vulnerable people. He explained how despite being the 17th largest economy in the world, Turkey ranks as the world's second largest humanitarian donor - thus highlighting the countries crucial role of leadership in the humanitarian world. Çavuşoğlu argued that Turkey is praised for its open door policy towards refugees, but receives very little economic assistance, as exemplified by the failure of the EU to fulfil its promise of providing 3 billion Euros to help Turkey with the economic burden of hosting more than 3 million Syrian refugees. He criticised the double standards of various countries in treating some terrorist organisations as 'good terrorists' and providing support to them whilst labelling others as 'bad terrorists.' He argued that in order to solve the humanitarian crisis, the root cause should be addressed through humanitarian relief and by fighting terrorism in the affected countries. He explained that Turkey shares European values and has tried hard to become a European Union member, but that the EU has not done its best to integrate Turkey. Çavuşoğlu said that Turkey must diversify its foreign policy by looking towards the Islamic world and to other regions. Finally, he cites the double standards of the EU towards Turkey, and the rise of anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiment as the main factors as to why the Turkish people no longer support the process of Turkey's integration to the EU.





## José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero

*Former Prime Minister of Spain*

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero has been the only Prime Minister during the Spanish democracy who has gained the support of more than eleven million votes. He won the Spanish elections for two consecutive terms (2004 and 2008). His political measures focused on the development of an extensive programme based on the egalitarian and universal extension of civil rights through pioneering laws and reforms. Currently Rodríguez Zapatero is the President of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy Advisory Board. The Economist included him in the first ever Top 50 Global Diversity List.

## José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Highlights

There exists today a lot of global phenomena, a lot of global incidents [related to] economics, climate change, migratory movements, violent conflicts, and terrorism. There are a lot of global phenomena, but very little policies and very little processes in global governance.

If something characterises this historic moment, it is the change in the strength of the economic and geopolitical relations between the West and the emerging world or the developing countries. That is the most important change we are seeing now.

Today, the contribution to the economic [growth], to the gross domestic product, is greater by the developing countries than by the developed countries. Europe, the old Europe, and the United States have less and less size, a lower size in the world's GDP, and the emerging countries - China, India, whole of Asia, parts of Latin America, Turkey - have a greater weight in the international context.

We have to make changes in the United Nations. We have to make changes in the Bretton Woods paradigm, in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to geopolitically rebalance the world.

I believe that in the 21st century, rejecting xenophobia, racism and discrimination has to be a universal, conclusive and permanent rejection.

Europe, refugees, war in Syria, Iraq, Middle East, are great matters, not only for Turkey but also for global peace and stability. The future stability and peace of the Middle East and [...] Europe, mostly depends on the future of Turkey.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey [Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu], [you] have a great, historical responsibility because the future of Turkey is the future of the relationship between the Western World and the Eastern World.

Unless there is [...] an agreement between Israel and Palestine for a future Palestinian state [...] there will not be stability in the Middle East.

[I]t is fundamental to incorporate all policies related to climate change because 80% of all conflicts [...] that there are in the world today, occurred in lands with processes of desertification - in barren lands.

[I]n Europe - despite the economic and financial crisis that has caused profound political movements - a majority of citizens, a majority of European people want an open Europe, an integrating Europe, a Europe that is respectful towards all cultures, all religions, and a Europe that would like to see [...] Turkey in that path of rapprochement, of understanding, and why not, of integration. We need to return to the spirit of negotiation.



I have always thought that the integration of Turkey into the European Union is the most decisive factor for peace and stability in the Middle East and in Europe.

Together we will do things better. By respecting each other's cultures and religions, - respecting each other, getting to know each other - we will interpret the future better.

When people know each other, when they live together, prejudices are surpassed.

I would not like for Turkey to lose that attitude of being a great factor, a great country, a great international player - international and not only regional - and of being another European country, another great European country.

**“I would not like for Turkey to lose that attitude of being a great factor, a great country, a great international player - international and not only regional - and of being another European country, another great European country.”**





## Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu is the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 62nd, 64th and 65th Governments of the Republic of Turkey. He was the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator between December 2013 and August 2014. He was the President of the PACE, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe from 2010-2012 and following this, he became the PACE representative at the Venice Commission from 2012-2014. Prior to these roles, he served as Chairman of the Turkish Delegation to the European Security and Defence Assembly from 2007-2010.



## Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu's Highlights

Today when we look at the figures; more than 65 million people are displaced from their homes by force, and no less than 25 million are refugees in many different countries. I do not know how many IDPs [internally displaced people] exist in their own countries. And 10 million are stateless. And how many missing persons in the world? So, how are we going to meet the needs of these vulnerable people? I think we need better cooperation. We need to support each other. And, we need more solidarity. But we do not see cooperation, we do not see burden sharing, and we do not see enough solidarity. We have to be very frank.

Integration policy in Europe and the European Union is a failure. We have to admit this. And this is another consequence of the crisis - I mean migration and migratory flows - and the rising of anti-immigrant trend or sentiments in Europe and Islamophobia, Christianophobia, xenophobia, intolerance and anti-Semitism as well.

So, who is going to reverse this trend? Politicians? Which politicians? Do you expect anything from radical parties? Or do you expect anything from centre parties? Do you expect anything from Sebastian Kurz, whose party is so called 'centre-right.' But when you look at the rhetoric during the campaign, there is no difference between the radical parties' rhetoric and Sebastian Kurz's rhetoric: Islamophobic, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant. And very, actually, disturbing. There is a lack of leadership, unfortunately. And during the campaigns, there is no difference between the Social Democratic Party, Mr. Schulz's party, and the Alternative for Germany party either. One of them is far-right and one of them is a social

democrat party. So, lack of leadership is there, and it does not help. And therefore, we need to face all these challenges together.

How about the media? Media can play a very important role. Now we are living - actually passing through a confusing age. It is the age of information and misinformation. Media is worse than politicians and the political parties in Europe - very anti-immigrant. So who is going to reverse this trend?

And counterterrorism - who is going to defeat the terrorist organisations? I think it is a global problem, and we need to fight together. But to do so effectively, we have to understand that there is no good and no bad terrorist. Now we have 300,000 Syrian Kurds in Turkey. Among the 3.2 million, 300,000 of them are Syrian Kurds. Who forced them to leave? The YPG, a Kurdish terrorist organisation. Why? Because those other Kurds do not share their political ideology and their policies. And maybe another 100,000 Syrian Kurds living in European countries. They were also forced by the YPG to leave. And this YPG gets a lot of support from our allies, from the coalition, and mainly not only from the United States, but also from some other countries. So how are we going to defeat terrorism? While you are supporting one terrorist organisation to defeat another one?

The EU membership is a strategic war for us. But I do not see this from the other side. This is the problem. In 16 years, we did our best. But we need to understand why the Turkish people are not supporting this process anymore, because there is a huge disappointment and frustration.

**“How are we going to meet the needs of vulnerable people? I think we need better cooperation. We need to support each other. And we need more solidarity.”**

Disappointments of the EU's double standards, and how they see us. And the frustration of the trends that I mentioned: Islamophobia, rising of Islamophobia, xenophobia, and Turkey bashing sentiments, and this and that.

Unless you help those people where they live, those vulnerable people, unless you focus [on] the root causes of these migratory flows, and you help them and solve their problems, you cannot stop them. If you do not go and find them where they live, they will come to you.

Unless you find where the terrorists are and defeat them, eventually they will come to you. You cannot say this is a good terrorist, bad terrorist, or this terrorist organisation is far away from me and they cannot reach me. These people are leaving from famine or natural disaster, terrorist organisations, ungovernable countries, or the regimes - different types of regimes that they do not feel safe in. Therefore, whatever the reason is, we need to maintain this first open door policy to help the vulnerable people.

So, of course when they reach you, you need to help them. But before they reach you, it is better [that] you reach them wherever they live.



# Public Sessions

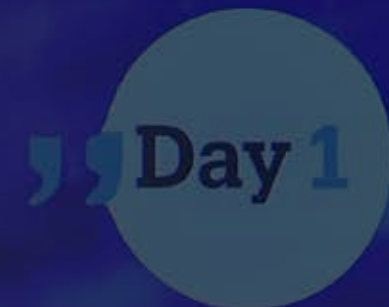
TRT World Forum 2017 hosted seven public sessions around the main theme of 'Inspiring Change in an Age of Uncertainty' with attendance of more than 600 guests from home and abroad. The titles of the public sessions are as follows: Redefining the Global Agenda: Old Guard vs New Players, Emerging Trends and New Threats in MENA Region, Re-Thinking Media: Responsible Reporting on Humanitarian Crises, Transforming Humanitarian Aid: A Refined Approach, Capitalising on Fear: The Politicisation of Xenophobia and Islamophobia, Digital Influencers and Their Role in Shaping Public Discourse, and Big Business, Big Solutions: Encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility.

Among the participants, there were scholars, journalists, politicians, NGO representatives, corporate managers and other civil society members

from over 20 countries and 30 panellists were hosted from the different backgrounds. Politicians like Rached Ghannouchi, co-founder of Tunisian Ennahdha Party; Sayeeda Warsi, former UK Minister of State; leading experts, thinkers and scholars like İbrahim Kalın, spokesperson to the President of Turkey; Richard Falk, Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University; Dr. Karin von Hippel, Director General of RUSI; leading activists like Ilyasah Al-Shabazz, author and daughter of Malcolm X and journalists, experts, CEOs and digital media personalities participated as panellists of the public sessions where they presented their arguments in a panel format. It was followed by Q&A sessions.







# Session 1

## Redefining the Global Agenda: Old Guard vs New Players

Panellist

**Karin von Hippel**

Director-General of the  
Royal United Services  
Institute (RUSI)

Panellist

**Stephen Chan**

Professor at the  
Department of Politics and  
International Studies,  
SOAS University

Panellist

**Gülnur Aybet**

Senior Advisor to the  
President of the Republic  
of Turkey

Panellist

**Pan Wei**

Director of Centre for  
Chinese & Global Affairs at  
School of International  
Studies, Peking University

Panellist

**Kingsley Makhubela**

CEO, Brand South Africa

## First Session

# Redefining the Global Agenda: Old Guard vs New Players



## First Session

# Redefining the Global Agenda: Old Guard vs New Players

- How are emerging powers influencing and reshaping the established global order?
- Are emerging powers a 'threat' to the status quo of established powers?
- What opportunities will new global institutions, like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, provide? What challenges lie ahead?
- What impact will proposals of solidarity between developing nations have on sustainable development?





## Summary of the Session

The panel 'Redefining the Global Agenda' discussed issues surrounding the established current world order and explored the players in the international arena that have the potential to change and shift the power equilibria. One of the first questions of debate was on defining the established global order to explore the subject more appropriately on a common ground. Participants discussed how countries experiencing significant economic growth in the last decade were regarded as the new players of the international arena. In this regard, the powers that constitute the first circle when it comes to bringing peace and stability and combatting conflicts in different regions around the world were considered to be the leading powerful nations in the world. The phenomenon of problemsolving in the face of political and socioeconomic challenges was elaborately discussed by shedding light on poverty, social exclusion, global security and creating a more equitable world.

The moderator, Craig Copetas began the panel discussion by highlighting current global affairs and in particular focused on the industrialisation of anti-terrorism, which has led to the foundation of the established economic order being shaken. The question of whether there is a correlation between intentionally instigating demolition and rebuilding for the sake of an investment opportunity was raised.

The first speaker, Kingsley Makhubela emphasised that the root causes of extremism should be addressed. He said there existed a 'security dilemma' and proposed taking away the resources that are used to prepare for waging wars. Karin von Hippel made the case that despite being the principle defender of a liberal rules-based international order, the United States has been hesitant to interfere in Syria due to its past disastrous

experience in Iraq. They now regret not having intervened because of unfortunate shockwaves such as the refugee crisis and the emergence of DAESH. Gülnur Aybet critically analysed the US and EU's relationship with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and highlighted how Turkey's security interests are undermined.

Pan Wei addressed the moderator's comments about China not being democratic enough, strongly putting forward the view that Chinese people do not like to be labelled as undemocratic but see themselves as a more successful democracy than many other countries. The final speaker, Stephen Chan claimed the big question now was to ask what a post Western world would look like? Who is going to replace the old guard since Donald Trump is not ready to become the guardian of the international order? The panel emphasised the inherent problems in viewing change and reform from a Western lens and questioned whether the inclusion of new powers into the strategic agenda would see the liberal, world order, descend into chaos.

Institutions that form a part of the old order were raised as a main concern because whilst the world is changing, institutions do not make real reforms and are cruising on autopilot. The periods of post-World Wars were emphasised by the following claims; after World War II, possible wars were prevented, however during the post-Cold War period the world order failed to embrace existing diversity. The question of achieving greater equality was responded to with strong notions that the Security Council of the United Nations should be reformed. Future prospects were discussed including the potential for a unipolar world that could disseminate equality in fair trade and in which openness and exchange could be promoted extensively.



The session, 'Redefining the Global Agenda: Old Guard vs New Players', witnessed vibrant discussions from the panellists.





## Kingsley Makhubela

CEO, Brand South Africa

Kingsley Makhubela is the CEO of Brand South Africa and holds a master's degree in Diplomatic Studies and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Pretoria. He has had a distinguished career in the public service having concluded his tenure as the Director-General of the Department of Tourism in 2015. Prior to this, Dr. Makhubela held amongst others, the position of Chief of State Protocol at the Department of International Relations and Co-operation.

## Kingsley Makhubela's Highlights

We really need to understand the causes of global uncertainty. I have identified about four of them: poverty, social exclusion, the growing divide between the poor and the rich- a global security dilemma and the shift to the far right. These are issues that are really creating this uncertainty around the world.

We really need to manage issues related to poverty and social inequality. It pushes good people to get involved in terrorism. It pulls them away from good things and from playing a responsible role in society. So those are issues that are related to really managing the socio-economic interests of those people. Terrorism is not necessarily a military or requires a military solution, it is a political and socio-economic challenge that we need to address.

The shift that we see to the right - it creates a lot of intolerance and pushes people further to the margins, they are isolated in society, they do not feel useful in society and they are then tempted to move to the other extreme that is presented.

The element that relates to security dilemma is a huge thing. The security dilemma concept, it simply means that in order to avoid war, prepare for war. You see a lot of countries putting a lot of resources and preparing to go to war. Is it useful? The tension that is rising around the world. How are you going to manage those issues? The resources that are supposed to deal with the challenges of socio-economic development are channeled to military buildup.

You have to take away resources from preparing for war. Deal with social economic issues. Because the challenges that you see are not necessarily military challenges, they are socio-economic challenges. If you do not address the root causes of what causes people to have the propensity to resort to violence, you are not going deal with the issues that bring people to violence. We need to deal with issues of poverty. Human security issues are very fundamental in managing the issues.

War marginalises growth definitely and it creates perpetual insecurity. It feeds on its own because the more you have insecurity, the more you get a lot of politicians who are able to spend more money on new weapon systems. Now we are dealing with the fourth industrial revolution. Are we really trying to help countries and people to catch up with the fourth industrial revolution? If you look at the weapons systems, they are developing so many of them and at a very fast rate.

The positive element that came out of the liberal world order was to prevent another world war and to prevent a conflict amongst powerful countries, that is very positive. But post-Cold War, this world order has failed to embrace and understand the diversity that exists and understand the ethnic diversity that exists even within the West. So that is why you have seen this challenge, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia was basically to understand the diversity of ethnicity and how to manage it. Now you start to see ethnicity being elevated to be the main driver of conflict paid in Syria,

**“In order to create a new global order when the world is drowning in debt of the old global order, we really need to understand the causes of global uncertainty. I have identified four of them: poverty, social exclusion, the growing divide between the poor and the rich [...] and the shift to the far right. These are issues that are really creating this uncertainty around the world.”**

in Libya and in the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Now you are seeing conflict building up in the Rohingya communities who have been pushed out. Ethnicity; it is an issue that the new world order cannot manage. I think we need to invest a lot of resources in managing the diversity and the conflict that emanates out of the diversity. Members are spending a lot of resources in building strong military power. We do not have the system that can adequately address the challenges and existing trends.







## Karin von Hippel

*Director-General of the Royal United Services Institute*

Karin von Hippel is Director-General of the RUSI, Royal United Services Institute. She previously served in the US Department of State as a Senior Adviser in the Bureau of Counterterrorism and as Chief of Staff to General John Allen, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL amongst other roles. Prior to this, she co-directed the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. She has numerous publications including *Democracy by Force: US Military Intervention in the Post-Cold War World*.

## Karin von Hippel's Highlights

I think over the years, for those of us who have studied war, we have often made the case that we need to do all we can to end the conflicts. We have also seen situations where the US at least as the leader of this liberal rules-based order has not always wanted to end all wars. If you look at Syria, as the most recent example, President Obama did not want to interfere robustly in Syria. He did not want to have another situation like Iraq - it really disrupted so many forces and unleashed so many forces. So by not interfering in Syria, in many ways you can trace so much of today's tumult to the fact that not enough was done to stop that. So the Syrian civil war festered and ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) was allowed to grow and incubate and plan attacks elsewhere.

The Syrian civil war caused a huge refugee crisis and no country knows that more than Turkey, obviously. But if you look at the countries in the region: Turkey and Jordan in particular and Lebanon, they were only able to hold and to house so many millions of refugees before the dams burst and when the dams burst we saw this massive wave of humanity streaming across Western Europe and Eastern

Europe trying to find sanctuary. So you have a situation where by not doing more in Syria, ISIL metastasizes attacks outside of the so-called Caliphate and they attack throughout Europe. Turkey has had over 300 civilians killed by ISIL inspired and ISIL directed attacks. The huge migrant crisis also enabled many populist politicians in Europe and in the United States to stir up fears. And so in a sense you can say [countries] were not doing enough to end a very important civil war.

Conflict is certainly inevitable. And not all conflict is negative. Conflict can lead to positive change as well. The issues are that you have to determine which conflicts need robust intervention and which ones, if you intervene you might make it worse. So there is no simple answer to that question.

I think that the point that needs to be made here is about the new players and the old guard. The challenge is the old guard. If we assume that the old guard is the United States, it does not want to play that role right now. Donald Trump does not want to play the guardian of the international order role, he is talking about



**“We are trying to grapple with what it means if the US is not the sole superpower. I think the US will still be a superpower because of its economic and military might for some time to come, but other players like China, Turkey, Brazil are playing a major role.”**

‘America First’ and he is challenging every consensus that has been in place since the end of World War II . So if the US is not going to play that role of trying to promote global values etc., which country or groups of countries will? That is really the bigger question. Or will no country play that role? So, if he is successful in stepping back as he has done so far, he does not really even have a US foreign policy, what will fill that gap?

We are trying to grapple with what it means if the US is not the sole superpower. I think the US will still be a superpower because of its economic and military might for some time to come, but other players like China, Turkey, Brazil are playing a major role. I am also a believer in systems and processes and what the concern is: will this be anarchic and will we end up with a world where lots of regional powers do different things in different parts without a potential overarching structure. There is also the concern of the US pulling back from a leadership role, since whether or not you like the US playing that leadership role, there is some sort of anchor and reliability about it.





**Gülnur Aybet**  
Senior Advisor to the  
President of the Republic of Turkey

Gülnur Aybet is Senior Advisor to the President of the Republic of Turkey and Professor of International Relations at Yıldız Technical University, Istanbul. She was former Head of Department of Political Science and International Relations and founding Director of BAUCES, Centre for Security Studies at Bahçeşehir University. In 2013 she founded the International Relations Department at Özyegin University, Istanbul. She held academic posts at the University of Kent in England between 2001-2013 where she created and directed the first MA programme in International Security. She also taught at the University of Nottingham, in England and Bilkent University in Ankara. She is the author of A European Security Architecture After the Cold War: Questions of Legitimacy.

## Gülnur Aybet's Highlights

NATO - as every other alliance has had its ups and downs, even during the Cold War, when it definitely had a concrete purpose. After the end of the Cold War, there was an allegation about whether NATO would die out. I think it had its shining moment in the 90s when it engaged in operations to assure collective security, humanitarian interventions and was putting wars to an end. But, currently the NATO as any other Western institution is living through this fatigue and wishes it was still in the 90s.

The West as a transatlantic relationship has come to the point where they are not reading Turkey in the right way because they are not reading the world in the right way. The issue is not really about Turkey, it is about a changing world, a changing region and a changing Turkey.

When this liberal world order was set up after 1945, there was this sense that for the United States, you had to balance the bigger powers like the Soviet Union or China or later Russia. You could not really sort of control them, but you could balance them. Then there were those former powers who were now allies that had to be controlled through economic interdependence and providing for the security - Germany and Japan in the sphere of influence of the West. Then there were the other allies, these were largely functional allies, passive allies. Turkey was a functional ally. It had a strategic location, a great army but it is functional. It is not at the table, it does not really have a strategic partnership with the

West. The confusion is Turkey is no longer in that role. The West is finding it very difficult to say, wait a minute you used to be a functional ally, now you are acting like a strategic partner.

The United States is in a period of confusion. For many years, they have dealt with the Middle East as if it is the backyard of the Cold War. They had certain tools to deal with it, such as shuttle diplomacy. Proxy wars were also a part of the Cold War. As far as I am concerned, the main confusion lies in the grand strategy of the US, which seems to have lost its way in the sense that they want to do some kind of offshore balancing. They engage in an attempt to maintain control by balancing outsourcing to local actors and regions while they go off and do other things. I think that this is the sticking point.

Those who established the post-1945 liberal world order want to hold on to that control but currently they do not know what kind of approach to adopt. This leads onto the following questions: how do we do offshore balancing but keep control because we cannot have the military power projection that we had during the Cold War? We cannot afford it anymore, but how do we do offshore balancing? Do we do it with local actors, with allies? Do we do it with proxy fighters on the ground? There is a big confusion about that. Secondly, how do we maintain this global outreach and control while trying to look like we are really not interested? I think this is actually the crucial point here. For a while, institutions in the 90s were put forward



**“The West as a transatlantic relationship has come to the point where they are not reading Turkey in the right way because they are not reading the world in the right way. The issue is not really about Turkey, it is about a changing world, a changing region and a changing Turkey.”**

as those who could maintain that control because let's face it; this order was declining. There is this fear in the West that, any alternative to it and you mentioned this as well, will descend into this dark chaos.

Trump's position as a reaction to the declining liberal world order says that these reactions are coming from within the Western world. This is also the main cause for the rise of the far right in Europe. It is not about whether the Western world wants per se to promote values or not, we really need to think about what the end tension is behind promoting values. Are values promoted to exert control, or are they promoted to share them? This is the crux of the question. When countries such as Turkey are promoting their values in their moral hinterland, it is not to exert control but to genuinely share those values. I believe that the West has lost the spirit in establishing the values pillar. There was of a lot of sense of humanity, which is not there anymore.

I think institutions that were supposed to embody those values are now cruising on autopilot and they just have a knee-jerk reaction to whatever they see as something not representing what they think the world ought to be like. Because they have lost the meaning of the words, the concepts and the values that they embodied. They just keep repeating them without really understanding it.





## Pan Wei

Professor,  
Peking University

Pan Wei is based at the School of International Studies at Peking University and the Director of Centre for Chinese & Global Affairs at SISS. He has a bachelor's and master's degree in International Politics from Peking University. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley. From 1985 to 1995 he worked as a Research Assistant at the Institute of World Economics and Politics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing.

## Pan Wei's Highlights

In China, we understand democracy differently. We do not feel that democracy is just to elect leaders. To elect top leaders, is that democracy? So in China, we find that the way that people express their will, about their welfare and increasing their living standard, have a say in how to improve their quality of life. It is democracy. It is more like a people's democracy, as we like to call it. The people's welfare is the most important thing instead of just electing leaders or having the power only to elect leaders.

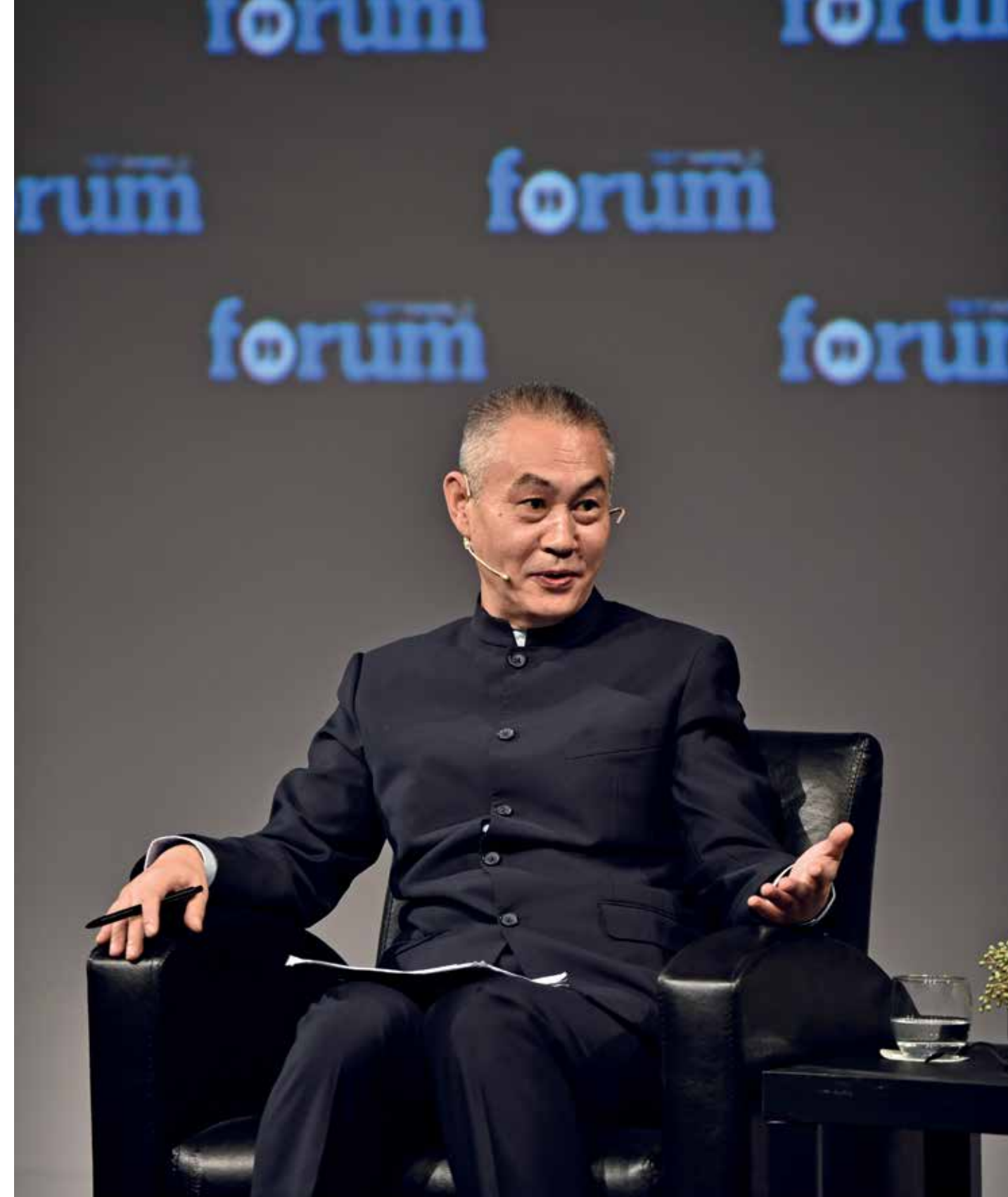
Members of the Chinese Communist Party amount to a number of almost 90 million which means that it is larger than the population of any European country. Coming to the question whether that is democratic or not, I mean that is quite representative.

**Moderator A. Craig Copetas:** 'You are not a democratic country, you are a one-party system', this study at Harvard says...

**Pan Wei:** We do not care about what Harvard says. We care about what Peking University says. We are very self-confident. People want to label China as democratic or anti-democratic and non-liberal. The Chinese do not like to be labelled like that because we are more successful than most of the others. This is the source of self-confidence or you might say culturally self-confident. We like the word 'democracy' and we like to say we are more democratic than you are.

In China, the top important values are two things: one is peace and number two is development. How to obtain this peace and development for the world order? I have [two] principles to propose here: number one, that major powers should agree not to impose their own social values on others. That is for me the most important lesson that we have learned from the post-Cold War world. Number two, from our own experience, we have to tighten our belt and work on our infrastructure. We believe that the only major difference among underdeveloped countries and developed countries is infrastructure. So whoever is capable of doing this, will get people to become rich, and therefore that is China's proposal - all major countries work together to build infrastructure in the underdeveloped world - for prosperity.

To sum up, I would say China is not an enemy to the liberal world order. But we do see some negative things in that and China is actually one of the victims. For example, China is currently not recognised as a market economy at the standards in WTO (World Trade Organisation) and China is also suffering from the high-tech embargo as well as arms embargo. So the things we were to see in this world is not just about liberal or market mechanisms, we want the private sector and public sector to work together and to promote peace and development in the world. So to say



**“[M]ajor powers should agree not to impose their own social values on others. That is for me the most important lesson that we have learned from the post-Cold War world.”**

that to reduce the bias among each other, we should not foster this conflict among civilisations, then don't impose social values on others. This is not to say that we have different values like democracy, liberty and so on, but it is mainly about priorities. There are different priorities for the Chinese; we are very materialistic, we want to see the welfare and well-being of the common people.

I think there is another way to see the world order. If you are an institutionalist, you would see the world is governed by the United Nations, World Bank, IMF (International Monetary Fund) and even UNESCO. Then you may see it the other way, that those institutions are actually based on power, based on American dollars, based on American aircraft carriers. It seems that in the future, the world is not going to have this polar or unipolar world, so it would be a world without a pole and that is why I guess this forum is labelled the 'world of uncertainty.' I agree with Prime Minister's (Binali Yıldırım) speech; that culturally mutual respect and tolerance are important things and now of course I know that might offend some very ideological people. I think equality in fair trade and openness and exchange of more people and more goods and more capital, that would promote peace.

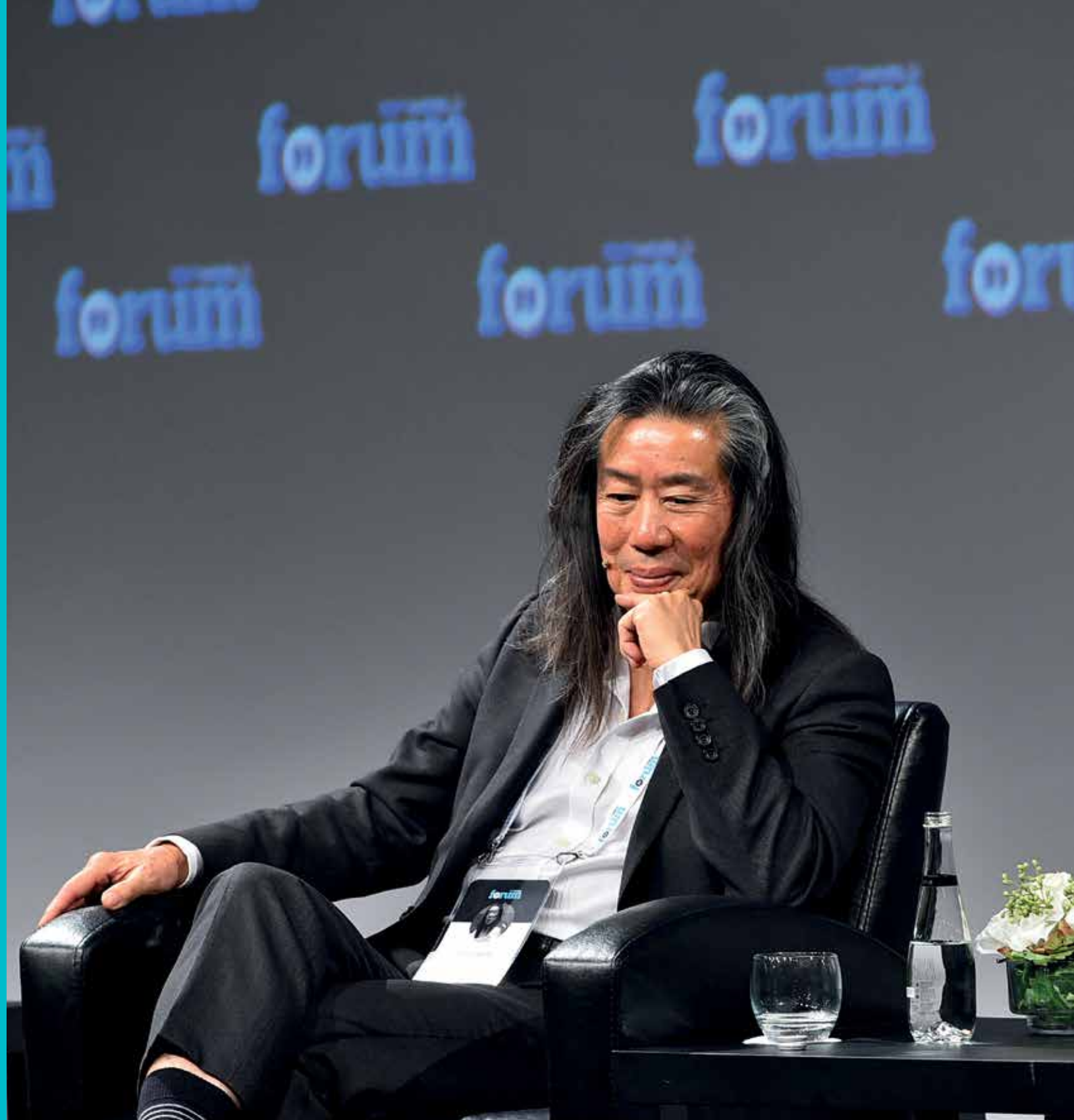




## Stephen Chan

*Professor,  
SOAS University*

Stephen Chan OBE is a Professor of International Relations at SOAS University where he has previously been a Dean of Law & Social Sciences. A former international civil servant, he helped pioneer modern electoral observation at the 1980 independence elections of Zimbabwe, and has been involved in conflict mediation and post-conflict institution building in many countries. He heads the Kwok Meil Wah Foundation, which benefits young people in Africa. Winner of the 2010 International Studies Association award, Eminent Scholar in Global Development, he has published 32 scholarly books - in addition to 3 novels and 5 volumes of poetry.



## Stephen Chan's Highlights

I think every culture, every so-called civilisation is immersed in a conceit that their way of doing things and their way of thinking about things is the correct way. If you are going to have a true globalism with inter-mixtures and interconnections in a true global cooperation, that kind of conceit has got to go the way of history. It has got to be a genuine mixing of different ways of thinking, without that, there will be no peace, there will be no shared objectives.

All kinds of questions arise from the discussions we have had so far. When we talk about offshore balancing for instance what is it that we are trying to balance? That is a question that is unanswered because it is not the same balance as the Cold War even though we try to behave as if it were. How do we balance different confessional beliefs, different theologies, different approaches to God and the universe? How do we balance all kinds of economic interests of the Chinese very much to the forefront there in places exactly like Africa? And how do we go about making war without at the same time spending as much money and making as many efforts in going about negotiations? Where is the twin-track that is thought through, so when you negotiate with the other side, you know what the other side is thinking and what the other side wants. Without that kind of appreciation of how other people think, what they want and what they aspire to, we are going to be in for a very rough

ride in the 21st century.

In order to achieve a structured counterbalance to the old world order, the first thing that has to be done is reforming the Security Council of the United Nations. Once you have got that down and you have got a greater equality and participation and making strategic decisions to do with life, death, war and peace, then you have got to step forward to addressing more of these other issues.

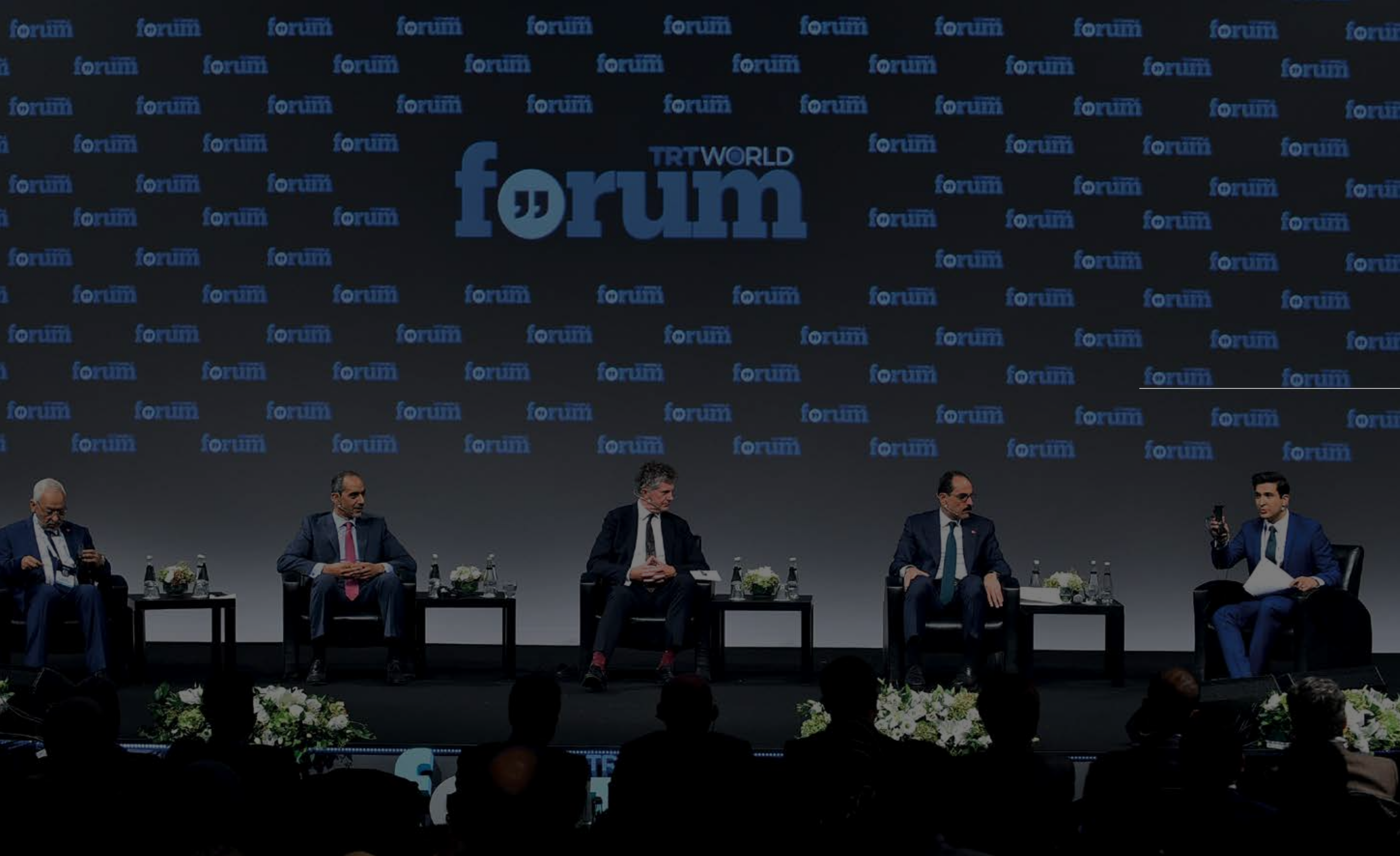
[The G20 (Group of Twenty) becoming more influential in some issues of global governance] was a major shift in the way the world deliberated at least. It was a major shift in what was included in global agendas, that was a reform that was also change making. So when you talk about institutional reform, you are also talking about changes and the way people have ideas about how to view the world. I think that people are afraid because people are very much set in their own values. We talk about values and this is key to everything, whether we talk about institutional change or reform but people do not want to give up their values.

I think that Kingsley is not quite right in saying that we have got a clash of ethnicities as a future landscape. We do have a clash of confessional thought, a religious clash which is very evident internationally. That involves ideas, that involves values that are very dearly held in the DNA of what each country holds very close to their hearts. Until we break out of that and open ourselves up to a true exchange between theological values and

**“In order to achieve a structured counterbalance to the old world order, the first thing that has to be done is reforming the Security Council of the United Nations. Once you have got that down and you have got a greater equality and participation and making strategic decisions to do with life, death, war and peace, then you have got to step forward to addressing more of these other issues.”**

the moral underpinnings of those theological values, we can talk about reform and change until the cows come home. There has been a learning curve for the Chinese since 2007, they have actually acquired some sophistication which was not there at the beginning. So I do agree that the Chinese do not have malign ambitions for Africa at the same time they certainly have what I would call retrograde views of the African. Those retrograde views have changed. At the same time what you have got is an increase in African negotiating ability as well, so the two are meeting at some point in time. I should make a brief point about Chinese military projection. They've got no military projection in the normal sense. Their aircraft carriers are refurbished Ukrainian sprat heap, that's more operational than the British aircraft carrier right now, but it has got no naval projection power whatsoever.





Second Session

## Emerging Trends and New Threats in MENA Region



## Second Session

# Emerging Trends and New Threats in MENA Region

- What are the structural factors that drive and sustain instability in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region?
- What are the prospects of building democratic institutions? Can decentralisation help solve problems in the region?
- What platforms could be provided for countries to rebuild their economies and social institutions after years of war?
- How can regional institutions - such as the Arab League, the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)- help remedy existing crises and pave the way for a more stable MENA region?





## Summary of the Session

TRT World Forum hosted an esteemed panel under the title of 'Emerging Trends and New Threats in the MENA Region.' The panel session delved into topics most pertaining to the Middle East today and which have affected the course of events regionally and globally over the past six years.

The panel session started with a speech by Rached Ghannouchi, who spoke of his perspective of the Arab world, the current situation and where he believes the Arab world is headed. Ghannouchi stated that the Arab world is in a process of democratic transition, and despite the challenges it has and is facing, it will eventually overcome - and the revolutions which engulfed the Arab world in 2011 - will succeed.

The panel discussed the need for the region to take agency and regain its ownership over its stories and events: the need for the decolonisation of the MENA region in the political, linguistic, social and intellectual sphere. This also led to the discussion of the role of theology and religion within the MENA region, and if Islam is compatible with politics. As such, İbrahim Kalın tackled the sectarian focus within the discussion, stating that states today exploit sectarian issues for the sake of their national interests. Ghannouchi on the other hand, approached the issue from a governance perspective, claiming that governance in Islam does not require Muslims to create completely new systems of governance, nor does Islam require them to rule as per the past; rather that Islam came with guiding principles, leaving the intricacies of a system to be decided by the people of the time.

It is also worthy noting the discussions that took place on the impact of military intervention in the Arab world and the abandonment of the Syrian people. Jonathan Powell argued that there was a lack of nuance in the West's strategy regarding their intervention in Libya, stating that the West learnt the wrong lessons from Iraq and instead of assisting the Libyans properly in their democratic transition - they left halfway, leaving a vacuum for terror and chaos to thrive. Tarik Yousef capitalised on Powell's point, and went further to state that a unified entity containing powerful actors in the MENA region, similar to that of the European Union, needs to be established. By establishing a unified alliance between MENA countries, the region would be able to claim agency and take back control of its own matters.

Concluding, the panel explored both theoretical and practical aspects of the threats and trends the MENA region is passing through at the present time. A question from the audience prompted İbrahim Kalın to remember Ibn Khaldun, claiming that the lack of 'Asabiyya' - or group solidarity - in MENA based societies today is one of the main contributing factors for the region's problems. The lack of unity amongst MENA states and their people, speaking their stories in languages other than theirs, approaching their problems via Western countries, and looking outwards for scapegoats to blame before reflecting inwards - is what has driven the MENA region to the state it is in, more than any outward threat such as terrorism and Western intervention. For this to change, Middle Eastern states will need to look within, and trust that their issues can be solved first and foremost by regaining control, and unity.



The session, 'Emerging Trends and New Threats in MENA Region', gave broad perspectives about past and present threats as well as political and social trends in the MENA region.





## Rached Ghannouchi

*Co-founder of the Ennahdha Party, Tunisia*

Rached Ghannouchi is the co-founder and President of the Ennahdha Party, the largest political party in Tunisia. Following the government's rejection of Ennahdha's application for parliamentary elections in 1988, Ghannouchi, sought exile in London. He returned to Tunisia within days of the January 2011 Revolution and led the party campaign for the October 2011 elections in which Ennahdha won forty-one per cent seats and formed a government in coalition with two secular parties. His perseverance and understanding of other parties' viewpoints in Tunisia has guided his party to adopt a modern, forward-looking constitution and has attributed to the establishment of a durable democracy in Tunisia.

## Rached Ghannouchi's Highlights

Nations revolted against dictatorship, and succeeded in removing some of them. And we are waiting for the rest. Because declaring revolution in a place does not mean immediate success to the revolution. Between the declaration of a revolution and the success of a revolution is a period of time: be it a year, be it 10 years, be it 20. Take the French Revolution for example; the process, which it took from transferring from a tyrannical monarchy to a democratic system was 80 years. 80 years seems like a long time, but history is not written in one or two days. For this reason, I am completely convinced that the Arab world has entered the process of democratic transitions. And these transitions have varying periods of time. And the political elite has the capability to reduce this period, if it succeeded in finding compromises and common ground between itself. Will Assad stay or leave? He will leave as all dictators eventually do, no doubt, but when? This question depends on the balances of power and circumstance. If the situation in Tunisia was reached in a shorter period of time, that goes back again to the success of the Tunisian political elite in solving its problems around a table, meaning it did not turn to violence, and secondly because Tunisia's strategic importance is not as high as that of Egypt, Syria and Libya, as Tunisia does not have petrol. We are lucky we do not have petrol.

Libya on the other hand has vast amounts of petrol, which increased the people interested in it, causing international and external interest in it even more. For that reason, the situation in Libya is much more complicated and will require more time. However for the Libyan people there is light at the end of the tunnel, and I believe there is a solution coming. And it is only a matter of time until the Arab world catch up with the rest of the world; the Arab world is still in a state of transition, but will reach - as all other nations have - to democracy, and a democracy that agrees and goes hand in hand with the region's Islamic culture.

It is not required of us to bring a new system, which is strange to the world, because Islam did not come to us with a separate system of economics or governance, rather it came with principles and values. It called us to justice, *shura* (consultation) and brotherhood, and it is required of the Muslim of every age to innovate and come up with solutions to his issues and problems, in light of these common guiding principles.

In our age, how do we implement *shura* for example? We find that the best way to implement *shura* in this day and age, or the way that is available for us now, is through democracy. It is the way of elections and



**“Despite all the challenges and terrorism the Arab World is facing, I have no doubt that the Arab World has entered a new phase: the process of democratic transitions. The issue is only about time and cost. Then all Arab countries will be among the free countries.”**

parliaments, and political parties, and the constant change in political leadership - and we do not find anything in Islam, which rejects this. So those who call for Islamic democracy are not calling for anything that is too different to what the Christian democrat, or Buddhist democrat calls for. Because religions did not come with detailed systems, but with guiding principles - and it is the duty of the people of intellect to create systems that suits their time and solves their problems. Take the judicial system in Islam. Islam calls for justice, and in our history, our judicial system was based on the individual. The person was judged according to his deed, whereas now our judicial systems are collective - and have more processes and layers to them - which surely is more efficient and more just. Do we say that because our history knew only one certain type of judicial system that is only applicable to Islam? No. Islam did not tell us that the judicial system should be individual or collective, etc. Rather it told us that we should judge and rule justly. But how is justice achieved? That is left to our intellect. However, Muslims have closed the doors of *ijtihad*, and said that we should not copy the West, which leaves us in a static position. For this reason, we should implement the systems known in this world currently - and develop them with our cultures, traditions, interests, values and principles.





## İbrahim Kalın

*Spokesperson to the President of Turkey*

İbrahim Kalın is the founding-director of the SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research) based in Ankara, Turkey and served as its director from 2005 to 2009. He previously served as Assistant Undersecretary of State and Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister of Turkey before taking up his current post. A graduate of Istanbul University, he received his Ph.D. from the George Washington University. As a broadly trained scholar of philosophy and Islamic studies, Dr Kalın has taught courses and published widely on Islamic philosophy, comparative philosophy, Islam-West relations and Turkish foreign policy.

## İbrahim Kalın's Highlights

The MENA region is part of the current global system which is dysfunctional, which is unfair, which is more a system of disorder than order - therefore when we talk about the MENA region or the problems in Syria, Iran, Palestine and other places, we have to see it within the larger context of the global picture. You cannot isolate the region and the problems from the larger picture, because we also live in this age of butterfly effect rather than snowball effect, where things are no longer mechanical but they are interrelated in so many different ways. Something happens in one part of the world affecting many other things, triggering many other positive or negative forces, and this is exactly what happened in the MENA region.

We have to acknowledge that the nations in the MENA region and the larger Muslim world have the means and the resources in fact to deal with their own problems. We have a young population, we have good people in our societies - but are they really given the space to function in the ways that will help their countries, their nations? They are not in many ways. I do not want to put the blame just on others, on outsiders, I think I have said this many times - those who follow my speeches and writings know that just blaming others leads to intellectual laziness. It does not solve any of our problems, that is clear enough. We have to do a lot of soul-searching reckoning within ourselves. Without having peace, integrity and clarity within our own souls, we cannot really do anything properly in the outside world. This applies to the general state of the Muslim world, which is not in its best shape at the moment. But we have to also recognise always in external interventions - proxy wars - are

also crippling the potential of countries we are talking about.

In my humble assessment, as a scholar of history, I do not think the conflict that we see today between Sunni and Shia is directly related to what happened during the Battle of Siffin. If you look at how the 1,400-year old Islamic tradition dealt with the issue of Sunni and Shia Islam, with all the colours in between, we can overcome the sectarian identity issue very easily. We believe in the same God, we believe in the same book, we face the same Qibla\*; these are the most important elements, all the rest - everything else is a detail, it is a footnote on the main text. You have this differences within every sect, the issue is not about Sunni-Shia Islam, it is about nation state interest.

We have to understand the political order that was established in the Middle East and the larger Muslim world, after the end of the Ottoman Empire; we had 23 Arab countries and 55 - 56 Muslim countries. We are not saying that the borders should change, new states should be established, in fact we should maintain the national borders - they are part of the Westphalian political orders we have been living with for the last three to four hundred years. We are not questioning it; but we can create a regional order where it is as if borders do not exist, do not matter, national identities do not matter because we have interests and values and identities and historical memories that go beyond the limited petty interest of this or that particular nation-state.



**“If you look at how the 1,400-year old Islamic tradition dealt with the issue of Sunni and Shia Islam, with all the colours in between, we can overcome the sectarian identity issue very easily. We believe in the same God, we believe in the same book, we face the same Qibla; these are the most important elements, all the rest [...] is a footnote.”**

Establishing a regional order requires a regional understanding and understanding of the actors and the actors speaking to one another. We have a problem that even the terminologies that we use to describe our problems are borrowed from other places. These are not our terms, these are not our words, and these are not our stories. And if you do not have your own words with which to express your own story - you do not have a story, it is someone else's story, you are just a figurehead. Therefore, talk about the narrative, about the Middle East, about the Muslim world in most of these media outlets or analyst circles do not really reflect the realities on the ground, and they should be critically examined. We should benefit from them no doubt, we should engage them, but if you think that this is the only narrative, this is the only platform with which we should address our own problems, we will be that wrong from the very beginning.

One of the mistakes that we make all the time in the Muslim world is that we think we should be speaking to ourselves only - this is like an internal Muslim talk. No, we should address our problems in a global language and that is exactly what our ancestors did. If you look at how Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Khaldun and others did philosophy, how did great poets write poems, how did great logicians like Farabi and others produce their work, or great architects like Mimar Sinan and many others or musicians like Ziryab who went from Syria to Andalusia. They had a global vision of the world. It was not limited to one country or one region. That is why their achievements have been so enduring for centuries and that is the perspective we need today: to create our own agenda. Of course, we have to know where our roots are but once your roots are strong enough and deep enough then you can have the confidence and the ability to reach out to the sky, and the sky is the limit.

\* Qiblah: the direction of the Ka'bah (the sacred building in Makkah), which Muslims pray towards.





## Tarik Yousef

*Director, Brookings Doha Center*

Tarik Yousef is a Senior Fellow in the Global Economy and Development programme and the Director of the Brookings Doha Center. His professional career has spanned the academic world at Georgetown University and the Harvard Kennedy School; and the policy arena at the IMF, the World Bank, and the UN. His research has focused on the political economy of policy reform in the Arab world. He has contributed numerous articles and co-edited several volumes including *Young Generation Awakening: Economics, Society, and Policy on the Eve of the Arab Spring* and *Public Sector Reform in the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons of Experience for a Region in Transition*.

## Tarik Yousef's Highlights

As far as I am concerned, radicalisation, violence, terrorism are fundamentally an outcome that has flown from political, economic and social failures in this region. This was clear 10 years ago, this in fact was clear 20 years ago. In societies where especially the young are excluded, where political voice is absent and where the only way to keep stability is repression, it is only a matter of time before young people in bigger numbers - in growing forms of violence and extremism - will express their resentment - their rejection of the status quo. And as these failures are prolonged and authoritarian regimes that do not respect tolerance, that do not promote inclusion, that do not spread prosperity and welfare amongst their publics, are bound to create these repeated outcomes of failure.

Authoritarian regimes cannot be the answer to the problems we have today. Just go back 30 years ago, problems of religious extremism and violence in the Arab world were confined to very smaller groups. Muslim jihad some of their offshoots in member states. 15 years later Al-Qaeda emerged: a much more global, ambitious and violent organisation. Continued failures, lack of a response over time bred DAESH and its likes, and my bet that if we are to vote in favour of the return of the old regimes, or the old styles of governance, we will replicate the same failures and end up promoting even greater violence in the future. And hence I find myself in total agreement with Sheikh Rached Ghannouchi on the need for us to be patient about change, to manage our expectations during the process of

change, but fundamentally be principled about the need for change. Because the alternative is essentially an extension of processes and outcomes that will not address the fundamental issues and challenges in society and will only seek to prolong problems only for them to explode in more extreme forms.

The US is no longer interested in looking after the regional order; the regional order that lasted for decades after World War II with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was shaped, protected, sponsored by external powers, namely the US and to some extent the UK. Those countries now are no longer either committed or quite frankly as in the case in the US, they are not interested. That is what is driving the intensification of instability and volatility and uncertainty at this moment. It is much easier for me to think about solving Libya's problems if I were left alone than in a world where I do not know if my neighbours are conspiring against me, are working to undermine me, or what sort of a regional neighbourhood I am going to find myself in. But there lies the opportunity as well. Given the vacuum that is emerging, the entrenchment of the US, and the withdrawal of the West from the region based on what we can see now, regional actors, regional powers - and I am very happy and confident and comfortable saying this will include Turkey and Iran and Egypt and Saudi Arabia - need to find a way of accommodating each other's interests in the way that Ibrahim suggested. Their fears, their worries, help put a framework that will bring about some stability



**“Authoritarian regimes that do not respect tolerance, that do not promote inclusion, that do not spread prosperity and welfare amongst their publics, are bound to create these repeated outcomes of failure. Authoritarian regimes cannot be the answer to the problems we have today.”**

and some internal coherence to this system.

I do not think we have genuinely even engaged in open discussions. I mean let me be frank with you right now, when was the last time the leaders from the countries I have mentioned sat together and actually discussed substance that has to do with the region? The last summit that brought all of these guys together focused on what? The fight against terrorism. I think terrorism is a threat, I think it is a problem but is it the number one problem - is it the only problem? Is it where all of our resources and tensions and energy should be going? Absolutely not. So as somebody from outside of Turkey and Iran, and as an atom looking at my own neighbourhood, I feel not

only perfectly comfortable - I am compelled to think of future regional security arrangements that would include not only countries from the region, but Turkey and Iran and others that have a vested interest in stability and prosperity. We need to solve this conundrum. Unless we do so, then the commitment in the hopes for change in the future based on inclusiveness, democracy, and justice and peace will be much harder to fight for.

I will tell you what I have learnt in the last few years, just looking and thinking about refugees, thinking about the Muslim diaspora abroad. I have been incredibly inspired by the readiness, the commitment, and the willingness to give, sacrifice, and contribute to their home societies that I have seen across many segments of the Muslim diaspora abroad. It is up to us to imagine a world in which even the refugees today who might have been dispossessed of everything, who may have left because of all the grievances, lack of basic human needs, are possibly future ambassadors - future bridges - who could link up both the West with our region. In Libya, in Syria, in Tunisia, the diaspora has decidedly contributed to some of the most innovative practices in health and social mobilisation, in civil society, and I think we should be thinking of this from a long-term positive and hopefully an inspirational perspective.





## Jonathan Nicholas Powell

*Director, Inter Mediate*

Jonathan Powell is the Director of Inter Mediate, founded in 2011 to work on conflict resolution around the world. Powell was Chief of Staff to Tony Blair from 1995 to 2007 and prior to this the Chief British Negotiator on Northern Ireland. From 1978 to 1979 he was a broadcast journalist with the BBC and Granada TV and a British Diplomat. He is the author of a number of books including *The New Machiavelli: How to Wield Power in the Modern World* and *Talking to Terrorists: How to End Armed Conflict*.

## Jonathan Nicholas Powell's Highlights

Tackling terrorism necessitates three tools: one is security - you need to have security measures that stop the terrorism as far as you can, that contain it, that push it back. You need to address the grievances that terrorism feeds on, the injustices we had in Northern Ireland with the Catholic people being excluded from economic and political life, and you need to offer a political way out. It is about doing all of those that will help us solve all of these terrorist problems whether it is DAESH or PKK or any of the others.

I was Prime Minister Cameron's special envoy in Libya for a few years, and when I first went there what people said to me: 'thank you for supporting the revolution, but why did you go away and leave us with no support while we try to make our way towards a democracy?'

The problem was, what I think the West was doing was drawing the wrong lessons from Iraq. They drew the lesson from Iraq that it is okay to intervene from the air, but do not go in there - do not try and build governments, do not try and help with institutions. I think that was a terrible mistake, because what we needed to do was help those institutions grow strong. The Libyan people had no experience of those institutions, they had no experience of compromise, so I wanted to echo very strongly from the other point of view, the point of view your Western intervener on the point he makes.

In Kosovo we intervened and it actually worked. We managed to save Kosovo from a fate worse than

hell and we managed to actually change Serbia in the process - so sometimes intervention can work. But you have to be patient; if you are going to do something like Afghanistan, it is no good going in there with a one-year sense of purpose. You have got to have a long-term commitment to that country and to building its system of government and building the institutions in somewhere like Libya- and we did not have that.

It is quite hard to make the case that Iraq was a terrific success and that we all did wonderfully. We made a huge number of mistakes: disbanding the army, de-Baathification, failing to really stand up institutions. There was a series of mistakes that were made after the invasion. But to suggest that ISIS happened because of overthrowing Saddam, I think is a misunderstanding. And I think it is a very important misunderstanding, because if we believe that by liberating Mosul, and liberating Raqqa, and liberating Deir Ezzour we have solved the problem of DAESH, we are sadly mistaken. We may have stopped them holding territory, but as long as the grievance exists between Sunni and Shia in Iraq, as long as that feeling the Sunnis that they have been dispossessed by the Shia continues, we will have the same problem again in Mosul after a short while, we will have the same problem in Syria as well.

We have to find a way of getting a dialogue between Sunni and Shia inside Iraq. If we do not do that the problem will reoccur all over again. There is a reason that one and a half thousand men were able to take over the city of Mosul despite the Iraqi army, and that was because the people of Mosul did not



**“We think it is over - it is not over - the Arab Spring is going on. We know what happens when you have a revolution, you have a counter-revolution, you have a dictator like Napoleon but the system moves on.”**

want Maliki's regime in Mosul, they wanted something different even if it was DAESH. We will face that same problem. Unless we actually get to grips with this, and try and get a dialogue properly underway between the two communities - a real understanding - that is why the formation of the Ankara group, I think, on the Sunni side is a very good thing. It gives some sort of coalescence to Sunni views that could lead to some sort of proper dialogue inside Iraq.

I think the single most important point is the answer to your question is that we need some sort of historical perspective. We were much too optimistic when the Arab Spring started. We thought all the problems we would solve straight away and it will all be fine. We are now much too pessimistic we think it is over - it is not over - the Arab Spring is going on. We know what happens when you have a revolution, you have a counter-revolution, you have a dictator like Napoleon but the system moves on. The war in Syria is not over. It may be moving into a different phase but there will not be stability there until Assad goes. We just completely lack the historical perspective. If you reassert that you will end up a lot more optimistic than otherwise you might end this session.



Day 1

## Session 3

### Re-thinking Media: Responsible Reporting on Humanitarian Crises

Panellist

**Rodney Dixon**

Barrister specialising in  
international law based  
at Temple Garden  
Chambers

Panellist

**Resul Serdar Atas**

Journalist & Director of  
Programmes &  
Managing Editor at TRT  
World

Panellist

**Sarah Helm**

British Journalist and  
Author

Panellist

**Nicole Johnston**

Journalist at TRT World

Panellist

**Simon Marks**

President & Chief  
Correspondent, Feature  
Story News

Third Session

**Re-thinking Media:**  
Responsible Reporting on  
Humanitarian Crises



## Third Session

# Re-thinking Media: Responsible Reporting on Humanitarian Crises

- How does the media shape public opinion and government policies?
- How are the social foundations of media changing, and will that affect responsible journalism?
- Can social media play a complementary role with the conventional media in information production? Can both harmonise?
- How are emerging media sources in the developing world influencing current discourse?
- What role does the media play in empowering the voiceless and helping build peace in troubled regions?
- How can traditional and new media platforms bridge the gap between the people and state?





## Summary of the Session

The media depicts and produces narratives of global events in a traditional way while experiencing one of the greatest transformations in history. The intensity, magnitude and speed urged the panellists to question and re-think media's ethical codes and the way it shapes public opinions as well as government policies. Session three analysed the importance of editorial guidelines and what it means to be objective. The panellists questioned whether reporters or journalists could ever, truly, refrain themselves from the story they are pitching.

Panellists' recounted incidents where they often found themselves torn between their professional role as detached observers and their engagement as activists and the dangers associated with getting too involved. They asked the obvious question, that is, if a reporter was to take sides, did that negate objectivity, or did it imply partiality? Resul Serdar Atas stated that the attempt of journalists to be 'objective' could cause them to veer away from righteousness. He emphasised that media should make a clear difference between objectiveness and fairness by building new functional ethical codes in traditional journalism. Sarah Helm argued that journalists should hold fast to the Geneva Conventions and other forms of international humanitarian laws as guidelines when it comes to objectivity. Throughout her speech she emphasised the importance of investigative journalism and that more investment should be placed on this. Nicole Johnston shared her personal

experiences in the media and how her reporting from conflict zones affected the idea of 'responsible journalism.' She explained how the lines between journalism and advocacy can get blurred or entirely erased when telling a story and questioned the constant dilemma of how to cover a conflict in a responsible way without damaging or impeding the dignity of the people that is reported on. According to Rodney Dixon, media images can help find peaceful solutions to ongoing conflicts by attracting global attention, giving concrete evidence and creating International courts. Simon Marks observes how government policies can affect different broadcast organisations in competing for international news space.

Overall the session discussed 'responsible journalism' and how the term objectivity needs to be rephrased in relation to reporting on war zones. Secondly, panellists discussed the role and impact of emerging new technology in giving a voice to the voiceless. With the advent of social media, ordinary people can now broadcast what is happening on their devices with the same clout and authority as seasoned reporters and journalists. But 'do ordinary people know how to operate objectively and pose the right questions?' Thirdly, panellists debated as to whether international news media organisations have become too reliant on NGOs to receive information from areas of conflict. Operating in this realm, speakers pushed forward the failure of credibility in the media due to manipulative journalism.

The session, 'Re-thinking Media: Responsible Reporting on War Crimes', discussed the ethics of journalism as well as objectivity that exists in the media.







## Resul Serdar Atas

*Journalist & Director of News & Programmes at TRT Al Arabia*

Resul Serdar Atas is currently the Director of News and Programmes at TRT Al Arabia. In 2015, he joined TRT world as a Chief Editor. He then was assigned as the Director of Programmes. Atas was a member of Editorial Board at Euronews between 2015 and 2017. He was the Editor of the Middle- East Desk at Al Jazeera Türk between 2012 and 2015. Atas hold a Turkish Literature degree from Boğaziçi University.

## Resul Serdar Atas's Highlights

I think for us as journalists, when we talk about editorial guidelines, it is time to check our editorial guidelines and especially the term 'objectivity.' Is a journalist's will really biased when he leaves roses in the river, which symbolises the victims of the war, symbolises those who have been raped, those who have been killed under torture. I think - this is personal idea of course, a personal opinion - I think by getting under the cover of the term of 'objectivity' we journalists are somehow avoiding the truth in many cases. We are journalists, we are professionals, but at the end of the day, we are human beings who have a heart. Moreover, we need to make a clear difference between objectivity and fairness. Are we supposed to be objective or true telling? I think let us say, not neutrality but being truthful, not objective but true telling, not objective but fair and balanced. That we can make sure we are making a difference between the killer and the victim. I personally do not see a problem of taking sides with the victims, taking sides of children or women, those who have been disadvantaged and those who have no opportunities in making their voices heard.

We are journalists but we have a heart and I think putting our heart into the story is not a violation of journalistic principles. I am not talking about sloppy, lazy, cheap, cheesy, sentimental journalism but trying to say responsible reporting requires to be brave and to serve the public interest. To make sure we journalists raise awareness related to crimes and make sure that this does not repeat again, by making a difference between victims and murderers and calling them into the account.

It is time for us to question ourselves. So what we have done - I mean in international media and international journalists - what we have done is that we have created an environment where 64 percent out of 100 do not believe us, they think that we are lying.

I think first, the international newsrooms do not reflect the average of the society. Mostly the newsrooms are being dominated by ideologically motivated groups or individuals. And while they are reporting, their priorities are being determined by that ideological psychological filter.



**“We are journalists but we have a heart and I think putting our heart into the story is not a violation of journalistic principles.”**

It is time to build a new workable ethical code, especially in a time where the media is so diversified and manipulative. So with the rise of the new media, social media, digital platforms, what is left for us as traditional journalists? Especially for TV journalists and print journalists, maybe the most efficient platform for us is, in a time of disinformation, in times of breaking news and so on, it is almost impossible to be in competition with the new media right? Therefore, the position that is left to us is that we can still compete and can build ourselves to form a platform by which we can give accurate, credible and in-depth journalism.





## Simon Marks

*President & Chief  
Correspondent,  
Feature Story News*

Simon Marks is the Chief Correspondent of FSN (Feature Story News), an independent broadcast news agency he created in 1992. FSN operates 23 fully-staffed news bureaus in locations including Washington DC, New York, London, Brussels, Moscow, Kampala, Caracas and New Delhi. For nearly 30 years, he has reported international news for many of the world's leading broadcasters, including TRT World. He has covered wars and revolutions, coups and elections and specialises in thoughtful, in-depth reporting of the major international events of our time.



## Simon Marks's Highlights

To be objective you do not necessarily have to remove yourself entirely from the story because sometimes if you do that you fall into the trap of then not being objective.

I do not want to be stereotypical or make generalisations out of it, because clearly we are now working in this multipolar world and you have got a whole array of different broadcast organisations out there competing for eyeballs in the international news space - plus of course all the new media organisations, the citizen journalism that exists. I know we will talk about this later on but we talked a lot about the 'voiceless.' They might be 'voiceless' but they are not necessarily 'phoneless' and so their ability to put compelling testimony straight into the public domain about humanitarian crises that are unfolding is unparalleled in human history. But you would still find yourself on occasion battling against a slightly American dominated view of world news that even sort of washes up from time to time in newsrooms far away from American shores and on occasion I think that actual objectivity requires you sometimes to push back against that.

The voiceless have smartphones, they have as much power at their disposal as I do as a journalist or Nicole (Johnston) does or any of us have, to go out into the field and tell a story.

Now to disseminate that story through a whole variety of digital channels that allow it to be spread, to go viral, to be relatable as the phrase goes and to have impact. We do what we do, not because we want to be aid workers, but because we want to tell stories and because we want those stories to have an impact and we want those stories to provide citizens of globalised democracies or developing world nations, to have the information at their disposal with which to make responsible decisions.

[...]

I think clearly well rooted, grounded, verified, independent journalism clearly has the potential to inform people and thus alter the outcome of elections for example. It can absolutely alter the dynamic of corporate decision making. Take a look at what has happened to Uber for example over the last six months or so. Much of that has been driven by journalism that arose out of complaints that members of Uber staff and some of its passengers raised with journalists. So I think there is no doubt about that. I do think though that any organisation that is in this industry now, that worries about and has to worry, as Resul (Serdar Atas) was saying about its own credibility, has to find a way of making sure that any user-generated content that its deploying in its television

**“You would still find yourself on occasion battling against a slightly American dominated view of world news that even sort of washes up from time to time in newsrooms far away from American shores and on occasion I think that actual objectivity requires you sometimes to push back against that.”**

reporting or any other reporting, anything that you pull in from Twitter or you pull in from Facebook or drone footage that is put out by the UNHCR, you need to verify that what you are seeing in that footage is actually what took place. Therefore, news agencies networks are now beginning to invest substantial amounts of money in some cases in creating desks that do precisely that. Engaging in that business of verification becomes hugely important.





## Rodney Dixon

*Barrister specialising in international law based at Temple Garden Chambers*

Rodney Dixon is a barrister specialising in international law. He practices both internationally and domestically in the elds of international law, public law, and human rights. He regularly appears before the International Criminal Court, including on behalf of the UK Government in the Preliminary Examination concerning Iraq; the Sudan Situation in the case concerning President Al Bashir of Sudan and a number of other high profile cases. He regularly lectures at conferences and seminars on international law, human rights, and civil liberties topics, including a course at the Department of Public International Law at Leiden University.

## Rodney Dixon's Highlights

I think that we probably would not have the new set of international courts, without all of the media attention that came particularly in the Yugoslav conflict. You may recall seeing that picture of that group of Bosnian men who were in custody in a concentration camp behind barbed wire with their ribs showing. The courts had not been established then. That image and the reporting around that has often been credited as the reason why the UN and politicians decided that they had to do something. Because it was so powerful, it was so embarrassing for them as well. And strikingly, this picture of these Bosnian Muslim men, reminded them of the Holocaust of the Second World War and how people had been treated then and the parallel that was drawn was just too overwhelming for this to be happening in Europe again. This was meant to be the new world order that had come in after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid. Things were changing and then this comes. It became such an important symbol, which the media got out there, and promoted that something had to be done, the courts were formed. Then you had Rwanda, the genocide of over 800,000 people just after that. Once again, because of the media all around Yugoslavia, for whatever reason many people say they might never have been a court for Rwanda in Africa had there not been one in Europe first. However, once there was one in Europe, the politicians knew that they could not say 'oh well we are going to forget Africa this time.' They had to do something there as well and there was the same kind of attention of the bodies on the dusty

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streets, the pangas (machete) that were used to kill so many people in such a short space of time that drove it on. We honestly believed then that these courts would make a difference and that is a whole separate topic whether they have and how effective the ICC (International Criminal Court) is at the moment. But I make that point just to highlight how important the media has been in generating accountability.

**Moderator Alican Ayanlar:** *Talking about the astonishing video that Nicole (Johnston) was talking about and the drone footage from the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, Rodney let me ask you, do you think that these sort of images*



*can help find peaceful solutions to ongoing conflicts or let's take it a step further, even prevent them in the future from happening?*

**Rodney Dixon:** Certainly, because I think that kind of material was never available before. Certainly, when you look at historic crimes, it is something that is missing. And it makes two things happen. One, it gets world attention, which is required to start investigations and accountability. It never happens unless there is that level of embarrassment that I was talking about earlier on. Then secondly, it gives you the concrete evidence as a prosecutor. That is what you want. It is real time physical evidence, it is not witnesses you could be embellishing their stories. I mean this is what you see; it is forensic evidence that can be used as the first step in an investigation. So in all the cases now before these international bodies, this kind of evidence is more and more at the centre. Moreover, we are seeing a widening of these investigations and wherever you look there is one set up by the General Assembly for Syria, there is one in relation to Iraq and is one in relation Yemen as well. There should be one in relation to the Rohingya's; maybe this will be the tipping point. But the point I am making is that if you are not there gathering it, yes it might be very good news, but you might be called as the first witness by the prosecution to say 'well we need to authenticate this: where did you take it, what is the quality of it?' I can tell you now, there will be people saying that it has been hacked and that it is being doctored and manipulated for political reasons and as much technology as there is out there to help, people will make arguments about how it can be manipulated. Therefore, you need to be ready to do that and I do not see that there is any problem with journalists playing that role.





**Sarah Helm**  
*Journalist and Author*

Sarah Helm is a British journalist and author. She studied English Literature at Cambridge University before working as a journalist for The Sunday Times and The Independent. Her career has included roles as home affairs correspondent, diplomatic editor, and as a foreign correspondent working in the Middle East, Bosnia, Washington and Brussels. Recently, she has combined journalism with writing books, including *A Life in Secret*, a biography of a wartime secret agent, *If this is a Woman*, and a play, *Loyalty*, about the Iraq war, which was staged in London in 2011.

## Sarah Helm's Highlights

I grew up in a very old-fashioned school of journalism. I was trained on a local paper in North Yorkshire, which is in the north of England. We grew up 'journalists know what a story is.' They did not have to worry about it too much, they have an instinct they learn in there training what a story is. To put it simply, we were always told 'dog bites man' is not a story, 'man bites dog' is a story. Therefore, you instinctively find your way through to learn when a story is a story. I think objectivity is to some degree not something one put first. One went for the story. What was new, what was different, what had not been said before? Trump is new. Everything he says is new, everything he does is a story. [Let's hope that he does not stay so long that it is no longer a story]. The second thing I was going to say about objectivity is that [...] I learned this from writing about war crimes in the past, that for journalists and indeed for everybody concerned, the existence of international conventions particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention passed in 1949 precisely as a result of the World War II crimes, gives journalists a sense/a roadmap for judging whether something is of supreme international concern and whether it should be reported.

I think that we need to absolutely hold fast to the Geneva Conventions and other forms of international humanitarian law as our guideline when it comes to objectivity and then we can argue our case much more strongly.

I would like to go back to another role that journalists should play and that is the investigative journalist; the journalist who is able to ask questions, who is able to get to those who are taking these decisions and say 'why?' There are so many questions that have not being asked rigorously and properly by people who know how to ask them, who are trained. You say that ordinary people have a voice now, yes they do and they can get on the phone, they can post things, but they do not know how to operate as journalists, not really. They do not know how to seek out presidents, prime ministers, war criminals and get to them and analyse the information. I mean, for example, Iraq was raised in the last panel. How many British journalists asked Tony Blair and his government and the British intelligence services and indeed the intelligence services around the world 'why do you really think, why are you so sure that Saddam Hussein has WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction)?' It was just

**“Obviously as we know from watching all the wonderful videos that the TV journalists do and the film and covering this coverage of Syria coverage of the Middle East in general coverage of Gaza that women and children are in absolutely in the front line. And the point I would make here is that of course the video, the film, the footage is crucial and will be used at the hopefully at some point as evidence against the criminals, but it is not enough.”**

accepted that he did and that was a huge journalistic failing. It was a political failing but it was a journalistic failing and it has really been too easily ignored. So, I think journalists should be - as well as getting to the place and getting the video, getting the film - they should be asking questions and there should be huge investment by the news media in a new form of investigative journalism. Because no money is put into it.







## Nicole Johnston

*Correspondent,  
TRT World*

Nicole Johnston is a correspondent for TRT World. She previously spent 10 years at Al Jazeera as a Doha based reporter. She spent stints in London, Kenya, Jerusalem and Gaza. Prior to Al Jazeera, Johnston was a reporter with ABC Australia for seven years.

## Nicole Johnston's Highlights

I think from some of my experiences over the last two years, particularly in Iraq where you are often faced with that dilemma and I think a lot of journalists are faced with it now - about how much should you intervene? I think journalists were also faced with the refugee crisis across Europe. You know so many European journalists, perhaps or global journalists who had not dealt with these sorts of humanitarian crises before, all of a sudden they are in a situation where they are in a comfortable hotel and they are going out and seeing humanity and it is at its best and its worst on the streets. Also seeing people drowning as they reach the shores of Lesbos and having that conflict about how far should they go? Should they be going in and trying to help rescue people? Should they be trying to help carry bags? To what degree should we be intervening? And I think that seems to be something that is perhaps a line that is becoming more and more blurred between journalism and advocacy.

[...]

You know my own recent experience in Iraq, in the old city, the cameraman and I had sort of turned up to try and get those harrowing shots of people emerging from their houses, trapped in the old city for sort of months on end. And when we arrived we saw nothing for about 45 minutes and we were thinking 'oh we are not going to get anything, it is just rubble, rubble, rubble.' We were almost ready to give up. We were with the Iraqi military and we were being sort of pushed through as you inevitably are. It was a big rush and then all of a sudden, just as we were ready to turn around - and there was maybe ten of us - you have horrible images of people walking out, thin, weak in their underwear. You know men carrying their grandmothers, skin and bones, struggling over the rubble, begging for water. And your response is 'okay we need to go and film this', but also 'how much should we be trying to help?' Because there is no one there; there are no NGOs there. There is some military there, but they are not really helping, they are just pointing them in the right direction.



**“So how do you cover a conflict in a responsible way where you are not, I guess, damaging or impeding the dignity of the people that you are trying to tell their stories?”**

You know, you want to stand back so you can get the shots, but at some point you think, well I should try and help some of these women with their bags over the rocks, but how much of that can you do? Then there is the issue; I mean the safety issue of course. Some of these women, it turned out were wearing suicide vests. I mean more than a dozen Iraqi military were killed as they were approached by women strapped in suicide vests. So I think it is a very difficult debate or question for people who are in conflict areas. I mean it is something that is still not resolved. It will probably never be resolved. A little bit later on, our cameraman suddenly saw a man who was just too weak to get up from the rubble - in his underwear, you know, absolute skin and bones - the most harrowing shot that we had in probably the five or six months that I have spent there off and on over the last couple of years. And again you feel so sort of grubby trying to take those shots. So how do you cover a conflict in a responsible way where you are not, I guess, damaging or impeding the dignity of the people that you are trying to tell their stories?



Day 2

**Session 1:**  
**Transforming Humanitarian Aid:**  
A Refined Approach

Panellist

**Fuat Oktay**

Prime Ministry  
Undersecretary of The  
Republic of Turkey

Panellist

**Mukesh Kapila**

Professor of Global Health  
and Humanitarian Affairs at  
The University of Manchester

Panellist

**Richard Falk**

Professor Emeritus of  
International Law at  
Princeton University

Panellist

**C. Kani Torun**

Founder of Doctors  
Worldwide and Former  
Turkish Ambassador to  
Somalia

Fourth Session

**Transforming  
Humanitarian Aid:**  
A Refined Approach

TRTWORLD  
**forum**



## Fourth Session

# Transforming Humanitarian Aid: A Refined Approach

- What strategies and policies can break the cycle of dependency that humanitarian aid creates?
- What roles will global institutions, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework, play in promoting sustainable development?
- How have former aid recipient countries gone on to change international aid models?
- What long-term social and economic approaches would be best suited to help rebuild Syria and assist the return of refugees?





## Summary of the Session

This session dealt with transforming the conventional humanitarian aid system towards a more refined assistance approach. It kicked off with two fundamental questions posted to the panellists: 1) Why is humanitarian aid necessary? 2) Where does it go and who decides where it goes? The session involved serious debate on the most effective ways to distribute humanitarian aid. Each panellist was questioned on whether or not the distribution of aid is fair and equitable, and whether we need proper political will to move it forward.

Fuat Oktay crystallises the refugee crises by presenting statistics of refugees around the world. He noted that Turkey hosts 3.5 million Syrian refugees providing them housing, protection, health care, and education. Oktay pointed out that providing humanitarian aid alone would not solve the problem unless the international community addresses the root causes of the conflict. First, he addressed the solution by putting more pressure on the actors who create, promote or foster those root causes. Second, the international community should adopt a holistic and systematic approach to respond to the humanitarian needs of the people.

The question of political raised remarkable arguments, often veering into the philosophical roots and solutions of the problem. Mukesh Kapila was adamant that political will needs to be informed by the humanistic tenet of altruism, and suggested several challenges to the current humanitarian system. The challenges included, but were not limited to censorship of international aid agencies' appeals, the provision of the majority of international humanitarian assistance by a few countries, the majority of global aid being funneled into particular countries while ignoring others, aid not

going to the beneficiary directly and there being no accountability and transparency. Kani Torun, a Turkish lawmaker and former ambassador to Somalia, pointed out that humanitarian aid itself is a painkiller, and not the actual solution. He suggested a need for long-term development, such as commerce and investment in the disaster-ridden regions that would eventually lead them to turn the corner. Richard Falk noted that the fundamental issue of humanitarian aid was realism (national interest), which governs the political will of the aid donor countries - thus signalling that humanitarian aid is an instrument of foreign policy. However, Kapila rebuffed the notion of realism by stating that this competition-based realism politics has got the world where it is today and that global community can no longer afford to tolerate such status quo, but rather the global community should transform it.

Considerable attention was given to the nature of providing sustainable development with a holistic outlook of the world. Panellists agreed that humanitarian aid should not create a dependent and welfare society and that international organisations and corporations should invest to foster development and prevent aid dependency. Panellists also discussed influence by the vested interests of significant players in the global agenda in much of the current discourse relating to humanitarian aid. It has been suggested that veto power should be restricted at the UN Security Council when dealing with humanitarian aid, often in lieu of mixed political motivations. To prevent this, one panellist suggested the reform of the UN Security Council. In conclusion, all panellists agreed on an urgent need to return to the basics of true humanitarianism and altruism and attempted to find durable solutions to the current problems of the aid system.



The session, 'Transforming Humanitarian Aid: A Refined Approach', placed emphasis on whether humanitarian aid is an effective tool in allowing the international community to face challenges head on.





## Fuat Oktay

*Prime Ministry Undersecretary to the Republic of Turkey*

Fuat Oktay is the Prime Ministry Undersecretary to the Republic of Turkey. He completed a master's programme in Manufacturing Engineering and received his MBA in Business Management at the Wayne State University in 1990 in Detroit. He also received his PhD in Industrial Engineering at the same University. During his time in the USA, he provided process management consultancy services and worked at companies such as Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. Upon returning to Turkey, he specialised in enterprise-based crisis management, and worked as Vice-Dean and Head of the Business Management Department at Beykent University. He served as Deputy Director General at Türk Hava Yolları (THY) and brought projects to life at THY Teknik A. He also served as a Steering Committee Member for Business Councils at Foreign Economic Relations Board and was the Chairman of the Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) between 2012 and 2016, prior to his current role.

## Fuat Oktay's Highlights

Let me just remind you a couple of statistics over here, and then maybe tell you what is going on and then how we should refine the humanitarian aid system, if we can. These are the figures indeed you all know very well. As a reminder indeed, 65 to 66 million people are forcibly displaced. 40 million nearly out of 65 are internally displaced. 20 to 20.5 million are refugees and nearly 3 million are asylum seekers. Syrians, Colombians and Afghans are the top three forcibly displaced populations. Again 55% of those refugees are from Syria, Sudan and Afghanistan. Again, the major refugee hosting countries, Turkey ranks the first with 3.5 million people, Pakistan with 1.4 and Lebanon with 1.1 million people. Again the top three largest donor countries, Turkey ranks second with six billion - this six billion is the reported amount or the reports that are generated through UN and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The exact figure that we have spent as Turkey towards the humanitarian aid is a lot more than that figure. Mainly the amount that we spent for the 3.5 million refugees within Turkey is not counted within these figures indeed, which is nearly right now 30 billion dollars since the beginning of the Syrian crisis especially. As far as we consider as the percentage of the amount of the GNI (Gross National Income), Turkey ranks first.

Again, with the Syria crisis, a couple of figures. Syria had nearly 22 million population before the crisis. People in need right now is 13.5 million. These are basically either displaced or nearly displaced people. 12 million out of those thirteen and a half are the displaced people within Syria. 6.3 million are the internally displaced, and 5.5 million people are refugees within Syria. Turkey with 3.2 million ranks first as the hosting country for Syrians. Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq are the following countries.

So, what have we done for the Syrians? Before getting into the theoretical discussions, let me say, as in many cases indeed, as soon as anything happens whether it is a disaster, or whether it is a conflict, whether it is a war, whatever it is: Turkey does not wait to see who those people are, what their religion or ethnicity is, or what their sexes are, or which geography they belong to. We directly move. We do have a very dynamic system to move forward and start providing humanitarian aid.

[...]

As the humanitarian system, we are trying to respond to the end results. What are the end results? That is basically suffering, hunger, famine, poverty, conflicts, wars, terror, etc. But when we look at the causes, the root causes, they are different indeed. Unless we do address those root causes, no matter how much humanitarian aid we provide, we will not be able to solve the



**“[An] alternative for a refined approach is redesigning the international institutions like the UN agencies: UNHCR, UNDP, UNOCHA [...] And of course, as Turkey we do have a model regarding the UN Security Council: ‘[the] world is bigger than five.’”**

problem. We will not be [able] to ease the problem either. What we are going to do, we are just going to ease the pressure on those who create those root causes. So we have to first address the root causes.

Second, we have to - by providing humanitarian aid - we have to put more pressure on those actors who create or promote or foster those root causes. Third, we have to take a holistic approach and a systematic approach to respond to the humanitarian needs of those people.

And again, maybe one more issue is we should not create a dependent or welfare society while providing humanitarian aid. Unfortunately, the current system throughout the entire world creates a dependent and welfare society. Rather, we have to be investing internationally. We have to promote

corporate social responsibility. I do not mean that corporations should somehow help certain agencies, like the UN and others. They should be investing into the field and let the refugees or forcibly displaced people work in those [jobs created].

The last maybe alternative for a refined approach is redesigning the international institutions like the UN agencies: UNHCR, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs). We have to have more interrelated and integrated system approach order. They work for the same cause, but totally in different areas, and not much interrelate indeed. And of course, as Turkey we do have a model regarding the UN Security Council: ‘[the] world is bigger than five.’





## Mukesh Kapila

Professor, University of Manchester

Mukesh Kapila, CBE is Professor of Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the University of Manchester, and Chair of Nonviolent Peaceforce. He has served in roles at the UK Department for International Development, United Nations, World Health Organisation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and as Chair of Minority Rights Group International. Kapila was awarded a CBE from Queen Elizabeth II, the I Witness! award for human rights, amongst many other awards. His memoir *Against a Tide of Evil* was nominated for the 2013 Best Non-Fiction Book award.

## Mukesh Kapila's Highlights

Here are the six problems, which I think we have at the moment. Firstly, the appeals from the international system, where it is the UN or the other agencies, these are all censored. So when an organisation appeals, it appeals for what it thinks it can do. It is not a total embodiment of the humanitarian needs. So if UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) says, 'I can look after so many refugees,' it will appeal for that but the number of people displaced is much greater than that. If a health organisation says - and so on and so forth, you get the point. Who is to speak for the people around the world whose needs are not even a statistic in the appeals? We only know what the needs are, based on the numbers we are given. And those numbers are collected by the agencies who calculate them on the basis of their capabilities to implement, not genuine needs. Who is bearing witness to unknown needs?

Our second challenge is that the global humanitarian system does not belong to all of us. It is not global. More than 9 out of every 10 government dollars given to humanity resistance comes from just 20 countries, countries like Turkey, European countries, North American countries. With five governments contributing two-thirds of all the humanitarian assistance in the world, how can you talk of a world humanitarian system and all being in the same boat when the burden of providing for humanitarian need is just being satisfied by a few people? What has happened to the 190 other countries who should also be doing their share of it? And they cannot say that it is because they are poor or they are not as developed as the others. That is the number two problem.

The number three problem we have is that the practice of humanitarianism is a lottery. Now in a real lottery or in a dice if you flick it up, heads or tails, in a decent dice, it will be fair. Sometimes it is heads, sometimes it is tails. That is a fair lottery. But the humanitarian system is not even a lottery. If it is, it is an unfair lottery. This is because fifty-four percent of international humanitarian funding goes to just five countries. And I have got nothing against those five countries: Syria, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan, Ethiopia. They need it, and they need it desperately. That is not our argument. And Syria was the largest recipient of 2.1 billion dollars, and that is great. No one wants to take any money away from that. But what about the 90 other countries who also have their own share of misfortune and misery to endure?

The fourth issue is that not all suffering is equally compelling and not every baby is equally cute. In 2016, 99%, of say, Burundi's humanitarian appeal was funded, while only 4% of Gambia's appeal was funded. And we have forgotten about Darfur, we have forgotten about the Central African Republic, we have forgotten about many, many other situations. How can we say that we have a system where everyone is on the same boat? That is, I am afraid so far, wishful thinking and possibly even misleading thinking.

Finally, fifth, how do we channel our humanitarian assistance? The vast part of the money - and this is only the money we can count through the reporting system - does not go to the beneficiary directly. It goes first to large international organisations both multilateral UN agencies and international NGOs.



**“I do not want political will of politicians. I want political will of the people in the name of humanity. And the only way to do that is to mobilise that mass humanity. [...] Humanitarianism is not the monopoly of politicians.”**

And some of the international NGOs are bigger than the UN agencies nowadays. They then pass it on to implementing partners who may be other agencies, UN agencies, or smaller NGOs, who then in turn contract local partners. Now there is no accountability or transparency at least. So by the time the one dollar you have contributed to the big agency comes down to the level of the person receiving it, who knows how much of it has gone in administration costs. [...]

If we take the approach that the world is just a collection of national self-interest, then we will never resolve any conflict. I do not agree. This kind of argument takes us nowhere except the competition which we have seen in every sphere from economics to whatever. The politics that has gotten us to this situation is not the politics we want to recognise. We want to transform that politics. That is why Turkey is hosting this forum. Why recognise what we do not wish to tolerate anymore? We want a new order, not a way of adjusting, and adjusting to the old order. I do not want to live in that world

anymore. I have had enough. I have spent 30 years trying to deal with the frontlines of misery, and usually things have gotten worse, worse, and worse. We need new visions, new leadership, and we have to challenge the current orthodoxy. [...]

Regarding political will, my problem is that it depends on whose political will? Do I want Trump's political will? Do I want the Myanmar government's political will? Do I want Theresa May's political will? God save us from such political wills! Thank you very much...

I do not want political will of politicians. I want political will of the people in the name of humanity. And the only way to do that is to mobilise that mass humanity. As I said earlier, humanitarianism is not the monopoly of politicians. The last thing we want to do is to politicise humanitarian aid even further. Do you want the European Union's political will, which is stopping these migrants coming into Europe? No thanks. It is an interesting question, but it is a wrong solution down that route.





## Kani Torun

*Founder of Doctors Worldwide and Former Turkish Ambassador to Somalia*

C. Kani Torun is the Founder of Doctors Worldwide, a medical relief agency. Formally trained in medicine, Torun graduated from Istanbul University and worked as a doctor and as an academic in various parts of Turkey for many years. He worked as CEO of Doctors Worldwide for 10 years whilst based in the UK and upon returning to Turkey was appointed as Turkish Ambassador to Somalia in 2011. During this time, he worked on conflict resolution, peace-building and state-building in Somalia. In 2014, he was appointed as Chief Advisor to the Turkish Prime Minister and was elected the MP for the constituency of Bursa in June 2015 and currently serves as the Deputy Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Turkish Parliament.

## Kani Torun's Highlights

First of all, in terms of diplomacy you will see the figures [of] Turkish influence in Africa. And then in commerce [there] is also a big increase at the moment. Export and import on total trade is about sixteen billion dollars.

[...]

Let us go to Somalia as a case study. In Somalia, we have done humanitarian aid as well as development, peace building and state building. If you look in terms of development, you will see there are two types of development that we have done. One is building infrastructure, in which we build hospitals, schools, roads etc. And the other one is capacity building, which is mainly in education and skills development.

I would like to tell you something. You know, we all talk about humanitarian aid. If you only talk about humanitarian aid, you only talk about the painkiller. Humanitarian [aid] is a painkiller. There is no treatment in humanitarian aid. It just eases the pain for some time. So, for long-term development, commerce and investment, these are the tools that Africa will [need to] turn the corner. Otherwise, the humanitarian aid dependence will be a vicious cycle for Africa, for everywhere. So that is the reason we talk about not just humanitarian aid in Africa and Somalia. In this case, we worked on development. Also in [the] Somalia case, we work on peacebuilding and state building. As you know, after 20 years of civil war there was no functional state and all the factions in the country were fighting each other. So the peace building was the main tool for stability.

Turkey concentrated on - of course you know Somalia was kind of, I can tell you, that there was a fire, so you have to extinguish the fire first. There was famine and hunger in 2011, so Turkey's intervention [was] because of that big issue. Of course our activities - I did not mention the others because, you know, we have to be quick. So [in] all the other countries TİKA is working, Turkish airlines is working, and other Turkish agencies, NGOs, they are working in all African countries. But, I know Somalia very well.

Of course, you know, there is a long way to be a functional state for Somalia. But if you look at [where we are now] compared with 2011, there is a big improvement. Of course, the last 10 days what happened is terrorist activity, you know everywhere it can happen. So [let us] not just focus on that issue, but if you focus on that overall development, the state institutions, parliament and also the federal states institutions, they [have] come a very long way.

[...]

I do not blame the victim. I blame, actually, the donors because of the humanitarian aid dependency. Actually, of course, we need the compassion. Keep the compassion. However, we need to move from compassion to mutual partnership.

[...]

The post-World War II, you know, Marshall Plan improved the economy of Europe so then they joined the world economy. So same as we can do in Africa, rather than just - as the Japanese say,



**“If you only talk about humanitarian aid, you only talk about the painkiller. Humanitarian [aid] is a painkiller. There is no treatment in humanitarian aid. It just eases the pain for some time. So, for long-term development, commerce and investment, these are the tools that Africa will [need to] turn the corner.”**

rather than giving fish, you know, you need to teach how to catch fish. So that is the issue, we need to move to this phase. Of course, you know when there is need, we need to provide humanitarian aid but our focus should move to development and the mutual partnership in commerce.

[...]  
Humanitarian aid is a big instrument we can use to ease pain. And if you -- in any international disaster, if you change this that is great. You know as a doctor, of course, if you save one person, if you treat one person that is the latest achievement. But we need to look at the bigger picture. If you talk about just humanitarian aid for Palestinians and not to talk about that illegal occupation of Israel, that does not solve problems. So we need to talk real issues. Of course the humanitarian aid is important. We need to provide it [to those] who needed it, but if you stuck in just humanitarian aid and do not go beyond, this [will] not solve any problems. But if you save one person, that is great, as a doctor I am saying.





## Richard Falk

*Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University*

Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University. Between 2008 and 2014 he was UN Special Rapporteur on Israeli Violations of Human Rights in Occupied Palestine. Falk was the co-author of a report by the UN Economic and Social Commission on Israel as an apartheid state. He has been annually nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize since 2008 and recent books include *Power Shift: On the New Global Order*, and *Palestine Horizon: Toward a Just Peace*, and a book of poems *Waiting for Rainbows*.

## Richard Falk's Highlights

I think the most success comes when the donors feel not only empathy, but that it is important to their own future that the problem be solved. And the best example of that, I think, is what the US did for Europe after World War II. That was a massive instance of humanitarian aid. (David Foster: what was known as the Marshall Plan). Yes, the Marshall plan, which I think is a marvel that shows what can be achieved by humanitarian aid, provided that the political will exists. And without that political will, you will get random responses that are bandages on gaping wounds. They are not solutions.

[...]

But [the Marshall Plan] was also motivated by the sense that if Europe is not helped to restore its economy, the Great Depression that existed in the 1930's would return. That was the political motive that gave the political energy that allowed this shift of resources to take place.

[...]

I think that what has been done, for in relation to Palestine, through the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) and the UN, is really trying to keep a terrible catastrophe within acceptable political boundaries. And in a way it is transferring the responsibility that Israel really has to the international community and waiting

for a solution to come that has never come.

(David Foster: Without this aid would things perhaps have had to accelerate differently?) The only way that it could have created a cycle that was benign rather than a vicious cycle was to enable development to be the end result. And therefore it is artificial to separate them. And it is true that many NGOs are motivated by trying to make the world a better place and to create a sense that society does take suffering seriously. But that is not the way the main flows of humanitarian aid are given or withheld.

[...]

My immediate proposal would be to restrict the use of the veto within the UN Security Council in such a way that the five permanent members agreed not to use, or were told not to use the veto in issues involving humanitarian aid, and humanitarianism in general.

[...]

Dealing with the issues of refugees in Bangladesh at the present time, the spillover from Rohingya - there are many situations where a humanitarian policy is blocked by political conflict. And it is a test of the sincerity of governments if the five veto powers agree that in humanitarian contexts, they will not invoke their right of veto.

[...]



**“My immediate proposal would be to restrict the use of the veto within the UN Security Council in such a way that the five permanent members agreed not to use, or were told not to use the veto in issues involving humanitarian aid, and humanitarianism in general.”**

Corruption and that kind of manipulation of aid funds is embedded in a process, which has been described by others in this panel that does not really inspire a sense that aid is about altruism. It gives the sense that aid is mixed up with all kinds of other things, including trying to take advantage of it as a way of gaining personal wealth. And so you have mixed motivations that are very much at odds with each other.

I think one thing this TRT [World] Forum represents is raising altruistic consciousness in the world. And I think that is something that would benefit the kind of perspective that - that is whether one talks about education or media - we need to convince more and more people that altruism and empathy and self-interest are not at odds.





## Fifth Session

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# Capitalising on Fear: The Politicisation of Xenophobia and Islamophobia

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## Fifth Session

# Capitalising on Fear: The Politicisation of Xenophobia and Islamophobia

- Has multiculturalism failed to fully address xenophobia?
- How do stereotypes of minorities feed mistrust?
- How can the balance between press freedom and religious sensitivities be achieved?
- How do legal changes that negatively affect minority groups fuel xenophobia?
- What are the proper social channels to address xenophobia?
- How can policy-makers and media groups help develop platforms to counter xenophobia and cultivate tolerance?





## Summary of the Session

This session discussed the current upsurge of xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe and North America. Both problematic discourses operate at various levels of intensity, from outright anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant political campaigns to depict any disadvantaged or marginalised segment of society - including women, as the 'other' through film, media or numerous educational platforms. The potency of this session was that it incisively investigated the diverse factors contributing to the escalating pervasiveness of Islamophobia and the far-right populist discourse that targets a wide spectrum of minorities. In conclusion, this session put forward concrete measures - including political activism and grass-roots activism, that would reduce anti-Muslim hysteria, anti-immigrant bullying and numerous other manifestations of Islamophobic or xenophobic narratives.

To begin, the esteemed panellists shared their personal experiences and observations in regards to both the upsurge of Islamophobic and xenophobic narratives in their respective contexts. Brendan Cox suggested that 'discourses of hate,' demonisation and, eventually, criminalisation must be addressed at various levels of sophistication, including the development of proper institutions, a robust, independent judiciary and honest journalism, all that which works together to respect and protect the rights of minorities and disadvantaged sections of society. Ilyasah Al-Shabazz observed that the institutional and structural violence that plague the African American community during her father's time has hardly changed. Nevertheless, she retains a realistic optimism about the requisite need to continue to work for the empowerment of women, men and all disadvantaged people through grass-root level activism. Farid Hafez

argued that the current escalation of Islamophobia is a continuation of structural and institutional racism, which Europe has been unable to effectively reconcile with since colonial times. Thereafter, Maha Azzam elaborated on the manner that economic and cultural insecurities are creating anxiety and fear of minorities and immigrants in Europe. Then, lastly, Sayeeda Warsi observed that the revitalisation of the mistaken notion that Europe, only, has a Judeo-Christian identity is causing suspicion and exclusion of all other religious and ethnic communities living there. That exclusivist anti-pluralistic celebration of a mythical, non-existent Europe aims to emotionally deal with a loss of economic, cultural and political power.

Lastly, to conclude, the rise of Islamophobia and xenophobia was deconstructed in a sophisticated way to reveal its impact on numerous levels, across all spectrums of society. Firstly, the session explored the socio-political, cultural and economic contexts that facilitated the rise of far-right sentiments in Europe. Then, the speakers elaborated on the numerous ways politicians are 'capitalising on fear' and using 'scapegoat' narratives to rationalise anti-Islam and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Secondly, the session discussed how various grass-root level activism has and can continue to effectively tackle fear and hate between communities. Thirdly, the challenges of stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims in the public sphere and the critical role media must play to represent not just Muslims, but women, African Americans, Latin Americans and Asians was discussed. The session emphasised that, as a global community, we are all in this together. Hence, common, inclusivist and embracing platforms must be put forward to confront all forms of bigotry, whether those aberrations exist in Europe, the Middle East, North America or Asia.



The session, 'The Politicisation of Xenophobia and Islamophobia', discussed the increased rise of racist sentiments that is now rampant in Western countries.





## Farid Hafez

Lecturer and Researcher,  
University of Salzburg

Farid Hafez, PhD is currently lecturer and researcher at the University of Salzburg, Department of Political Science and Sociology. He is also Senior Researcher at Georgetown University's 'The Bridge Initiative'. In 2017, he was Fulbright visiting professor at University of California, Berkeley and in 2014, he was visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. Since 2010 he has been the editor of the *Islamophobia Studies Yearbook*, and since 2016 the co-editor of the *European Islamophobia Report*. Hafez has received the Bruno Kreisky Award for the political book of the year for his anthology *Islamophobia in Austria* (co-ed. with John Bunzl).

## Farid Hafez's Highlights

I think we have to be clear about the fact that Islamophobia is nothing more than an ongoing history that has its deep roots in the history of colonisation and racism. So we should not be naive to think that Islamophobia is about a false image of Islam and Muslims, but rather that it is a much larger power.

When we speak about Islamophobia we tend to reduce it to a very new phenomenon, and I think we have to understand the structural system behind it. I, very often, rather look at the phenomenon of Islamophobia through the lenses of colonialism as a larger picture. We can say there was a peak in Islamophobia after 9/11. We can even argue after the fall of the Soviet Union and the introduction of the clashes of civilisation theory, there was a peak trying to frame all the conflicts going on in the world as religious and cultural conflicts. But, I think we have to go even further in time and beyond that.

50 years ago when most of the Muslim immigrants in Europe were poor working people, nobody had a problem with Muslims then, right? The problems and the restrictions for Muslim lives only started when their daughters and sons in the second and third generations started becoming educated,

started not to clean the house of the justice department but to try to become attorneys and walk in the house as lawyers. Then you had the bans for the headscarf for attorneys and court justices, right? So it is very much about how much space do you give those people who you see as a threat to your 'power.'

Racism is a structural problem. Islamophobia is a structural problem. Let me say at this point, I really do very much appreciate the fact that TRT World is hosting this very panel at this moment in time [...] So, I think it is very important to be self-critical and reflect upon which role you play as a TV channel in the reproduction of racism.

One of the most important things is to take back this religionisation of everything and the Islamisation of everything. The political, social and economic struggles that are going on and we are Islamising them by calling it out and marking it as Muslim, even though there is no Muslim thing about it. And as she (Sayeeda Warsi) said before my colleague, I mean, we are Muslims as private people. Maybe some are publicly Muslim but at the end of the day the religion is a very private thing but it is really the media and politics that is making it into a public thing.



“When we speak about Islamophobia we tend to reduce it to a very new phenomenon and I think we have to understand the structural system behind it. I, very often, rather look at the phenomenon of Islamophobia through the lenses of colonialism as a larger picture.”





## Brendan Cox

*Co-founder of  
More in Common*

Brendan Cox started his work in the aftermath of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia working with children affected by the conflict. This formative work gave him a long-standing interest in building cohesive communities and combatting hatred. He was Chief Executive of Crisis Action from 2006 and then left to serve as Special Advisor to the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown between 2008 and 2010, where he advised on international development and foreign policy. Cox has also worked for and advised a number of organisations including Oxfam, Save the Children, the UN and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## Brendan Cox's Highlights

My engagement and my first experience of hatred on this level was when I was about 17. I went to Bosnia in the former Yugoslavia to work with survivors of the Srebrenica genocide and on and off every year with my wife when we were together as well. We worked with children who had survived that genocide. What that formative experience gave me was a sense of how societies can quickly turn from being pretty well integrated and highly functioning to societies where neighbours are killing their neighbours on the basis of their faith or ethnic identity. That then had a big impact in terms of what I went on to do.

For me, one of the most important things is how do we build the institutions that respect the rights of minorities? So that is about an independent judiciary. It is about highly functioning and independent journalism. Those institutions that protect the rights of minorities. That is as true in Turkey as it is in Britain, France and in the US.

We spend a lot of our time talking about difference and diversity and that is great and we should do that. However, what we are not very

good at is talking about the things that hold us together and the values that unite us as countries and as people. I think in particular on the liberal side of politics, we need to get much better at talking about the things that bind us together.

A note of optimism is that you have not actually seen big shifts and attitudes, so you have not seen a whole group of people who were previously quite liberally minded become more aggressive and become more conservative. But what has happened is that people who already are hatred orientated and have harboured those hatreds, have been able to act on them.

The difficulty here is not about humility or not humility. It is about whether you have a uni-dimensional identity or whether you have several layers to it, and healthy societies are where you have multiple layers. Jo [his late wife] for example, was proud to be from Yorkshire, she was proud to be English, she was proud to be British, and she was proud to be European.

**“We spend a lot of our time talking about difference and diversity and that is great, and we should do that.**

**However, what we are not very good at is talking about the things that hold us together and the values that unite us as countries and as people.”**







## Ilyasah Al-Shabazz

*Author, Social Activist and the daughter of Malcolm X*

Ilyasah Al-Shabazz is an author, most notably of a memoir, *Growing Up X*, community organiser, social activist, and motivational speaker. Shabazz is the founder of Malcolm X Enterprises and is a trustee for the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center. As of 2007, Shabazz worked as Director of Public Affairs and Special Events for the city of Mount Vernon. Shabazz wrote *Growing Up X*, her memoir of her childhood and her personal views on her father, in 2002. In 2007, Shabazz was an advising scholar in the award-winning, PBS-broadcast documentary *Prince Among Slaves*.

## Ilyasah Al-Shabazz's Highlights

In the 1950s, the world learned about Malcolm X. He was just in his 20s, there were African-Americans protesting, demonstrating, marching, asking for civil rights and my father came along and he said 'I demand my human rights as your brother, I demand my human rights ordained by God.' So there was this challenge. Now so many years later, the story that was told of Malcolm was so not true and we allowed his enemy to tell his story.

When we say that someone is an activist, it should be a way of life. So if something is wrong, if women are being oppressed, if Muslims are being oppressed, if the educational curriculum was inaccurate, then it is about time we do something and that was the beauty of my father. He did it. He did not fear any man. He feared God. And that is how he was able to make the accomplishments that he did in such a short lifespan, at such a young age.

30 years ago, 350,000 young people of colour, Muslims, were behind bars. Today 2.7 million of these young people of colour, a lot of them innocent, behind bars, permanently barred from mainstream society. You know, what is the challenge of that today? So, I think it is extremely important that the educational process, the educational curriculum, is inclusive. That we make sure the story of Muslims, the story of women, the story of

African-Americans, the story of Africa, that the educational curriculum and textbooks and so forth, tell the story - so that we take control narrating that story.

It is very important that we tell the narrative of the story ourselves so that we can get rid of this thing once and for all. It is not going to happen overnight, but it is going to happen once we grown-forward-thinking smart adults take charge and write the story ourselves.

For me, what is most important is that young people are learning and that because of the Internet they are more educated and they are more informed. And so when there was the Muslim ban, everyone came out [to oppose it], and when we say build a wall, you know that people are absolutely against that. I think it is the young people that is bringing this new social movement that will be effective.

I think that is key. I teach American cultural pluralism in the law and I also incorporate a wake up tour where we go to different college campuses and to various group homes and look up facility centres where we show individuality. You know, the power in each individual and what their power looks like, and then coming together and I think that is key - to focus on the culturalism, the pluralism of our society and the younger generation.



“When we say that someone is an activist, it should be a way of life. So if something is wrong, if women are being oppressed, if Muslims are being oppressed, if the educational curriculum was inaccurate, then it is about time we do something and that was the beauty of my father. He did it. He did not fear any man. He feared God.”





## Sayeeda Warsi

*Former Minister of State,  
Member of House of Lords*

Sayeeda Warsi is a lawyer, a businesswoman, a campaigner and a cabinet minister. She has had many roles, but is best known for being the first Muslim to serve in a British cabinet. She stood as a parliamentary candidate in 2005 and was elevated to the House of Lords aged 36, making her the youngest peer in Parliament. Prior to this, she was a racial justice campaigner and served six years at the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. Warsi is also the Chair of the Baroness Warsi Foundation and a Trustee of the Savayra Foundation, a UK registered charity which works in Pakistan to empower widows, divorcees and orphan girls.

## Sayeeda Warsi's Highlights

I think having a strong religious identity is a positive thing. It is why when I went to the Vatican and I said Europe needs to be more Christian, it needs to be more sure of its own heritage, it needs to stop fearing the Muslim because it does not feel Christian enough.

What I find most disturbing about the current discourse, not just because I am a Muslim and because it means acutely it is talking about my identity in the West but because we have started to develop this narrative of what is known as a Judeo-Christian European identity. Now unless somebody can convince me that Jesus was born in Germany and Moses in New York, I would be prepared to be convinced that Islam is an alien religion which came from the Arab world as opposed to the other two which were born in Europe, which they were not.

So I actually think that media does have a responsibility. One, to report good news and secondly to just go back to what the facts say, rather than actually trying to sensationalise.

I think there are reasons to be optimistic. I do think in most countries, younger people are more socially liberal, they are more tolerant, they are more comfortable with difference and diversity. But there are also exceptions too. If you look at France, if you look at Hungary, if you look at Poland, those are countries where actually younger people have the most extreme attitude.

I think if politicians had to take that oath of honesty, 90% of the politicians in the world would have to step down. I say that. I was a politician. There are two questions which I used to say politicians should regularly ask themselves in policymaking: do I believe what I say and do I do what I say? And I do not think that you can always find most politicians would be able to answer those questions. We do not always say what we believe and we do not always do what we say. It is actually the reason which led to my resignation in 2014. I found in the middle of the Gaza conflict that my government, my country the United Kingdom was neither saying what it believed, nor doing what it was saying. And at that point I felt that I had no choice but to step away from that because I believe that principles override political expediency. But the reason why politicians use the politics of hate and divide is because it works. It elects us to power. It elects people like Trump to the presidency of the United States and therefore it is a policy tool and a campaigning method which works.

The way in which respectable rationalised racism [works] is that nobody ever says 'I hate Muslims.' I could probably kind of deal with that because you could say, 'well, fine, you just hate people, you are a bigot' but actually what they will say is the narrative played out in the media 'I do not hate Muslims, it is just that they commit terrorism.' Well, yeah, less than 1/10 of 1% in Britain do but 99.9% do not. 'Oh it is not that I do not like Muslims, it is just that their religious book is quite extreme.'



**“We have started to develop this narrative of what is known as a Judeo-Christian European identity. Now unless somebody can convince me that Jesus was born in Germany and Moses in New York, I would be prepared to be convinced that Islam is an alien religion which came from the Arab world as opposed to the other two which were born in Europe, which they were not.”**





## Maha Azzam

Head of Egyptian  
Revolutionary Council

Maha Azzam is the Head of the Egyptian Revolutionary Council, and co-founder of Egyptians for Democracy. She was Head of Programme on Security and Development in Muslim States at the Royal United Services Institute, and has been an Associate Fellow of the Middle East Programme at Chatham House since 2000. She was one of fifteen specialists at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies Trans-National Threats Project, analysing the impact of Islamist radicals in Europe. She was previously a Caabu board member from 2002 to 2006, and rejoined in 2010.

## Maha Azzam's Highlights

I think Muslim communities have much to offer and that identity and its projection in the right way - through education, through culture, through whatever means, through politics, even the assertion of those values - are not bad things.

The role of the media is also ensuring a disconnect between the issue of terrorism and any reference to Islam. A crime is a crime; a terrorist act is a terrorist act. Terrorist activity happens in the United States from white supremacists. So I think in a sense that association with Islam is a challenge. It is a challenge I believe that particularly TRT can try to deal with maybe better than other news channels have. I also think that there is not enough attention given to those Muslim leaders, religious leaders, heads of various political organisations, that do come out and condemn these acts of terrorism and say they do not represent us - who clearly speak out against DAESH, who clearly call for the end of any kind of radicalisation among the youth. Their voices are occasionally represented but they need to be represented much more powerfully and much more strongly.

The political space is being limited even in democracies; that the civil liberties and the political space that was given at a certain point in greater abundance becomes more limited. That the notion that Muslims are fifth columnists. That the idea that a sort of

McCarthyism is creeping in. That if you were to speak too loudly about Islam or a young generation of Muslim youth represent political Islam or talk about notions of Islam and politics, they may be marked out as future terrorists.

I think that the challenge we are facing today is one that is heightened because of a number of issues that are happening on the economic level in Europe. On the basis of a growing idea that a new generation of young people in Western democracies and in the United States feel they need to assert their identity and that they find this identity in a new sort of right-wing politics. In some ways none of this is new as we have heard there is a long history of assertion of identities, of one identity over the other, of bigotry, of racism, and so on and so forth.

[When people who are white and Christians commit a crime] they do not say they have tarnished an entire community. So in a sense we are putting a different set, a different criterion when we are judging Muslims and we need to be fair and use exactly the same criteria. I repeat, if there are criminal elements in any society or among any community, they are criminals [...] that is it. And then the law must be carried out against them.



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So in a sense we are putting a different set, a different criterion when we are judging Muslims and we need to be fair and use exactly the same criteria.

I repeat, if there are criminal elements in any society or among any community, they are criminals [...] that is it. And then the law must be carried out against them.”





Sixth Session

**Big Business,  
Big Solutions:  
Encouraging Corporate  
Social Responsibility**



## Sixth Session

# Big Business, Big Solutions: Encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility

- Why should corporations get involved in humanitarian crises and how can they make their role more effective?
- Why have some corporations provided humanitarian aid while others prefer not to get involved?
- How can the role of the private sector and multinational corporations be improved to help solve humanitarian disasters?
- What dangers exist by involving business or corporations in the humanitarian crisis?





## Summary of the Session

This session discussed the role that big businesses and entrepreneurs play in effecting social development and change. Considering that the international community is failing to react quickly and effectively to the emerging problems of third world countries, this responsibility falls on the shoulders of big businesses. As opposed to traditional approaches, big businesses and organisations should react quickly and effectively to operate in fragile economies, both to improve them but also to gain the capability to adapt in the respective economies. This session is bringing ‘for-profit’ companies and ‘non-profit’ social organisations like TRT World Citizen, Turkish Airlines and Windhorse International together to discuss humanitarian issues and corporate responsibility in enhancing sustainable development.

The discussion started with a definition shared by the moderator Craig Copetas quoting Nobel Winner Richard Thaler. The moderator formed the discussion on the basis of Thalers’ argument and the concept of ‘nudge’. Mr. Copetas pointed out the importance of behavioral economics and ‘nudging’ others to do the right thing. In this context, İlker Aycı emphasised that Turkish Airlines is connecting Somalia to the world, nudging it, delivering assistance and care to Somalia

on Turkey's behalf. In parallel with this, İbrahim Eren underlined the humanitarian focus of TRT World as a news channel and its immense effect in generating empathy and faith, globally. Additionally, Paul Polak stressed the significance of creating business opportunities for the people of third world countries who live on less than \$2 a day. While doing this, the scale of action and the platform that people interact in are of vital importance.

‘Big solutions for big problems’ session had many themes that speakers emphasised on. Firstly, big solutions require sacrifice. Even if the process is at times cumbersome, businesses need to take incentives to spend money on social responsibility. This is a win-win process, generating mutual respect and trust. Secondly, doing the right thing bears more importance than fiscal concerns and nudging others to do this is the due that big businesses need to pay back to society. Thirdly, big businesses should think like small businesses and make empathy with them in order to help them. Companies who want to enhance this endeavour may face some difficulties but at the end of the day businesses having a social responsibility agenda could help mobilise other communities to get involved.



The last session, ‘Big Business, Big Solutions: Encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility’, analysed the role that businesses play in encouraging and creating social developments.





## İlker Aycı

*Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines.*

İlker Aycı is Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines. He has held a variety of roles at Kurtsan İlaçları A.Ş., Istanbul Municipal Authority and Universal Dış Ticaret A.Ş. He was the Vice President and President of the World Association of Investment Agencies between 2013-2015. Aycı graduated from Bilkent University's Department of Political Science and Public Administration in 1994 and went to the UK to work as a researcher at Leeds University's Department of Political Science in 1995. In 1997, he graduated from the International Relations Masters programme at Marmara University.

## İlker Aycı's Highlights

There are always scarce resources and the capital is always expensive. And today making up choices in scarce resourcing times, in challenging times, in difficult times, it is very hard to discuss projects that will never bring back any revenue, or any income. So, basically, when one is talking about the cost-cutting process, when you ordered the whole company that everybody will have a cost cut and last year Turkish Airlines cost-cut was on expenditures nine percent which is one of the most remarkable in the sector.

It was a remarkable performance. And we have right now the records of the numbers; passenger numbers in the third quarter and everything is great right now. But last year was challenging. But even during that moment, keeping yourself calm and staying cool and being strong and telling everyone, 'cost-cutting is the key this year guys.' Efficiency and optimisation is always important for us.

But on the other hand, you are going to call the CFO (Chief of Financial Organisation) and ask him in the same room, 'hey you need to spend this money on social responsibility projects.' Starting from 2012, until today, we realised more than 300 projects, social responsibility projects, only in Africa. Either carrying food and pharmaceuticals to Somalia; or opening up new water resources when they need water; or just whenever they need something to be transferred, even free of charge from somewhere to another place - that will be necessary to help people. Turkish Airlines realised in 34 countries, in Africa and more than 300 projects in the last few years only. Turkey has a great vision under the strong leadership of his excellency President Mr. Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan. He put up a very important vision for Africa and Turkey, based on win-win, based on mutual respect and trust. And Turkey is a country without any colonialist period and no colonialist relationship with any country in the world. We are proud of helping and supporting the humanitarian issues in Africa.

There is something more important, more valuable than making money. We know how to make money as the airline who is flying [to] more countries than any other airlines in the world; and one of the largest network company; and in terms of the international passengers we carry we are number six in the world; and we are the best Airlines in Europe far beyond other competitors but more than that creating value and sharing it with the people. [...]

We just responded when people call us. We called back, then we responded to them. This is our responsibility.

[...]

We need to be patient. It is just like opening up a channel for the water and the water streams and find its own way. So all you need is just to open up a way for the water so then the flow will come after. [...]

Facilitating people, giving them a platform, and giving back what you get from the people is the most important thing. It is priceless. And [to] see one child's face happy and smile to you is priceless, [and is] more important than billions. It is much more important than numbers. And then seeing their face, and seeing them, and making them happy, and giving them a chance to survive. And without being survivors and also opening up a

channel to mobilise themselves for education, for a better job, for a better life and giving them mobility, giving them connectivity - that is the most important thing.

**Moderator Craig Copetas:** *How can we cross this bridge [of the East and West] and come together?*

**İlker Aycı:** First of all being very transparent, being very open. And there is only one language between people, no matter what cultures they are from, they belong to, this is intimacy first of all. And if you are intimate, if you are open, if you are transparent, if you are cooperative, if you just offer a relationship based on mutual trust, and also based on mutual respect, and if you just offer any relationship based on win-win. So not only just in theory but also in practice. If you are the same person. If you are acting how you say and how you promised, then the result is really verifying who you are. That is correct.

We are proud of being number two in terms of [providing] aid, after United States. And that means how Turks act, and how Turks think, how Turks talk, and what is Turks' heart is the same. So then I think the intimacy brings up the reality - come true the dreams of both sides and I think that you can be more constructive.

[...]

I have to be socially responsible. I have to respond since they are honouring us by flying with us. Since they are choosing us, that means we should do something really for those countries and give back what they gave to us. Then I think that, first of all, not only serving them but also trying to gain their hearts is more important.



**“There is something more important, more valuable than making money. We know how to make money as the airline who is flying [to] more countries than any other airlines in the world; and one of the largest network company; and in terms of the international passengers we carry we are number six in the world; and we are the best Airlines in Europe far beyond other competitors but more than that creating value and sharing it with the people.”**





## İbrahim Eren

Director General and  
Chairman, TRT

İbrahim Eren is the General Manager of TRT. Eren worked in executive positions for several important companies in the technology and media sectors. Beginning his career at Boğaziçi Group, he founded Who Pictures which operates internationally in documentary and animation. He served as General Manager of ATV Europe and Deputy General Manager of ATV, an Independent Non-Executive Director at Türk Telekomünikasyon A.S. He graduated from Boğaziçi University in International Relations and Political Science and holds master's degree from Westminster University in Media Management.

## İbrahim Eren's Highlights

The TRT World citizen project is a bi-product of TRT World because TRT World's mindset is in line with the TRT World citizen - which is when we first started to launch TRT World; we wanted to make a difference in the way we make news - by storytelling. We examined the market, we made research, we looked up to the competitors in other international channels, and then we looked to the culture of Turkey.

So we are a public broadcaster. Our main aim is not profit. We are a public broadcaster. So how can we utilise being a public broadcaster and exploit being a public broadcaster and at the same time make a difference in the news sector? So we put the human at the centre of our news and when I say we put the human, not just human stories, but human at the centre of news, which is like if anything happens in a country we do not first analyse its effects to the big powers in the world. And we do not make calculations on the life of people. So we just want our audiences to understand and feel what the people in the place that the incident happened is feeling. So we try to put the human in the centre of the news. It is hard to do so because the general practice in the international arena is like

news is more important than anything and we said TRT is more than news.

**Moderator Craig Copetas:** *How difficult do you think it is to get people to do the right thing? Even if our stories on TRT World try to get people to do the right thing. The fact is most people do not want to do the right thing. That is changing, but how difficult is it? How do we get there?*

**İbrahim Eren:** It depends on the story, but I think TRT World Citizen, again based on your experiences, is since we are a nonprofit organisation. I cannot believe that I can change the world. And the only thing I know is I can change myself, my institution, and it may have a result, and it may inspire change, but I do not know the results. So TRT World Citizen's idea is the same. Making the right thing is, like, you cannot be right all the time. I mean all of us are right people, then sometimes all of us are bad people - it depends. But the thing is when we are trying to do the right thing, and we put it in the philosophy of the institution, then people will try to make their best to fulfill the right thing. I mean, it is as you say, it is the psychology. If the mood is positive in the institution then people will try to do the right thing.

[...]  
I think there is a very root difference in I think there is a very root differences in the culture. In Turkey, no one will, or not the majority will argue and question why Turkey is second in the world for humanitarian aid while at the same time in the GDP it is not in the top ten. So they will be proud of it, and Turkish Airlines will be proud of it, TRT [will] be proud of it.

**“If anything happens in a country we do not first analyse its effects to the big powers in the world. And we do not make calculations on the life of people. So we just want our audiences to understand and feel what the people in the place that the incident happened is feeling. So we try to put the human in the centre of the news.”**







## Paul Polak

Founder, CEO and Board Chairman of Windhorse International

Paul Polak is the Founder, CEO and Board Chairman of Windhorse International. As Founder of International Development Enterprises, he has over 30 years experience designing and disseminating practical strategies to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor in Asia. He completed his Medical Degree at the University of Western Ontario and had a 23 year career as a psychiatrist. Polak has contributed to and written a number of publications in the field of development and psychiatry. He was recognised by the Atlantic Monthly as one of the world's 27 'Brave Thinkers' alongside a number of other awards.

## Paul Polak's Highlights

**Moderator Craig Copetas:** *How do you get big business to think more like small business, to become more involved into the community? Because Thaler is telling us - and remember he won the Nobel Prize - is telling us that this behavioral economics is the future. And how do you see it based on your experience in the field as an economist, a businessman, and a psychiatrist?*

**Paul Polak:** Well, the first thing, there are many areas where the process is the same and success is based on the same thing. The first is from a business point of view you have to know the customer. I have made a fetish of that. I have interviewed in some detail 3,000 people over ten years that earn less than two dollars a day. But this is not an office interview; I go with them; I walk with them through their fields; and eventually, we have some tea. And then I ask them what their hopes and dreams are, and the bottom line is aspirational branding is probably more important for the two billion or so people who live on less than \$2 a day than it is for the first class ticket passengers of Turkish [Airlines]. [...]

I come with no assumptions. I talk to people. But if you were not able to feed your family fully, and your kids are going hungry three months of the year, you have one meal a day, your dreams are more powerful and you cannot just sell stuff. See part of the problem in development as far as I am concerned is scale. It is useless to do 200 of one thing or 300 of another thing. There are two billion people who live on less than \$2 a day. If you

cannot come up with something that reaches at least a million of them, you are not going to make an impact. [...]

The first thing I ever did in development by accident was in Somalia. There were 400,000 Somali refugees that had been pushed out of Ethiopia for various reasons. And I talked to them like I am talking here and that is what they needed. What they needed most was transport.

We ended up in this first small project helping refugee blacksmith, build and sell 500 donkey carts. Things were of enormous value because these four hundred thousand or so refugees had been suddenly displaced into refugee camps that were isolated. They were used to donkey carts. They had donkeys. We imported the tires from containers of tires from the US and so on. And we recruited refugee blacksmiths who taught us how to work. And they sold those donkey carts for four hundred and fifty dollars apiece to other refugees on credit, and those refugees because of the scarcity of transport, which we learn from talking to them, earned on average two hundred dollars a month. [...]

I create companies that make a profit, that help farmers make a profit. It is the same thing they do, only they have amazing platforms that could transform the world so that there is a bigger risk to create a platform in the beginning. [...]



**“I create companies that make a profit, that help farmers make a profit. It is the same thing they do, only they have amazing platforms that could transform the world so that there is a bigger risk to create a platform in the beginning.”**

Once you have a network - we are still very small, we are delivering water every day to 150,000 people, but that is a platform. It is an aspirationally branded platform that once you have that, the marginal cost of adding antibiotics or something that is marketable. So out of the million things you can do, why not pick something that eventually, if successful, even though it is a risk, could reach a hundred million people and transform their lives. So there is a transport platform; there is a communication platform, that is manna from heaven if you use it. Because the marginal cost of adding other things that will transform the lives of \$2-dollar-a-day-people. [...]

I would ask each of you what your dream is? What is your dream for what you want to do in the world and with your life? And if you had an opportunity to follow that dream, even if it was not the best thing you would do to make money, would you do it? That is a different answer.

Look, I made money buying and selling real estate before I jumped into this. But this gives me more pleasure and more peace than anything I could think of doing.



# TRTWORLD forum



Seventh Session

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**Digital Influencers  
and Their Role on  
Shaping Public  
Discourse**

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## Seventh Session

# Digital Influencers and Their Role on Shaping Public Discourse

- **Are digital influencers challenging the conventional media in setting and changing perceptions?**
- **Is the presence of digital influencers representing different segments of the society creating a pluralist social media?**
- **Do the discourses produced to become a digital influencer give rise to populism?**
- **Considering social media law has not been fully established, what sort of an ethical stance should the digital influencers have?**

## Summary of the Session

As digital media on mobile devices is the primary platform of communication with the outside world, the rise of digital influencers continues to grow. Community leaders and celebrities have been replaced by individuals who gain popularity on social media. The popularity of influencers on YouTube highlights how young people who create content on digital platforms have the ability to garner international attention. Digital influencers have become the role models of millennials. With their massive fan base, what role do they have in shaping public discourse? This session looks at the responsibilities of these digital influencers towards their audiences and the ways they could promote social good and inspire change.

The popularity of influencers on YouTube highlights how young people who create content on digital platforms have the ability to gain international attention. Panellists began with sharing their personal experiences on the massive digital platform. The main question of the session was: ‘With their massive fan base, what responsibility do they have in shaping public discourse?’ Humza Arshad stated that with homemade videos it is possible to create social awareness content that would allow thousands to reach personal opinions on different topics through comments and grab attention of the audience. According to him, there is a huge competition between mainstream companies

and digital platforms. Subhi Taha shared his personal experiences on how his religious background had helped shape his identity, in hopes of helping others find theirs. He emphasised the role of the minority in searching for the community to talk on social media, and share ideas, faith, goals and interests. Didem Kaya raised the question on whether the Internet is really connecting or dividing. She argued that people are recruiting others through the internet, from all ends of the spectrum. Riyaad Minty observed that digital platforms assumed the form of a decentralised model and have access to information anytime and anywhere. He further stated that when information is decentralised, costs are greatly reduced.

Overall the session discussed how each individual, as a digital influencer, could shape public opinion and change perceptions. Secondly, panellists emphasised how conventional, traditional media is being challenged by digital platforms in terms of its cost, speed and diversity. Thirdly, they raised the question of how the Internet sphere can label communities; do the discourses produced to become a digital influencer give rise to populism? Fourthly, speakers pushed forward the idea of whether people from minority backgrounds should be creating content for people within their own communities or whether they should be using their unique experiences to create stories that resonate with a wider audience.





## Humza Arshad

*English actor, comedian and writer of Pakistani descent*

Humza Mohammed Arshad is an English actor, comedian and writer of Pakistani descent. He is best known for his web series Diary of a Bad Man. His homemade YouTube videos have been viewed more than 60 million times and have made him one of the most popular online comedians in the UK.



## Humza Arshad's Highlights

I think with YouTubers, I definitely feel that we are in a lucky position where we can kind of communicate with our fans. And that is the beauty with YouTube, you can look at the comments through social media. We talk about Instagram and Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat, you know people are talking back to us - it is a conversation. So when I put a video, I have started the conversation. Now, I have the ability through social media to get the responses, and you know a lot of the time, you know I mean this is quite deep. But I think it was not yesterday but the day before yesterday, there was this young girl and she was saying she was going to commit suicide and she literally was saying 'bye.' Now I do not know, it could have been a cry for attention, it could have been a prank, it could have been anything. But I thought, no I am going to spend the next hour messaging this girl through Snapchat, and I am going to speak to her and give her advice and do the best that I can with that. By the end of it, she was happy. She completely realised that she was being stupid and she thanked me for it. You know, for me personally those things that you have the interaction with people and then they give you the feedback. I think that is the beauty with YouTube and social media. When you make a video, you are starting a conversation and you have the ability to actually get the feedback and see if you are making a difference. And there might be people telling you why you do not speak about this or about what is going in Syria or Palestine. Whatever it is, they can come back to you and then you process it and then take it from there.

I do not feel that the mainstream company is going to turn around and say Humza we got this great idea and know that you are talented, here is the show and you are going to be the star of it. I am a Muslim, I am brown, my parents are from Pakistan and I just know that it would be a problem. So I started doing

**“It is more about what we feel passionate about. As I said, if you do not have the passion or you want to do a video about something that you are not going to relate to, you cannot. You have to literally. For me personally I just try to be myself.”**

YouTube videos, and I started creating my own content with my own money. Even though I am trying to get someone's attention, you know like a casting director and an agent so that they could put me in the right direction. Alhamdulillah, it is so fortunate that I have got a lot of fans and now because of my influence, now I am having more opportunities. But I realised that if it was not for the fact that I have a big fan base, I knew it would have been hard for me to have my own show on this channel and that channel, and even now things are in the right direction and people are trying to slowly change that. But it is not something that could be done overnight, it is just the way it is unfortunately. I just think that when you are part of the minority, it is harder.

For me personally, I was saying before, what people want and expect but I think the whole point is we are just on YouTube, a lot of us are just ourselves. We do what motivates us, what is our passion. We do what we feel is in here, do what we enjoy and if people like it, great.

It is more about what we feel passionate about. As I said, if you do not have the passion or you want to do a video about something that you are not going to relate to, you cannot. You have to literally. For me personally I just try to be myself.





## Subhi Taha

*Blogger and modestwear designer of SUBHITAH*

Subhi Taha's approach as a Muslim-American YouTuber and blogger is to share his personal experiences on how his religious background has helped shape his identity, in hopes of helping others and theirs. His YouTube career started with culturally-based comedy skits reflecting his Palestinian/Filipino background. The channel has since grown to more heavily include vlogs on faith, motivation and self-improvement, and most importantly rants tackling current social issues. His professional background is in fashion art direction and social media strategy which inspired him to launch his self-titled modestwear line, 'SUBHITAH' in late 2016.

## Subhi Taha's Highlights

The people are watching us and we have a following. The people that care about what we are saying and what we do. And so it is our responsibility to guide people in the right way. It was not something I intentionally wanted to start, it kind of just happened, and after I graduated from college and I started working, that is kind of when I drifted from it. I personally did not feel any attachment to it, because most of the content at that time was comedy and that is just not, obviously, I like comedy but that is just not my main thing. So eventually, I connected, I found my goal, kind of like involving my actual interest, which is like design and fashion and using that as my platform. Well little bit of comedy, it is still there.

Taking that, eventually, so yeah I met my friend's mum, I flew out to LA to visit my family and his mum was like 'what are you doing with social media?' I was like 'aunty I do not know, you tell me,' and she was like, 'you need to think about the fact that you are blessed with this platform, that people for some reason want to hear what you want to say. So if you are not speaking then you are throwing away the opportunity to influence people in a positive way.' When you say it like that I

was like yeah, I do feel bad about what I am doing, and it was from that kind of moment on, and I just remembered this quote from Spider-man, when I was watching as a kid, when Uncle Ben was dying, you have great power, great responsibility . I was like Uncle Ben is right. You have these people who want to hear what you want to say, so you have to guide them in the right way. Basically, it just happened to me in the beginning. Like I said, it was against what I wanted to do, like essentially when I was young I was really into religion and I had no social skills. My family was worried, really worried. They were like 'why is he so quiet? He does not talk to people, he just sits there.' So eventually I developed a personality and I developed social skills, and that is when I was able to be ok and take the responsibility of using my platform to influence people in a good and positive way.

I always knew that I wanted to get into creatives, to the creative world. I know that it was something I was always interested in and knew that I always wanted to do something in that field. I also had this really strong urge to do good in the world, and always just wanted to help people in any way. I do not know how, but in some way I will figure it out when I get older how it can help people -



**“The people are watching us and we have a following. The people that care about what we are saying and what we do. And so it is our responsibility to guide people in the right way.”**

whether it will be one-on-one or updating big amount of people. Like when I was working in the professional field, I would always go home thinking how to develop social media concepts for a fashion brand. I was like what am I doing though? Who is it helping? I am literally trying to sell people watches, that is my goal. What am I doing and why am I doing it? My goal for this job is to sell these watches and make people buy these fashion products. I stop and think why I am doing it, there is just something missing. I will go home one-hour drive, and reflect on what I am doing with my life. It is the struggle of what am I doing with my life? It is what I enjoy, but how do I actually implement my urge to do good and actually effect change in a positive way, whilst still holding on to my interest, which is fashion?





## Didem Kaya

Deputy Producer,  
TRT World

Didem Kaya is a Video Producer at TRT World and presents the videos on the TRT Digital Team's YouTube channel. Prior to this, she worked at Yale University as a Senior Presenter. She graduated from Yale University with a BA in American Studies.

## Didem Kaya's Highlights

I think that affirmative action is one of those things highly misunderstood as well. It is not just minorities. Like when you say affirmative action, worst case scenario people are going to understand and say, 'are you a Muslim girl who did not have as many high grades to get in because we need to put you in the diversity of brochure.' I literally was on the diversity tab of my university's website. But, at the same time, affirmative action programmes are not just to level the plane field but also because we need to control the human biases of the people who are the decision makers. It is the college admissions people, it is the casting directors. So, it is not just because we fall short due to historic reasons and socio economic and all of that. Not because we lack abilities necessarily, but also because those people who are making the decisions are necessarily as diverse. And I also have huge problems with that.

So I think for me, we should move past these, and be mosaic. Let everybody be the colour they are. Like I am still Muslim and I am still Turkish and I still bring all of that history experience and point of view. But I do not necessarily have to appeal to peoples' sensibilities, in terms of their humour and the way they dress. For example, the first

thing that pops into my mind is when they do not let black woman wear their hair natural, because it is not professional. I mean that for me, is a big no. People should be able to be who they are and then they bring to the table what they can bring to the table.

To me, if we are not in the arts and the media, then we are not really influencing change, like everybody else is doing. Why do we not have more poets? Especially for the American case, I know there are a lot of kids doing pre-med and all of these majors and I studied American studies, and my professor was like interested in how my journey took me to where I am, and why I am not in the Middle Eastern studies. I mean I was even asked one time when I was in the class studying New York city and urban planning, and my professor asked me: 'would you like to study Syrians who moved to New York in 1900s?' I was like, 'that is interesting but why would you necessarily want me to head towards that direction?'

For example, my content does not necessarily talk about Islam, does not necessarily talk about Turkish politics either. That is not my professional



**“Let everybody be the colour they are. Like I am still Muslim and I am still Turkish and I still bring all of that history experience and point of view. But I do not necessarily have to appeal to peoples' sensibilities, in terms of their humour and the way they dress.”**

interest, that is too baffling to people. To me, talking about Turkish politics or Turkish Islam, I do not want to. I do not necessarily appeal to an only Muslim audience. If we cannot breakout from our communities, the Internet may be really toxic for breathing these, incredibly racist and dividing communities. This is how people get a lot of support. I was researching in Europe how young people were recruited to very extremist movements like DAESH, both on the right and other end of the spectrum. You know, people recruiting others through the Internet are just as racist. And how do we reach them, let alone change their opinion?





## Riyaad Minty

*Manager of Digital Strategy, TRT World*

Riyaad Minty is the Manager of Digital Strategy at TRT World. Previously he founded AJ+, one of the world's largest news publishers for a digital generation, in San Francisco as part of the Al Jazeera Media Network. Riyaad spent a decade at Al Jazeera as part of the networks New Media team, building the networks global strategy across social platforms as the Head of Social Media. He is recognised as a leader in the space of digital media and regularly speaks at conferences and universities around the world on the shifts within the media industry. He joined TRT World in Istanbul in 2016 to help build the digital arm of the new network.

## Riyaad Minty's Highlights

I think for me, one of the things that I have noticed is a lot of the time within minority groups we tend to produce content or art for our minority communities. In addition, we tend to push ourselves that kind of line. That for me one of the relations with AJ+ was people said it could not be done and we went out and built it and made the largest news brand in the world on Facebook. Reaching to that level of scale, then you end up being invited to all the conferences. It goes beyond being the talk on the panel than there you are on the merit. Then we brought something that what is catered to much wider audience and not specifically for this. Often you find that people are talking about our communities, but in reality, we have amazing talents, why do we not try and build something that can reach to that scale? We are getting to that space, and people are looking towards what we are doing in terms of art and our form because we are better than everyone else. Because we are introducing new ideas. You touched up on your two passions, which is passion of doing comedy and doing these videos.

So take whatever we are passionate about and what makes us unique in our differences, then put them together and think how we can take that to a scale for a much wider audience. People would relate to that. The very first day I walked into Al Jazeera, I went to the director general and he told me the actions of truth, false and suspicions,

and it is our job to always tell the truth. If you tell the truth, people will come. A lot of the time, it sounds very naive, up in the sky, but we did it. We would always stay true to our message, stay true to identity, stay true to our culture and our audience and will never apologise for that. The more and more we did it, the more we hit it to that scale, the more people came to us and started respecting us.

When I joined Al Jazeera, going to America, going to anywhere, I have picked up the phone to Google and all these people were like Al Jazeera writes the most pieces about Bin Laden. So I am not going to talk to you. But it got people to watch our channel, got people to watch our content. Few years later we as Al Jazeera became the largest news channel brand in the world on Facebook. When Morsi was stepping down in Egypt, we had it live on YouTube and Aljazeera for the audience to watch live on stream. It took time and effort but we were able to build something then everybody else copied. But at the same time, when I go to conferences I am still always the brown guy talking at the stage because we still do not have that diversity. Everybody else is very much focused on our niche communities versus looking at the scale. For me that is something, how do we break out of that? Let us think better, let us think bolder and take care of our minority groups and build something to change the world.



**“It is our job to always tell the truth. If you tell the truth, people will come. A lot of the time, it sounds very naive, up in the sky, but we did it. We would always stay true to our message, stay true to identity, stay true to our culture and our audience and will never apologise for that. The more and more we did it, the more we hit it to that scale, the more people came to us and started respecting us.”**

Digital platforms had given us this form of decentralised model and where we have access to the information anytime, anywhere. So AJ+ came at the right time where it was off the back of this movement of the Arab spring, off the back of the decentralisation of information, data cost getting cheaper. So there were many effects to that, and we spent a lot of time trying to understand our audience and build something that we did not speak on behalf of people. We took their voice and listened to them. I think that is something that, as you said digital platform, is going very well, whereas traditional media is not, because with traditional media we talk as an audience. So with AJ+ we are able to take all of that feedback, with years of experience and very talented team and they kind of put their heart into it.

We have more information now, but what are we doing with that information? That is kind of the challenge we are going through now. AJ+ work at that point now, but as technology progresses and we have more information, I do not think we as humanity really thought about what we are really going to do with that information and where it is going to take us.



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# Closed Sessions

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As part of the TRT World Forum 2017, seven closed sessions were held in parallel to the public sessions with the attendance of leading experts on security, politics, international relations, humanitarian aid, professionals, country and region specialists, policy makers, state officers and journalists from over 20 countries and various backgrounds.

Closed sessions were organised for detailed and engaging discussions to hold with specific policy prescriptions. Issues such as the war in Syria, Gulf crisis, Far Right, Turkish Foreign Policy, the 15th July coup attempt, Humanitarian Aid and global terror

were debated with the insights of individuals who had first-hand experience on the field. Each closed session run for a total of 90 minutes that started with the 10 minutes presentations of 2 or 3 speakers where they outlined main aspects of the topic; then, the floor opened for discussion between 15 and 20 participants to contribute through their questions, comments or analyses. The meetings were conducted under the off the record session, it allowed speakers and participants to freely use the information received. However, neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers, nor that of any other participant, was to be revealed.

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First Session

# **Turkey's Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges**

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A picture from the meeting between Turkish and American envoys at the 11th G20 Leaders Summit, which were lead by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and former President Barack Obama respectively, in Hangzhou, China, on 4th September 2016. (Kayhan Özer/AA)

*As a historic conduit between the East and the West, Turkey’s foreign policy direction is poised to transform into a bridge between North-South. By challenging the status quo, maintaining relations with both Russia, the EU and the US, and strengthening and deepening long-standing historical and cultural linkages to the Middle East and North Africa, Turkey is poised for global leadership. No other country exists on so many disparate, conflicting and complementary fault-lines. This session seeks to explore the challenges and directions of Turkey’s foreign policy in light of the BRICS countries, South-South cooperation, Turkey - EU relations and as well as Turkey - MENA dynamics.*

Discussion themes of the session:

- Exploring the challenges and directions of Turkey’s foreign policy in light of the D8 group
- Turkey - EU/NATO relations
- Turkey - MENA dynamics
- Turkey’s position on the refugee crisis
- Turkey’s call for reforming global governing institutions, such as the UN (‘the world is bigger than 5’)

# Summary

## Turkey’s Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges

The closed session, ‘Turkey’s Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges’ was held on October 18, 2017 with the participation of highly esteemed politicians, academics and policy experts from all over the globe. The session primarily dealt with the general landscape and contours of Turkey’s foreign policy, its main pillars and its changing dynamics. After presentations by Turkish foreign policy decision-makers on the forces of continuity and change in Turkey’s relations with the US, the EU and the Middle East; discussion was opened to the floor and distinguished participants shared their analyses.

The debate revolved around Turkey’s main principles in its foreign policy, its alliance structure, main security concerns and recent changes in all of these. It has been argued that Turkey’s foreign policy has significantly shifted after the Cold War, similar to many other countries. This has been due to the removal of the Cold War’s security and ideological constraints over the country. Once the strict confines of the Cold War were vanquished, Turkey has enjoyed a freer hand in diversifying its foreign relations and in opening up to new regions. When it comes to the recent dominant sentiment of Turkey’s foreign policy makers, it is marked by frustration emanating from the failures of its traditional allies to stand by Turkey in times when

it needed support the most. Turkey, being an actor in a volatile and unstable region, tries to strike the right chord between its interests and promoting global good.

The assertion that Turkey’s relations with two of its firmest allies have taken a curious twist in the last few years was an agreed-upon issue among the participants. The relationship with the EU became tense due to difficulties in Turkey’s negotiation to become an EU member, the EU’s failure to share the burden of refugees with Turkey and the blemishing of Turkey in Europe, which is interpreted by the Turkish government as a result of the rising far-right. Turkey-US relations which was regarded a model and strategic partnership in the past have been tainted with the US’ rapprochement with the PKK in its fight with DAESH. Furthermore, the US’ indifference to Turkey’s demands to extradite Gülen, head of the organisation which orchestrated the July 15 coup attempt, has been taxing the relations. All the more so, troubled relations with these partners have been apparent in the Middle East where Europe was mostly incompetent in helping refugees and the US was inconsistent in its strategy. As a result, Turkey’s attempts have been twofold: first, to try to continue and normalise the relations with its partners, second, to build regional initiatives to address the region’s problems rather than seeking cooperation elsewhere.



# Turkey's Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges

## Introduction

As a key player, whose policies affect both Europe and the Middle East, Turkey has long been an interest to both academic and political circles. In the last two decades, Turkey's foreign policy has notably changed because of both domestic reorientations and regional-global landscape shifts. Most analysts were swayed by the ease of interpreting these changes as a major break-up of Turkey's ties with its former allies. However, Turkey's top decision-makers have consistently argued that Turkey was not abandoning its former ties, it was just establishing new ones. In the session 'Turkey's Foreign Policy: New Directions and Challenges'; politicians, academics, regional experts and analysts came together to discuss the dynamics of the country's foreign policy.

### The Outlook of Turkey's Foreign Policy

A significant portion of the session was devoted to Turkey's alliance structure and whether it is going through a major change. Most participants agreed that there are changes but this trend should be contextualised with the dynamics of the Cold War. During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was plagued by two pervasive constraints. The first constraint was the impact of global ideological polarisation. Turkey, being a member of the Western camp, was also influenced by this ideological conflict. This kind of ideological influence over foreign policy evaporated after the Cold War and, Turkey's foreign policy was liberated. The second constraint has much to do with security.

During the Cold War, the USSR constituted an existential threat to Turkey. Now, threat perceptions have changed. Hence, Turkey's foreign policy became much more dynamic after the Cold War.

Currently, Turkey enjoys cordial relations with a wide array of countries. Though Turkey remains loyal to its previous alliance commitments, it follows a path of diversification of its international relations. One reason behind this is Turkey's perception that its allies are not fulfilling their part of the deal. Nevertheless, Turkey's current affairs with other actors are not mutually exclusive to those with the EU and the US. Accordingly, Turkey fosters relations with non-negligible regional players such as

Russia and Iran. Likewise, Turkey's relations with developing countries are quite important. There is an ongoing opening to Africa, East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

Regarding the backbone of Turkey's foreign policy, the concept of 'moral rationalism' came to the fore. The concept represents two prominent trends in Turkey's foreign policy: Turkey as a humanitarian state vs. Turkey as a realist player that faces existential threats. On the one hand, Turkey is a humanitarian state that prioritizes humanitarian values. It proudly takes the burden of Syrian refugees together with Jordan and Lebanon. On the other hand, deep-seated uncertainty brings strategy to the table where being moral is not enough.

Turkey is forced to be a realist power which, not only relies on soft power, but also hard power. Lack of a conceptual framework makes Turkey unsuccessful in convincing others to the sincerity of its foreign policy. So, the usage of the concept 'moral realism' might elevate Turkey to the moral higher ground. And this would be a convergence between Turkey and the EU as well as other regions.

### Turkey and the EU: Shifting Currents

Although there is a widespread belief in the absence of progress in the EU-Turkey relations, there has in fact been remarkable progress. In the 1990s, the EU had a number of objectives and concerns about Turkey. Certain issues were presented as obstacles to amelioration of relations between the two sides. Among these were human rights violations; rights of the Kurdish, Alawite and non-Muslim minorities; and finally economic problems such as inflation and unemployment. These were the main concerns for the EU-Turkey relations from the EU perspective.

Especially after 2002, the government has done a lot to solve these problems. A reformist agenda was pursued. In 2005, the EU declared negotiations for full membership, which was a huge development. However, the trend did not continue. Although Turkey has made a lot of progress in the many problems mentioned, the EU has started following a 'culturalist'

agenda. Some EU politicians saw the question in civilisational terms. Accordingly, Turkey was not considered a member of the European civilisation. Despite Turkey doing its own homework, the evaluation of the EU had changed. During the negotiation process, many chapters were opened and closed, but unfortunately the EU stopped opening new chapters. Erdoğan and Turkey in European institutions became the new trend. As a result, despite enduring an overall vision of Turkey, the EU's attitude had shifted and Turkey's path to the EU encountered serious obstacles.

An important point to acknowledge here is the rise of populism within the EU, which has hijacked the EU agenda. Although domestic issues affect foreign policy on both sides, recent developments are telling in terms of European politicians' new concerns as a response to the new wave of populism. For example, a significant portion of TV debates between Merkel and her rivals was on Turkey. Furthermore, the far right party in Germany gained considerable influence in the parliament and the racist party in Austria came second in elections. This indicates a very unusual trend, which is telling in terms of a new shape in the relationship between two parties.

Another problem was the refugee question. In the years 2013-2014 there was a working relationship between the EU and Turkey but

it deteriorated over time. The agreement on refugees had four main points: stopping human flow from Turkey to the EU, readmission of refugees back to Turkey, financial assistance to Turkey and visa liberalisation between Turkey and the EU. Since the EU demanded significant changes in Turkey's terror law in order to implement its part of the deal, the arrangement is in near collapse.

The July 15 coup attempt also had a negative impact on relations. When there was an extensive attack on all democratic institutions, Turkey expected more decisive support and a degree of solidarity from its allies. The response from the EU to the coup attempt was neither democratic nor appropriate for an ally. It took two months for EU leaders to come to Turkey. It was either bad intentions or a failure to understand the importance of the coup attempt for Turkey. The EU focused exclusively on dismissal of civil servants who were implicated with FETÖ, the criminal network behind the coup attempt.

### Shockwaves of the Crises in the Middle East

As part of its plan to open up to the rest of the world, Turkey initiated regional and international groupings such as the D-8 and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in the early 1990s. Among others, Turkey's relation with Middle Eastern countries is regarded extremely



highly by policy makers. This is because Turkey is affected mainly by all developments in the region. Yet, within the strict enclaves of the Cold War camps, cooperation was not an option. Consequently, Turkey was negatively influenced by regional spillovers of instability.

In the initial period, the PKK threat from Iraq and Syria were the main concerns. Later on in the 2000s, a new trend for engagement developed between Turkey and the Middle East. New political consultations, new economic contacts and new trade channels with the Middle Eastern neighbours were established. Furthermore, visa liberalisation had led to increasing humanitarian contact. When all trends were positive, the region faced new challenges with the Arab uprisings. Turkey believed that the demand for change was genuine and that the region deserved better governance. Therefore, transitions in the right direction were met with praise from Turkey. However, after the resurgence of some of the old regimes, instability in the region has never been more prevalent.

A participant pointed out that after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States had effectively presented Iraq on a golden plate to Iran. Today, the entire political arena of Iraq has been penetrated by the Iranian influence. Furthermore, responding to the Arab uprisings, Iran has chosen to make use of the disorder

and employs tactics that are inhumane but nevertheless profitable in chaotic environments. Therefore, they enjoy regional influence in a vast region in the Middle East. Turkey, on the other hand, has been averse to the use of tactics, costs of which are paid by the people of the region. Instead, it is bearing the brunt of the negative outcomes brought about by the turmoil. Among these are the refugee crisis and its on going security challenges.

Firstly, despite numerous attempts, Turkey could not convince the international community to find a solution to save the Syrian people from persecution. As a second option, Turkey offered no-fly zones and protected zones in Northern Syria to prevent mass exodus of people from the country. As both of these were ignored, millions of people became refugees. This phenomenon constitutes a serious challenge to Turkey for it currently hosts the largest number of refugees in the world. Secondly, fragmentation of state authority in the region has played into the hands of terror organisations such as the PKK and DAESH. To deal with these problems Turkey initiated Operation Euphrates Shield and also took diplomatic steps within the framework of the Astana peace talks.

Turkey's final concern in the Middle East has been the referendum in Northern Iraq. In 2000s, with the decline of security threats,

there has been increasingly more engagement with Kurds in the region. Especially after 2008, relations with the KRG have gradually improved. There has been a strengthening of economic ties, high-level political visits and an overall positive atmosphere. Yet, Barzani's referendum decision tipped the balance. Turkey declared that it supports the rights of Kurds within the Iraqi constitution but it would consider independence in Northern Iraq as a security threat - stating that this had to do with preserving Iraq's territorial integrity. Furthermore, Turkey had already proven it had no bias against Kurds by both improving relations with the KRG and holding talks with Salih Muslim before the PYD set out to carve itself a region in Northern Syria.

### Future of the Strategic Partnership with the US

Turkey-US relations has been suffering since the end of the Cold War. The main reason behind this is the lack of direction in relations. In order to alleviate this problem of direction, several concepts have been developed such as model partnership and strategic partnership but, mere naming of the relationship did not clarify the nature of bilateral relations.

Participants have identified three main challenges that compromise Turkey-US relations. Firstly, there is a significant lack

of clarity in the US foreign policy. The fact that the policy orientation and intentions of the US are vague creates confusion in all of the US' allies such as Poland, Japan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Secondly, there have been changes in Middle East politics. This trend of change that started with the 2003 Iraq War has created several challenges, amongst which are failed states and terrorism. Thirdly, there is a considerable change in Turkish foreign policy. Partly stemming from the change in relative powers of the US and Turkey, Turkish foreign policy has been diversified. During this time, whilst heated debates regarding US decline were taking place, the world was beginning to increasingly recognise Turkey as a powerful regional power, with potential to play a constructive role. As a result, Turkey no longer wanted to invest only in one bloc. Accordingly, since Ismail Cem's initiative in 1999, Turkey aimed to maintain cordial and improved relations with neighbouring countries.

Some current issues have kept the relations of Turkey and the US problematic. The Syrian crisis is the first one of these. The US had previously acknowledged that there was strategic convergence and tactical divergence in policies on Syria for Turkey and the US. Yet, this tactical divergence could have been managed with more tact. Besides, the US foreign policy exhibits a clear strategic ambivalence. An example is the fact that, Obama's red line

speech, which promised a firmer stance in case of a WMD attack, has proven empty. The second issue is the US's collaboration with the YPG. Everyone in DC accepts that there is no difference between the YPG and the PKK, which is on both Turkey's and the US' terror list. Yet, the US chooses to fight DAESH with them. This could have been considered a tactical alliance. However, once they got tactically successful, it turned to become a US strategy. Again, this is related to the lack of a clear strategy of the US. Internal rivalries within the US, causes tactics, rather than strategy, to be the rule.

Finally, the lack of sympathy from the US regarding the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey constituted a major problem. In strong semblance to Europe's reaction, the US did not treat the coup attempt as the existential threat that it was. Instead, the first reaction from the US was about the stability of foreign policy of Turkey. In another statement, the US representatives did not use the coup word at all. Infact it took forty-five days for a US official to visit Turkey. In addition to this, Fethullah Gülen, the head of the FETÖ lives in the US. Despite numerous requests from Turkey, the US does not accept his extradition, which from Turkey's perspective compromises beliefs in the US' sincerity in its alliance with Turkey.

### Conclusion

Regarding the general outlook of Turkey's foreign policy, there was an agreement among the participants that Turkey's foreign policy has been changing after the Cold War. Yet, the dominant line of thought was that this change has been more of a liberation from former shackles of the Cold War than a total reorientation of the country's position. Furthermore, in pursuit of more security and economic benefits, Turkey has been diversifying its cordial relations. A vital point here is that the process is conducted not at the expense of former alliances but in parallel to them.

The EU and the US being traditional partners of Turkey, have failed on numerous occasions to fulfil their commitments to the alliance with Turkey. This has also created a major impetus to increase the number of alliance frameworks that Turkey is a part of. Nevertheless, there is a decades-long understanding between Turkey and its allies. Once outstanding issues such as the extradition of Gülen, the US tactical alliance with the PKK and the surge of the far right in Europe are settled, genial relations are likely to stay. All things considered, if these relations are to be restored, Turkey's allies will have to sympathise with its apprehensions and show more cooperation in their resolution.

Prepared by Ozan Ahmet Çetin



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Second Session

**Developing  
Counter-Narratives  
to the Far-Right**

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Far right activists pictured in an anti-immigrant rally in Warsaw, Poland. (AA/Omar Marques)

Far-right movements in the West have three key features: populism; authoritarianism and nativism (the combination of nationalism and xenophobia). Hostility to immigration has been a cornerstone of far-right discourse for many years. But it has not been just an issue of keeping immigrants, but also to exclude them from taking part in public debates. The most successful parties on the far-right have come to externalise their intrinsic xenophobia: it is not a matter of ‘us’ being racist; rather Muslims, are the source of intolerance. A counter-narrative can be used to share different points of views that may not have been otherwise considered. This session seeks to identify key elements of the far-right narrative in order to craft them a counter-narrative as a way to provide a voice for those who are silenced and marginalised.

## Discussion themes of the session:

The roots of the far-right movements

The approaches of fighting against the far-right movements

Civil right movements and Muslims in the West

The influence of the Islamophobia in relation to Western and Muslim countries

Discrimination against the migrant and minority background citizens by the nation states: seeking the new models for the states

# Summary

## Developing Counter-Narratives to the Far-Right

This session focused on far-rights movements, parties and their effects on politics and social life. It was emphasised that far-right political parties are increasingly supported more in the West, especially in European countries due to fluctuations in the economy and increasing in the unemployment. Another important factor in the rise of the far right is the migration to European countries from MENA countries because people who do not have the opportunity to survive in their own country due to war are migrating to European countries in order to survive. Speakers and participants stated that the characteristic of far-right ideas is the anti-Islam and xenophobia and these features of far-right parties attract the interest and support of many people living in the Western countries. Politicians are using immigrants, Muslims and xenophobia as materials in politics in order to gain easily more support. In this session, it has been also emphasised that the far- right is increasingly normalised in Europe and it is not only against Muslims, but also against women. In general, this session attempted to understand the roots and current situation of the far-right and the solution suggestion was discussed.

One of the academic background speakers who have lived and worked in Austria for many years stated that it is very attention-grabbing and remarkable that the right-wing party candidate who run for the presidential election in Austria was supported 47% and it demonstrates the rise of far-right parties in Europe. Another speaker expressed that Islamophobia is more dangerous than antisemitism. The speaker stated

that Islamophobia took place in two stages, the first of these phases was conceptual level, and at this stage, the Islamophobia discourse was produced in the field of academia and education and in the second stage, political discourse is produced. Another speaker emphasised that the far-right is a response to regression in modernisation theory and a failure of political leadership and parties. He also said that in last 20 years’ people have large wealth disparity. This created lots of resentment.

The discourse used against the Muslims and foreigners in the Western media and political populism were the most discussed themes in this session. One of the main discussed Themes in the closed session was that political parties produced populist rhetoric to get more support from voters. It is emphasised that the most concrete example of this is the Burka Ban that started in October in Austria. In Austria it is forbidden since 1st of October to cover the face and because of that more officials are deployed at Vienna Airport to point out to Burka and Nikab wearers. However, only 250 people were wearing burka in Austria. This means to create a problem by bringing a non-problematic issue to the political scene. Moreover, it was expressed that anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim rhetoric in media is attempted to create a psychology against Islam and Muslims. For instance, in a study conducted in England, it was determined that the news published between 2010 and 2014 had a negative meaning when it was called Islam and Muslim. As a result of this closed session it is stated that doing more research and study in this field could be the most important solution against the far-right rise.



# Developing Counter-Narratives to the Far-Right

## Introduction

The phenomenon of the ‘Far-Right’ - along with its associated discourses and narratives, is posing serious dangers, not only to the very fabric of European and North American society, but for global peace. It does so by challenging the universal declaration of human rights and celebrated notions of democracy, justice, equality and freedom. Unfortunately, it is odious and divisive agenda - even while rationally incoherent, based on ‘fake news’, hyperbole or, simply put, outright falsehoods, is garnering more and more adherents. Considering that, the TRT World Forum closed session on ‘Developing Counter-Narratives to the Far-Right’ aimed to expose the origins, growth and growing phenomenon of the ‘far-right’ movements in the ‘West.’ Thereafter, the esteemed panellists contributed thought-provoking and pro-active ‘counter-narratives’ to respond to this form of ‘soft-terror.’ Of course, a counter-narrative can be used to share different points of views that may not have been otherwise considered. Or, it may assist in helping concerned stakeholders to construct responses to maltreatment, institutional discrimination, or, at worse, demonisation. Hence, this session sought to deconstruct, identify, and respond to key elements of the far-right narrative in order to craft a counter-narrative as a

way to provide a voice for those who are silenced, shunned or marginalised. Moreover, the discussion included exploration of the influence of the Far-right movements to the politics of the states in the contemporary world, their use of anti-immigration sentiment - and why and the instrumentalisation of xenophobia/Islamophobia to harness discontent and commandeer peoples towards contentious politics.

Importantly, the session, also, deeply probed the origins for this disturbing trend, tracing it to a loss of meaning, the failure of liberalism to provide social cohesion, and, specifically, Durkheim’s concept of ‘anomie’ - that is, the weakening of social bonds, social alienation and normlessness. Yet, the anomic condition is not uniform, and a variety of intensities are possible. Consequently, Teymoori et al describe ‘high anomie’ as containing high levels of deregulation and disintegration. Adding to that, at its most intense manifestation, ‘anomie écrasant,’ it includes value-incoherence and moral ambivalence across social spheres leading to high levels of social frustration. Collectively, that intense anomic condition leads to a uniquely ‘conflicted’ cultural milieu, which cultivates the far-right phenomenon.

## Origins of the Far-Right Phenomenon

The European enlightenment was, in Kuhn’s terminology, a ‘paradigm shift’ of considerable vitality that was displacing values, erasing normative precincts and shattering the tacit moral order (Kuhn, 1996). Uninhibitedly, it portrayed Europe’s deliverance from longstanding intolerances, fallacies and folklores. For that reason, it reflected Europe’s emancipation from ‘self-incurred immaturity’ - that had stifled human agency, restricted freedoms and ignored equality (Kant, 2010). Clearly, the imaginative processes that the enlightenment unleashed enabled astonishing achievements. Yet, notwithstanding its inventiveness, it was, also, inescapably thorny. By emancipating people from the erstwhile moral order it was complicit in abolishing conventional value and meaning, decreasing social connectivity and eradicating deference, thereby complicating critical aspects of personal and public life.

Eventually, responses to the disappearance of meaning led to numerous intellectual trajectories and, among them, secularism is momentous. Originally conceptualised by Holyoake (2015), it was contributory in fostering novelty, encouraging inclusion, delineating confines of power and material well-being (Cox, 2013). It maximised space for individual expression, emphasising freedom, celebrating equality, heightening ingenuity and empowering people - but, still, observing compromise (Fawcett, 2015). Most importantly, it is widened embrace welcomed pluralism, skyrocketing innovation. Yet, concomitantly, it

was amplifying incoherence, social alienation and moral ambivalence. Specifically, it did so by being unable to fill in the ‘spaces of meaning’ that were hitherto emptied by the Enlightenment’s paradigm shift. Actually, replacing meaning was complicated, since unbridled human autonomy and self-determining freedom places, as Al Attas poignantly describes, the ‘West’ in a ‘perpetual state of becoming, while never being’ (Al Attas, 1978). This condition of never ‘being’ or actualising, meant concrete meaning was not being supplanted into social spheres - since there was no clear mechanism for social agreement to materialise, leaving humans unfulfilled. Granted, this is not to say that meaning could not be supplanted, but clear directives in that regard needed to be well thought out and institutionalised. More often than not, that arduous task was poorly assumed. Consequently, the enlightenment’s paradigm shift, and secularism’s celebration of self-determining freedom, was of such magnitude that neither God, nor a mandated ethical foundation of any sorts, was encountered in day to day life. This leads to a perpetual state of competing norms, without ever acquiescing to the conclusions of social contestation, only recognising its impermanence and fluidity.

Other disconcerting aspects of secular modernity have been described in numerous ways: Tocqueville’s (1999) ‘soft despotism’; Weber’s (1991) ‘disenchantment’; Taylor’s (2007) ‘emptying’; Lukacs’s (2017) ‘reification’ and ‘phantom objectivity’; and, most powerfully, as Durkheim’s ‘anomie’ (2014). ‘Anomie’ describes the upsurge of social alienation that emerges with the collapse of homo duplex - an

inherent duality in the human condition that ‘corresponds to the double existence that we lead concurrently; the one purely individual and rooted in our organisms, the other social and nothing but an extension of society’ (Durkheim, 2014). With the pervasiveness of secular values, the social regulatory influence of society spoils as a result of diminishing civic responsibility, weakening social bonds and disregard for authority. In other words, society no longer functions to moderate human behavior, gravely undermining shared life. Attesting to that, Elwell writes the modern individual is ‘insufficiently integrated into society. Because of these weakening bonds, social regulation breaks down and the controlling influence of society on the desires and interests of the individual is rendered ineffective; individuals are left to their own devices. Because of the dual nature of human beings this breakdown of moral guidance results in rising rates of deviance, social unrest, unhappiness, and stress’ - i.e. the anomic condition (Elwell, 2017). Of course, Teymoori, Bastian and Jetten (2016) describe the anomic condition as exhibiting a range of intensities. High anomie contains excessive levels of both deregulation and disintegration, and that ‘the cumulative increase in perceived breakdown of both leadership and social fabric is the beginning of the emergence of high anomie in society’ (Teymoori et al, 2016). Adding to that, Chak describes a particularly potent anomic condition as ‘anomie écrasant’ (Chak, 2018 - forthcoming), which includes value-incoherence across social spheres leading to moral ambivalence and high levels of social frustration. This coincides with minimal levels



of Williams' four-fold needs taxonomy: 1) a meaningful life; 2) self-esteem; 3) belonging and social connectivity; 4) security (Williams, 2009). Together, this intense anomic condition leads to the emergence of religio-political fundamentalism and the 'Far-Right' phenomenon (Chak, 2018 - forthcoming).

### Features of the 'Far-Right': Populism, Authoritarianism and Nativism

Far-Right movements in the 'West' do not develop out of a vacuum and, in actuality, are responding to a deeper malaise in society. For that reason, they often exhibit three critical features: populism, authoritarianism and nativism - a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. Admittedly, none of these terminologies and their domains are clearly discernable and there is considerable disagreement on what they, in fact, mean. Yet, there are certain distinguishing features, as mentioned, that analysts share when describing them, which allows us to explore the bewildering explosion of far-right grassroots movements across Europe and North America. For instance, the populist tendency of far-right proponents' feed on social discontent and the breakdown of meaning, associating that to grotesque caricatures of both self and 'Other.' In other words, a hyper-inflated sense of superiority, civilisation and progress that has, inexplicably, been subsumed with the influx of others - censoring visible minorities. Secondly, it is authoritarian tendency is, certainly, anti-democratic, but ferociously against celebrated values of proportional representation, consensus and majority

rules -while acknowledging minority rights and protections. Thirdly, its relationship to 'nativism' is revealed through its incoherent hostility to immigration, which has been a cornerstone of the far-right discourse for many years. That, too, relies on inaccurate caricatures of the reality of hard-working, tax-paying and overwhelmingly law-abiding immigrant communities. It sensationalises crimes committing by these marginalised groups, men/women, African, Asian or Muslim to feed their divisive and hateful agenda. But it has not been just an issue of keeping out immigrants, but also to exclude them from taking part in public policy, debates and direction. The most successful parties on the far-right have come to externalise their intrinsic xenophobia. It is not a matter of 'us' being racist, but instead of 'they' - or Muslims or the Other, being a source of intolerance. Again, the onus is shifted to the immigrants to prove their worth - to go out of their way to reassure everyone else that they are not in any way affiliated to extremism, terror or violence, even while they are victims of violence.

### Populism, Authoritarianism and Nativism

More specifically, the spectacle of populism is, as of yet, and understudied and misrepresented field of inquiry. Typically, it is understood as the quality of appealing to the common person. Yet, in spite of that, it is often seen as myopic, intolerant and hyper-nationalist - when, that definition has no scholarly basis. Admittedly, the term is used in social media and across various mainstream media platforms as

hinting at the hidden rebellion and subversive impulse of the lower classes. As such, the term has taken on a negative connotation vis a vis established elites. In Europe and North America, growing social dissatisfaction, weak economic indicators, and raising divide between rich and poor - with less social services being provided, has propelled the so-called 'populist' movement. Most perplexing, and contradictorily, is that the richest segment of society - the so-called elites, are championing this widespread discontent - when in fact they are largely responsible for it, or benefit from the increasing class or economic divide. By usurping social agency of the deprived and disaffected segments of society, leaders of various far-right movements - who are often the absurdly wealthy 1% of society, i.e. President Trump in the US, or Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, can deflect their complicity in creating unsavory social conditions by misleadingly chanting for 'the people.' That is certainly worth highlighting - the most divisive, racist, and populist movements in the world are led by some of its richest people that, fraudulently, claim to work for the everyday man, women and child. Of course, not all countries will exhibit this phenomenon. In Qatar, there is no 'populist' movement as understood as a divisive, disagreeable or combative relations between the government and its people. This is not only because Qatar has among the lowest unemployment rate in the world, and the highest GDP per capita as well, but, specifically, because it provides numerous privileges including free health care, education and housing benefits, not to mention

exceptionally generous salaries. Henceforth, there is no possibility of a populist threat. Yet, in societies that are slowly drawing back on social programs, healthcare, housing benefits and, meanwhile the cost of living continues to rise - then these societies are ripe for the type of racist politics that the far-right uses.

Among the tactics that far-right proponents utilising is that of scapegoating - or misleading the general population to believe a particular individual or group - in this instance Muslims, people of color or visible minorities, is responsible for social ills, crime or deviant behavior in society. Statistically, in any given European or North American country, immigrants account to a small fraction of crime and/or breaking the law. Moreover, they contribute wholeheartedly to the societies in which they live through contributing by taxation. Hence, sweeping generalisations about immigrant populations or threatening discourses of being 'free-riders' and using, inappropriately, state-benefits are almost entirely fictitious. Still, they hold sway over millions of people. This phenomenon, of targeting visible minorities, is a simplistic way to detract attention from Europe's economic, socio-cultural and political challenges.

### Countering Divisive Narratives

Lastly, in order to confront these narratives -that, at worst, are leading to heinous crimes against Muslim populations throughout Europe and North America, it was argued that broadly-speaking 4 steps should be taken. Firstly, that includes Mosques - having 'open-houses' -

inviting their neighbours or others to share an evening with their co-citizenship. A key part of the Far-right agenda is to ensure that Muslim, Black or other visible minorities do not become mainstream. That would entirely upend their objective. Canada, for instance, has done extremely well in responding to the 'Othering' of visible minority communities and went so far as to support a primetime television show called 'Little Mosque on the Prairie,' that welcome Canadian of Muslim faith to interact with others in a positive, healthy and respectful way. Rest assured, as was elaborated upon, it is essential for Muslim communities to engage with their surroundings, and speak for themselves. If not, the alternative is that far-right bigots will do the speaking for them. Secondly, a variety of different themed 'Awareness Campaigns' throughout society - including city hall, universities, colleges or public places like libraries - essentially, wherever there is high traffic. Specifically, those campaigns should emphasise how Islam is a religion of peace, and the normative traditions and principles which mandate respect and acceptance for diversity. Especially, concerning matters of faith. It is imperative that these traditions are exemplified and, fringe, modernist doctrines that are myopic and that promote us-them binaries are sidelined. Campaigns, also, should highlight Islam's regard for women - in general, and, also, be led by women. Critically important, an awareness campaign that highlights Islam's requirement that believers abide by the laws of place that they are staying and be productive members of society are crucial to reiterate. In fact, one of the comments constantly used by

far-right provocateurs is that Muslims are not law-abiding. Hence, the panellists discussed this, and several other ways - including charitable initiatives like feeding the poor, clothes drive, and Muslim businesses offering discounts to disabled or elderly people go a long way to respond and challenge the contentious accusations made by chauvinists.

Lastly, of fundamental importance, is the political participation of Muslims, Blacks and other visible minorities. Organizing themselves through civil-society organisations, partnerships and political parties is the best way to ensure their voices are not drowned out. Of course, as it was acknowledged, there are those that would tend to use this opportunity to even side with those political parties that are aggressively anti-Muslim or Anti-Black. Here, then, is the importance of rallying political fortunes with other groups and disadvantaged segments of society - including women's groups. Only through this type of activism would the targeted community render untenable the divisive, discriminatory and prejudiced viewpoints that the far-right is asserting.

Prepared by Dr Farhan Mujahid Chak



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Third Session

# **The Impact of the July 15th Coup Attempt on the Turkish State and Society**

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Dawn of July 16, putschists left their military equipment and gear behind on the Bosphorus Bridge. (Open Source)

*On the 15th of July 2016, a group of soldiers within the army attempted a coup to overthrow the democratically elected government in Turkey. The confessions of some of the putschist soldiers and a number of incidents that took place on the night of coup pointed at Fetullah Gülen, a Turkish cleric living in the US. Far from being disorganised, there was a structured, multi-layered strategy to cause mayhem and wreak havoc that was thwarted by the power of the everyday, man, woman and child. That popular uprising crippled the unholy ambitions of FETÖ, the Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organisation. This session will discuss the failed coup attempt, the role of the Turkish people in preventing the coup and discuss lessons learned.*

## Discussion themes of the session:

**The history and transformation of the civil-military relations in Turkey**

**The reasons behind the failed coup attempts**

**The role of the Turkish people in preventing the coup**

**Impact of the coup attempt on the relationships between Turkey and other countries**

# Summary

## The Impact of the July 15th Coup Attempt on Turkish State and Society

In this session, a distinguished panel of speakers and participants convened to explore the origins, impact and lasting legacy of the brutal coup attempt in Turkey, in which many innocent civilians lost their lives and thousands were injured. During the night of July 15, 2016, a group of soldiers attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government in Turkey. Thousands of ordinary men and women took to the streets to oppose the coup. The confessions of some of the putschist soldiers and key evidence during the night of the coup, indicated that Fethullah Gülen - a Turkish cleric living in the US - and his followers were directly involved in the coup attempt. Within this framework, the session explored the roots of the coup in Turkey on the basis of civil-military relations, development of the FETÖ and the impact of the coup attempt on national and international politics of Turkey.

The after-effects of the failed coup attempt and the nations' continued shock and grief was the subject of intense discussion during the session. One of the speakers emphasised the link between the military tutelage in Turkey and the development of the FETÖ and coup attempt. He evaluated how 15th July influenced the state system and triggered the institutional transformation of Turkey to prevent potential coup attempts.

The next speaker addressed the role of the Turkish people in preventing the coup, emphasising the social, economic and political changes during the AK Party period. Participants contributed to the session by discussing various issues such as disputed understanding of the coup by international actors, FETÖ activities in the USA and the rest of the world, influence of the coup on national and international politics of Turkey and finally the post-coup era in Turkey.

While Turkey presented the entire evidence that linked FETÖ with the coup, the disputed understanding of the FETÖ by international actors was the most highlighted issue in the participants' comments. One of the participants emphasised the importance of Turkey's investment in clarifying and presenting the illegal activities of FETÖ within the state as well as in other countries. Furthermore, questions arose on the reasons behind the failure of the coup and how it differed fundamentally from the countries long and bitter history of successful military takeovers. Towards the end of the session, the participants discussed how ordinary citizens - regardless of race, culture and political affiliation - were crucial in defeating the coup and that their public display of unity have emerged as factors that underpin Turkey's democracy.



# The Impact of the July 15th Coup Attempt on Turkish State and Society

## Introduction

There is no generation without any memory of a coup d'etat in Turkey was a significant statement by one of the speakers of the session in determining the history of coup attempts in Turkey. From a historical angle, Turkey was formed under the strong Western-oriented perspective of the Turkish military during the 1920s. The military cadre and single party regime (CHP - Republican People's Party) dominated the state and civil politics for almost three decades and their legacy was maintained until the AK Party government came into power. The multi-party period of Turkey started legally in 1945 and in practice in 1950, however this democratic process was interrupted by the following military interventions: 1960 coup d'etat, 1971 military memorandum, 1980 coup d'etat, 1997 soft coup, 2007 e-memorandum and finally the July 15th 2016 coup attempt. Nevertheless, the July 15th coup attempt has differentiated from the previous coups in terms of its actors and the response of the people, which was the prominent discussion theme of the closed session.

In the session, politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats, academics, regional experts, and journalists came together to discuss the impacts of the coup attempt on Turkish state and society. History of civil-military relations in Turkey and the infiltration of FETÖ members into state institutions and their links to the coup attempt were addressed. Moreover, domestic and international reactions during and post-coup attempt process were discussed through historical, social and political points of view.

## Historical Perspective of Civil-Military Relations in Turkey and the July 15th Coup Attempt

The Turkish military has historically acted as the protector and executor of the Kemalist regime. The roots of the regime were determined by the growing political identities of the Westernised military cadres under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. This put the Turkish military in a superior position over other institutions, which is regarded as a military tutelage in Turkey. Therefore, one of the speakers identified the Turkish military as a 'bonapartist structure.' This term identifies Turkish military as a supra-political since it acts superior to democratic institutions and bases itself as the founder and protector of the state. As a result of this understanding, to get rid of the unnecessary political divisions in society, Turkish military should control the political area.

Within this framework, in order to be a dominant power in Turkey, FETÖ infiltrated into bureaucratic institutions, with particular emphasis to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) in order to control state and society. While the method of Gülenists were the same with the Bonapartist ideology, their worldview is completely different. FETÖ believes that they are a community selected by God and identify themselves as the 'Golden Generation.' This generation is supposed to govern Turkey and consequently other parts of the world. Moreover, FETÖ followers believe that they do not need to obey any rules except the words of their ideological

leader. Therefore, being a member of the organisation is seen as a great privilege.

This perception of being the selected community has led its followers to replicate Kemalist methods in dominating state institutions and thus governing Turkey. Their methods are followed by people from almost all walks of life, regardless of their worldview, beliefs, and lifestyles. More specifically, educated people are strong advocates of FETÖ because of the oppression they faced from Kemalists who in the past prevented educated conservatives to enter state institutions. When the FETÖ members consolidated their power within the state, they oppressed the other groups in the bureaucracy. Another significant analogy between FETÖ and Kemalists is their intentions in mobilising the individuals and society towards becoming 'more civilised', which according to them can only be achieved via their ideology.

According to one of the participants, the 1997 soft coup was also another significant step to empower the FETÖ, in which the Kemalist regime curbed the activities of conservative groups. Since then, their schools, universities and foundations have grown across major Turkish cities and easily spread to other corners of the world. During the AK Party era, they followed their main characteristic to do 'tedbir' which means to hide their real

purpose and identity until they have obtained full power in the judiciary, bureaucracy, and military fields of the state.

One of the participants articulated that the most important lesson we should take from the coup is the importance of democratic legitimacy of socio-political groups. Because it is a circle when undemocratic political attempts happened in a country that led other undemocratic political events. As in the case of FETÖ, they realized that they could govern Turkey through the domination of bureaucratic institutions without entering elections, since forming a party and attending the democratic elections was very risky. Instead, FETÖ surreptitiously infiltrated into the state institutions, specifically the military, to govern Turkey, regardless of who was in power. As a result of this process, Gülenists took over the Kemalist tradition of coup d'etat.

Upon making a comparison between FETÖ and Kemalist cadres, the speaker emphasized that compared to previous coups, the July 15th coup attempt was completely different. This is because for the first time in Turkish coup history soldiers opened fire on civilians and bombed the Turkish Parliament. This was a traumatic experience for Turkish people and one of the most catastrophic events in modern Turkish history.

## The July 15th Coup Attempt and the FETÖ Link

The link between FETÖ and the July 15th coup attempt is proven by the profile of the coup plotters and their confessions, and subliminal messages of the FETÖ followers and its leader before the coup. For instance, one month before the coup attempt, FETÖ member Osman Özsoy made headlines for statements he made on a TV show, announcing that: 'Good times are just around the corner. How I wish I were a colonel today and not a professor, then I would have much more to contribute to this process.' The presenter then asked: 'How exactly would you contribute?' Özsoy's reply: 'I just said what I said and won't be commenting on it more. If I were to be a colonel today, I would have a bigger chance of service.' Moreover, Hulusi Akar, the chief general of Turkish Armed Forces testified that the coup plotters who detained him the night of the coup offered to put him in touch with Gülen. In addition, during the coup night, FETÖ's 'civilian imams' (political commissaries who were in charge of FETÖ followers in the TAF) were in the military bases.

From the early days of the republic, Turkey has been a security-conscious state, with domestic stability and territorial integrity often at the top of its agenda. Every month, high-ranking military officers and top



executives of the Turkish government come together for the regular National Security Council (NSC) meetings. They would discuss significant issues of the state such as security, domestic and foreign politics. However, the Turkish military used this sense of constitutional authorisation in an undemocratic way by justifying interference in the political realm. The AK Party governments under the EU accession process have democratised the NSC through the introduction of several reforms. As a result, decreasing the number of soldiers in the NSC and restructuring the NSC was a significant step for Turkish democracy.

Within this structure, the FETÖ linked soldiers have always hidden their real identity in the military while some of them were compromised and consequently sacked. The FETÖ members were not able to easily rise to top military positions as the high-ranking military officers were stronger in the NSC. However, they were dominating the mid-level of the army. Therefore, profiles and positions of the coup plotters fit FETÖ and there was almost no hierarchy among those who carried out the coup. History shows us that executing a coup by a group of mid-level soldiers does not mean that the coup is doomed to fail. The 1960 coup was conducted by mid-

level soldiers and what differentiated this coup from previous ones was the resistance coming from ordinary people against the coup plotters. The July 15th coup was also prevented by the power of civilian people who took to the streets and stood up for their rights and liberties. Yet the overall price of victory was high: 249 people were martyred and another 2000 people were injured. In addition, hundreds of thousands of people marched against the coup soldiers that night, not only in Istanbul and Ankara but also in Diyarbakir and Cizre, where Kurds constitute a great majority of the population as specifically emphasised by one of the participants.

This picture laid the groundwork for FETÖ in order to cover their real identity in coup hiding behind the Kemalist discourse during that night. That night, they were expecting to receive the support of other soldiers but this did not happen. The coup plotters presented a statement on state television TRT. In this statement, it was announced that a council called ‘Yurtta Sulh, Cihanda Sulh’ (Peace at Home, Peace in the World) staged a coup. Nevertheless, it was not clear exactly who was in this council because FETÖ planned that other groups in the army would also attend the coup attempt that night. The most interesting point about the name of the council was that it

was coined by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1931. One of the speakers stated that the coup was a conventional coalition of old powers, including some Kemalists and nationalist-secular groups in order to defeat the AK Party. On the other hand, speakers and participants agreed that most of the people did not recognise the power of FETÖ within the army because they were very successful in concealing themselves. Yet after the investigations, it was revealed that coup plotters were predominantly FETÖ members.

One of the key factors in the infiltration of FETÖ members into the state and the difficulties in determining its members was that they used code names, rather than their own names. Moreover, they did not use their personal phones in their contacts with other FETÖ members. Therefore, it was hard to prove their links with FETÖ.

It was emphasised during the session that all political groups in Turkey agreed that FETÖ was behind the coup attempt. There is a consensus in Turkey that FETÖ was the planner of the coup d’état. While Turkey presented the entire evidence that linked FETÖ with the coup, the disputed understanding of the FETÖ by international actors was the most highlighted issue in the participants’ comments.

One of the participants mentioned that while the reality is quite clear, it is hard to convince America since FETÖ members have good relations with its politicians and institutions. Therefore, the participants emphasised the importance of Turkey’s investment in clarifying and presenting the illegal activities of FETÖ within the state as well as in other countries.

### International Political Atmosphere

The position of international actors on the 15th July coup attempt is another significant theme of the session. In this regard, one of the participants questioned why it is so hard to make a judiciary case on FETÖ and its leader Fethullah Gülen in the US, despite the fact that Turkey officially presented all the evidence to the American authorities. This indicates that the lack of evidence is not the issue here. The fact that the United States does not start any investigation on FETÖ after the coup attempt shows that the relationship between Gülen and US is still strong. It is emphasised that this is the result of the lobbying activities of FETÖ in the US, which has allowed the organisation to build good relations with the American authorities, bureaucrats, civil organisations and high-level academics in order to run a negative campaign against Turkey. It also

appears that there is a collaboration among Gülenists and pro-PKK groups and the Armenian lobby against Turkey in the US. This cooperation emerges as an anti-Turkey campaign in the US, which consequently makes it difficult to bring a case against FETÖ.

Another participant stressed that FETÖ is still active not only in the US but also in Africa, which has been a source of influence and revenue for the organisation. Some of these African countries have not started their investigations against FETÖ, with one participant stating that FETÖ members are married to people from the local community in African countries, which makes their lobbying more easy and gives them access to the bureaucracy.

Some suggestions were offered by participants which would help start investigations against FETÖ in the US and African countries. The most prominent of these was that Turkey should explain itself better and conduct lobbying activities in order to present the illegal activities of FETÖ within the state as well as in other countries. This long-term approach - in which more investment is made in establishing good relations between countries - was highlighted as a key factor and a successful step forward.

### Conclusion

On July 15th 2016, Turkey experienced one of the most important events in its history. FETÖ, which has infiltrated into Turkey’s military, bureaucracy and political institutions in the last 40 years through education, humanitarian aid and dialogue, staged a coup attempt. This night was one of the bloodiest days in Turkey’s history of coups but also the first coup that was stopped by the resistance of the people. Civilians, police officers, politicians, and head of the state President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were all targets of the coup. At this night 249 civilians, soldiers and police officers were martyred and over 2000 people were injured. The resistance of the civilians against the military coup marked a turning point in the history of democracy.

Finally, it was highlighted that Turkey survived the economic impact of the failed coup because it had already established a well-functioning financial system prior to the coup attempt. In order to prevent a repeated coup in the future, it was stated that coup plotters must be punished by law and their trials should be followed closely by the Turkish public.

*Prepared by Muhammed Ali Uçar  
and Selçuk Aydın*



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Fourth Session

# **Confronting Global Terror**

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The victims of the Istanbul night club terror attack on January 1st, 2017, are remembered. (AA /Arif Hüdaverdi Yaman)

*Last political developments in the world seem ominous or as threatening to outsiders as the rise of global terror. To be certain, the fundamentalist movements exist throughout the world, including Europe, North America, the Middle East and South Asia. This session will explore the phenomenon of global terror as it relates to numerous countries and challenges. Moreover, the discussion will explore the roots of the crisis of global terror and seek suggestions to address this issue.*

## Discussion themes of the session:

**The roots of the terrorist movements**

**Globalisation of the local terrorist movements**

**The phenomenon and challenges of global terror as it relates to numerous countries**

**Sustainability and demise of the terrorist movements and states’ role**

**How to promote the culture of dialogue and tolerance in the post-conflict areas?**

# Summary Confronting Global Terror

This session primarily dealt with the question of how to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter global terrorism. The rise of global terrorism has created an atmosphere of fear across the globe affecting many countries in different continents. With advances in communication and transportation technology due to the processes of globalisation, once local groups now have the chance of spreading their ideologies and activities to a wider population. This session addressed the imminent need in reaching common ground for solving the issue since there is still lack of consensus on how to eliminate the threat of terrorism, if such a thing is possible.

The difficulties and challenges faced in countering DAESH attacks was one of the main discussion points in this session. Among the participants, one expert who served previously as a security advisor in a prominent institution claimed that the transformation of terrorism into more complicated structures stands as one of the most formidable challenges since it makes previous methods ineffective and unfit. Several predicaments such as diverging and sometimes conflicting interests of concerned countries, have also led to lack of coordination and cooperation in developing a comprehensive and an all-inclusive counter terror strategy. Moreover, another security expert maintained that complications associated with the nature of the DAESH threat - such as the impossible task of designing one particular course of action due to varying reasons for people’s radicalisation, difficulty of detecting and measuring DAESH-inspired attacks and activities of its affiliates and an inability to cut off the external support to these terrorist groups - further complicate the situation by

requiring a multi-layered response in the face of a multi-layered problem. In addition, the question of how to deal with the post-DAESH era appears as the critical component of the issue at hand.

There are several factors contributing to the intractability of the problem. First and foremost, terrorism is a function of international relations whereby states implicitly or explicitly support terrorists to advance their interests. In this sense, one discussant firmly asserted that no terrorist organisation survives unless they are supported by external powers. Therefore, it is imperative to have common understanding and agreed principles among the international actors, requiring all states to treat terrorist groups with an equal standard, without distinguishing them as good or bad terrorists. This will help eradicate the inconsistency in tackling terrorism.

Secondly, the ambiguity in the definition of terrorism is one of the factors curbing state collaboration. A realistic and workable definition of terrorism is needed in order to develop an efficient counter-terror strategy. Thirdly, failed states stand as one of the most important factors that results in the creation of a fertile environment for terrorists. Therefore, state-building mechanisms should be cautiously implemented in the post DAESH era. In this sense, the root causes of terrorism, including grievances, inequalities, lack of political representation, discrimination and so forth, should be properly addressed to be able to eliminate the conditions that provide a safe-haven for the emergence of terrorist groups. Finally, returning foreign terrorist fighters should be taken seriously if potential attacks in metropolitan cities are to be deterred.



# Confronting Global Terror

## Introduction

Terrorism has become a global phenomenon posing ominous threats to people living in all parts of the world. Various factors can be enumerated to account for the rise of global terrorism, yet one thing is evident: it knows no border or nationality. Besides, terrorism has also become increasingly multidimensional over the years, further complicating the process of countering it. Above all, the complex nature of contemporary terrorism has demonstrated the urgent need in finding common ground to develop a well-organised strategy. This situation requires a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the different dimensions of the phenomenon. Against this backdrop, the session ‘Confronting Global Terror’ generated engaging discussions on the transformation of terrorism, development of counter-terrorism strategy and how to depoliticise it. Additionally, it was employed by politicians, academics, regional-experts, analysts and activists to discuss how the post-DAESH era should be handled in order not to give rise to a new terrorist group that would substitute the former one.

## Transformation of Terrorism

The 9/11 attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda in the US in 2001 constituted one of the most shocking moments, not only for Americans, but also for many others around the world. Attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon showed beyond doubt that a country may be susceptible to terrorism regardless of the might of military capabilities.. This incident also demonstrated that terrorism is anything but a local phenomenon. The response of the US to Al-Qaeda attacks was to launch a war on terror, an international military campaign aimed at eliminating all terrorists in a preventive manner before they attack again. Many world countries showed their solidarity with the US in varying degrees to permanently

root out terrorism. However, the world went into shock again after a group, which called itself DAESH (The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took control of the city of Mosul in Iraq and self-declared caliphate in 2014. This was followed by brutal images showing the massacres committed by DAESH in the areas it captured. It then expanded its terrorist campaigns outside the so-called caliphate. In the last three years, DAESH carried out more than 70 attacks across the world and killed more than two thousand people. These attacks have targeted cities in many countries, from Paris to London, Barcelona, Istanbul and Kabul. In Turkey, DAESH attacks claimed the lives of more than 300 people just in three years.

The problem became even more serious with the emergence of different terrorist groups declaring their affiliation to DAESH.

Within this context, the participants of the session agreed that terrorism has proliferated ideologically and organisationally and morphed into a new phase. One of the participants highlighted that when Osama bin Laden, the founder and the leader of Al-Qaeda, was captured and killed in 2011, there was hope for eradicating terrorism since his death was regarded as the final blow to global terrorism. During the same period, Turkey was also involved in a domestic peace process to solve its decades-long conflict with the PKK that caused more than forty

thousand people to lose their lives. Yet, the ensuing developments proved that terrorism was far from over. According to a participant, one reason for the survival of terrorism is the arbitrary implementation of ineffective and irrelevant counter-terrorism strategies. What is needed to combat the evolving global terror threat is a well-coordinated and all-inclusive strategy. As articulated by one participant, the nature of terrorism in the 60s and 70s has transformed into a more complex structure where leaders of terrorist groups are now more skillful players who manage to regenerate their organisation in the event of structural collapse. This feature makes it impossible to eliminate terrorism completely. What can be done instead is to recognise terrorism as an ongoing problem that needs to be ‘managed’ and contained. Terrorism can only be managed through a comprehensive strategy which involves international cooperation. As claimed by one of the participants, countries spend too much time and attention discussing terrorism and too little on countering it. Despite there is a consensus on the need to eliminate DAESH completely, there still is a lack of collaboration and coordination among relevant countries. As one of the speakers stated, the Global Coalition against DAESH is composed of 68 countries whose members still differ in their commitment in defeating DAESH.

The effectiveness of decapitation of terrorist leaders as a form of counter-terrorism strategy,

was discussed in the session. It was noted that decapitation worked in a few cases, notably in religious organisations. Although decapitation might provide short-term gains, in the long run it could lead to further radicalisation. Therefore, it should be accompanied by long-term strategies. For instance, the death of Zarqawi did not bring an end to DAESH, proving that new terrorism could revive itself with a more radical ideology and leader.

## Challenges of the New Terrorism

The discussions surrounding the session - ‘existing and likely challenges with regard to countering global terrorism’ - revealed two sets of difficulties that lay ahead. The first set, pertained to the complicated nature of global terrorism while the second, was about the politics among countries. Beginning with the first one, the decentralised organisational structure of DAESH encouraged various groups in different parts of the world (who affiliate themselves with the group) to carry out attacks on behalf of DAESH. Dozens of pre-existing groups announced their allegiance to DAESH once Baghdadi declared the caliphate. Additionally, many DAESH recruits who were trained in Iraq and Syria and indoctrinated into the group’s radical ideology were sent back to their country of origin or other countries to establish secret cells. These cells and affiliates constitute a large network where the money and resources are controlled and channeled to the

organisations inside and outside the caliphate. Moreover, individuals inspired by DAESH ideology carry out terrorist acts in the form of lone wolf attacks which are harder to prevent beforehand. This poses a significant challenge because it is hard to measure and detect an individuals’ allegiance to DAESH. Therefore, this scattered structure allows DAESH to exert its influence outside its self-claimed territory and carry out attacks in different countries.

People are radicalised for very different reasons making it hard to bring an all-encompassing solution. DAESH has recruits from over 120 countries and each individual recruit has different motivations for joining. Therefore, it is not possible to have one package that would mitigate every form of radicalisation. This requires a detailed plan of action. Moreover, government policies (both domestic and foreign) might also contribute to the radicalisation process. As articulated by one of the participants, European countries’ refugee policies gain significance because ill treatment might exacerbate radicalisation among the refugee population. However, today, the upsurge of right wing and anti-immigrant discourse in Europe stands as an important factor in inviting radicalisation. The session also noted that there is a risk of pushing people to the periphery as a result of using disproportionate military pressure as a counter-terrorism strategy. The incidents of Afghanistan, Iraq and Algeria proved this. Therefore, it should be



kept in mind an important challenge that needs to be overcome is the constant marginalising of people through the use of force - thereby stirring up radicalisation.

### Terror as an Instrument of International Politics

Countries implicitly or explicitly give support to certain terrorist groups whom they consider as good terrorists, in order to improve their national interests. As a participant pointed out, terrorism studies emerged under international relations rather than under psychology because international politics is the source of terrorism. This is a critical factor for the survival of terrorist groups since no terrorist organisation survives unless they are supported by external powers. For instance, over time, PKK camps and its so-called leaders moved from one location to another in order to survive between Beqaa Valley in Lebanon to Syria and Qandil Mountains in Iraq. At present, external support to terrorism still continues in different forms due to various motivations. This constitutes a critical challenge for building an international understanding that embraces the principle of denying support to any terrorist group, regardless of motivation.

In relation to the above-mentioned point, lack of agreement on the definition of terrorism can create challenges. More than 200 definitions

of terrorism are cited in the dictionary handbook of terrorism. This reveals that the concept of terrorism is not conceptualised in a scientifically workable manner. In this context, one participant highlighted the need for a realistic and workable definition of terrorism in order to ensure consistency in the treatment of violent groups. This is essential because labeling someone as a terrorist is a context-based and value-based endeavor generating inconsistency across countries, which in turn serve to the benefit of terrorist groups. In this context, Turkey's objection to the US support to the PKK's Syrian offshoot YPG becomes important because PKK is listed as a terrorist organisation not only by the US but also by the EU and many other countries. This inconsistency in treatment creates new challenges in the form of distrust not only among countries but also populations. For instance, many people in Turkey believe that DAESH is a product of the West. This perception has been fed by the inconsistent policies of the West with regard to terrorism problems outside their territories. Particularly, the case of FETÖ (Fethullah Terrorist Organisation) - which has been largely underestimated and downplayed by Western countries - has further aggravated the Turkish people's perception of the double-standard attitude of Western countries. It was noted that this challenge should be overcome by applying an unchanging and principled approach to other countries' terrorism problems as if they

were theirs if an international understanding and common ground were to be achieved.

### Prospective Comments

As to the future projections of post-DAESH era, various ideas were provided with particular emphasis on the need for solving the root causes of terrorism. The rehabilitation of society who witnessed DAESH brutality is of utmost importance. The negative impacts of the difficult conditions, experiences and sufferings faced by people should be treated with due care in order to integrate them into society. For eliminating the risks that would lead to the flourishing of new terrorist groups, the root causes of terrorism should be addressed cautiously. Terrorism can be a result of many factors. Some people become terrorists due to a desire for adventure, while others believe that terrorism is the only way to achieve their ends. Grievances, exclusion, isolation, lack of political representation, discrimination, economic inequality can be counted as the driving forces behind people's choice to become a terrorist. Therefore, in the post-DAESH era, such problems should be tackled seriously. In this line, one of the participants argued that the economic crises in Middle Eastern countries caused high unemployment and income disparity leading the middle class to lose its economic well-being. The Arab

uprisings offered a hope for these people to get through the economic turmoil. However, once it was crushed, the people lost their hope for the future and this pushed many to adopt extreme ideologies and turn to radicalisation. Therefore, establishing a functioning strong economy is an important element for preventing the re-emergence of global terrorism from the region.

Additionally, failed states are important sources of terrorism. The collapse of state capacity in Iraq and Syria helped the emergence of DAESH in these countries by giving a safe haven for them to organise their activities without being subject to the state authority. In the post-DAESH era, state building mechanisms should be implemented cautiously in order to prevent the creation of another failed state in the future. Functioning state institutions should be formed with due care without giving any room for their collapse. However, the unsustainability of political order in the wider region still constitutes a challenge for Middle Eastern countries in terms of having a latent source for another conflict in the region. Moreover, it was noted that 500 people including their families joined DAESH each month. Their motivations were quite diverse considering the various backgrounds of each individual. Although it is possible to find out the many reasons that drive people to join DAESH, there is still no single pathway to radicalisation

and therefore it is difficult to spot vulnerable people before they join. As one participant claimed, those who joined DAESH could easily travel across countries without being blocked or identified since there is no obvious profile of a person likely to become involved in extremism. Therefore, states should develop a mechanism to identify and prevent the travel of people whose purpose is to carry out terrorist activities. Cooperation of intelligence agencies among different countries will become an important component of counter-terrorism strategy in the post-DAESH era.

With regards to the evolution of DAESH after its collapse in Iraq and Syria, one participant argued that DAESH would not go underground, but rather become a virtual caliphate existing in cyberspace. The previous organisational models will be replaced by new ones as technology and cyberspace advance rapidly. According to this perspective, DAESH will continue its activities of recruitment, fundraising and ideological propaganda through the internet and maintaining its caliphate in the cloud.

### Conclusion

This session highlighted the importance of collaboration among countries in order to counter terrorism given the fact that its global character poses serious threat to the security

interests of all countries more than ever. Post-DAESH era provides a good opportunity for the international community to take lessons from the previous mistakes and to develop a new mutual understanding that shares the concerns of others. In this sense, first, all cases of terrorism should be treated along equal standards. Secondly, this new understanding should be expanded to address and solve the root causes of terrorism that by and large pertain to the economic, political and sociological conditions of the world. The international community should take issues such as global inequality, political oppression, xenophobia, and Islamophobia and so forth seriously. Finally, in addition to the threat on the ground, terrorists are rapidly adapting themselves to the new dynamics of the 21st century by spreading their ideologies in cyberspace. This evolution requires a major shift in the way we deal with terrorism. Therefore, more counter measures need to be taken in order to solve the problem before it casts an even larger shadow over the globe.

Prepared by Muhammed Lütfi Türkcan



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Fifth Session

# **Shockwaves of the War in Syria**

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Anti-Assad protesters chanting for the release of detainees, in Eastern Ghouta. (Stringer/AA)

*The conflict between the warring parties in Syria has entered its seventh year and peace remains as elusive as ever. The crisis persists without any positive signs of finding a solution, especially since the transformation of the conflict into a proxy war between rival regional and international parties. This session seeks to discuss the possible scenarios of resolving the Syrian war, and the prospects of Syria's future in the medium and long term.*

### Discussion themes of the session:

<b>The internal dynamics of the Syrian war</b>
<b>The role of the external parties in prolonging the Syrian war</b>
<b>The responses (or lack of responsibility) of the international community in solving the crisis</b>
<b>The humanitarian issues of the Syrian crisis</b>
<b>The prospects of Syria's future in the medium and long term</b>

## Summary Shockwaves of the War in Syria

The Syrian issue has come to be one of the hottest topics of the global agenda regarding the Middle East. This is further complicated with the involvement and intervention of both regional and major global powers. In the closed session of TRT World Forum titled 'Shockwaves of the War in Syria', Turkish, Syrian, Iranian, and international perspectives on the Syrian war were discussed with the attendance of experts from various backgrounds. The positions of Turkey, Iran and the Syrian opposition were presented by senior figures from these respective countries.

Discussions during the session mainly revolved around issues such as the future of the Syrian regime, influences of international actors, the Astana peace process, as well as the fate of armed groups in Syria. Participants referred back to the early stages of the uprising where the regime used a heavy-handed approach to crush peaceful protests spreading across Syria. During the civil war, the extremist factions being released from the regime prisons by Assad himself further complicated matters. According to Syrian expert, civilian populations had long suffered under the oppression of either the regime or of extremist groups like Tahrir al-Sham. Therefore, the opposition as well as the Syrian people welcomed Turkey's political stance against Assad. While recently the Turkish army helped liberate some areas from extremist factions - allowing local Syrians to enjoy the freedom of self-governance - experts say there is an urgent need to go back to the negotiation table.

With negotiations in Geneva making little progress, the Astana peace talks offer a more neutral platform for Iran and Turkey and provide new energy to the negotiations. According to an Iranian expert, Iran supports dialogue between Turkey and the Syrian regime, which is in line with the spirit of Astana, while Turkey seems to be sticking to the multilateral atmosphere of the process. The Turkish expert claims that Assad's lack of credibility on the ground has left the country to descend into a chaotic vacuum filled by foreign militias and terror groups, such as the YPG and DAESH, whose fates remain to be an important concern for Turkey. From the Turkish perspective, what needs to be discussed is the spheres of influence of the different actors in Syria to guarantee Syria's political reorganisation and territorial integrity.

Demilitarisation and the revival of civilian politics in Syria seem to necessitate the involvement of multiple local and international actors via processes like Astana peace talks. Whilst experts from different backgrounds do accept divisions and splits in the political landscape, multilateral processes and genuine negotiations seem to ease the transition to a more stable atmosphere in Syria. In this respect, political divisions will have to be tolerated for the sake of territorially intact borders. A transitional political process needs to be carried out by Syrians and this is possible only through multilateral diplomatic efforts that include demilitarisation and stabilisation of the Syrian landscape.



# Shockwaves of the War in Syria

## Introduction: War in Syria at a Glance

The Syrian issue has come to be one of the hottest topics of the global agenda in the Middle East. What began as a peaceful uprising against the government in 2011 has now become a full-scale violent conflict, underpinned by a complex pattern of alliances and enmities. For some, the Syrian outbreak was seen as a struggle for democracy and for others, as terror. Whilst the Syrian opposition was recognised as the sole legitimate representation of the people, the emergence of groups such as DAESH and YPG has left the efforts of establishing a democracy off the agenda. This was further complicated by the involvement and intervention of both regional and major global powers.

As a result of conflict, challenges to international security have surfaced and multilateral diplomatic efforts - that include demilitarisation and stabilisation of the Syrian landscape - have been initiated. In the closed session of TRT World Forum titled ‘Shockwaves of the War in Syria,’ Turkish, Syrian, Iranian, and international perspectives on the Syrian War were discussed and the positions of Turkey, Iran and the Syrian opposition were presented by senior figures. Talks during the session mainly revolved around issues such as the future of the Syrian regime, influences of international actors, the Astana peace process as well as the fate of armed groups in Syria.

## Turkey and the War in Syria

Since the very beginning of the Syrian conflict, Turkey has played an increasingly important role throughout the process. From its several attempts to persuade the Assad regime to introduce democratic reforms and not to escalate the tension, to the provision of shelter for displaced Syrian people, Turkey has taken an active part in trying to maintain relative stability in Syria. More recently, the Turkish Armed Forces began its peacekeeping mission in Idlib by pushing away the extremist factions. As a result, the opposition groups appreciate Turkey’s position in Syria. Its active role in the resolution of regional conflicts has won it favorable notice in the Arab world, especially during the early stages of the uprising when the Assad regime used a heavy-handed approach to crush peaceful protests spreading across Syria. In the process, the extremist factions being released from the regime prisons by Assad, further complicated matters. According to one Syrian expert, civilian populations had long suffered under the oppression of either the regime or of extremist groups like Tahrir al-Sham, which controlled 70% of Idlib before Turkey’s intervention.

The opposition as well as the Syrian people welcomed Turkey’s political stance against extremist groups as well as the Assad regime. Whilst recently the Turkish military helped liberate some areas from extremist factions - allowing local Syrians to enjoy the freedom of self-governance - Turkey’s cooperation with the Free Syrian Army opened up a space for civilian rule in the freed areas. In this regard, Idlib is an important spot where the opposition can present its own vision of governance.

Whilst this has been the case for the Syrian people, the regime, which stands side by side with Iran, has condemned Turkey’s peacekeeping mission in Idlib. Turkey’s intervention in dealing with extremist groups in Idlib such as Tahrir al-Sham constitutes a legitimate action according to the deals reached in Astana. However, condemnation from the regime creates confusion for it previously declared its compliance with the decisions taken at the Astana meetings. According to an Iranian expert, this is mainly due to the lack of cooperation between Damascus and Ankara in peace talks. In this regard, Iran supports dialogue between the two capitals, as they fear that distrust and disconnection can lead to misinterpretation and clashing of stances - which is not in line with the spirit of

Astana. Furthermore, the reason for Iran to hope for a stable bilateral relation between the two countries is due to the close link between Bashar al-Assad and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan prior to the start of the civil unrest - a relationship that was supposedly stronger than that of Assad and the Iranian President Hassan Rohani, contrary to current perceptions.

For the Turkish expert, the Astana process opens up a space for all key actors to talk to each other and yield concrete results, rather than ceding the negotiating space to the Syrian regime. Therefore, it is not realistic to expect a line of dialogue between Damascus and Ankara, as Assad has no credibility on the ground. The Turkish expert claims that this lack of credibility on the ground has left the country to descend into a chaotic vacuum filled by foreign militias and terror groups, such as the YPG and DAESH, whose fates remain to be an important concern for Turkey. From the Turkish perspective, what needs to be discussed is the various spheres of influence of the different actors in Syria to guarantee its political relocation and territorial integrity. Furthermore, Assad should also be considered as an actor on the ground even though he no longer has full control over all territories.



### Unfulfilled Promises in Geneva and Search for a Common Ground in Astana

According to the Syrian opposition, the Geneva process has failed due to Assad's unfulfilled promises and the regime's harsh treatment of the opposition directly after the talks. The ultimate aim of the opposition is to remove Bashar al-Assad from peace talks in Geneva since he has lost his incentive to negotiate after the intervention of Russia and Iran. They state the urgency of a transitional process to post-Assad Syria that should be negotiated between the Syrian regime and the Syrian people. They hold a confident position in terms of their capacity of governance in a post-Assad Syria, as the opposition have already built a local governmental structure composed of almost 300 local councils selected by the people and an internal government in the areas freed of violent factions via the peacekeeping operations of the Turkish Armed Forces. Almost half of Syrian society, 48% to be precise, is being administered by this internal governmental system. Therefore, what needs to be done - once peacekeeping operations in Syria are completed - is to initiate a process similar to that of Geneva between the opposition and the regime.

However, with negotiations in Geneva making little progress, the Astana peace talks offer a more neutral platform for Iran, Turkey and Russia as well as provide new energy to the negotiations. According to the Turkish expert, whilst Geneva acts as a good umbrella with some practical and unpractical aspects, Astana has provided more of a concrete step forward.

### Coming to Terms with the Reality on the Ground

The Iranian expert states that despite the differences in opinions, the actors around the table in Astana are the ones that Iran chooses to trust and maintain good faith. On the other hand, actors like Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel cannot be trusted. From the very beginning of the conflict, the United States and Saudi Arabia held a rejectionist stance and Israel had much to gain from the chaos that unfolded. From an Iranian perspective, the American stance in the Syrian issue is very similar to that in Iraq. Whilst America appeared to support Iraq's territorial integrity by recognising its central government, its policies reflected the opposite. In similar vein, despite the United States' repeated calls for a ceasefire and for a permanent, negotiated

peace agreement, its government continues to supply arms to YPG militants in Northern Syria. And with Saudi Arabia allying itself with the United States, the Iranian government chooses not to trust or rely on either country.

The Iranian expert continues to state that the situation in Syria should not be seen from a binary of demand for democratic change versus terrorist resurgence. There were legitimate and peaceful protests during the beginning that were handled very harshly by the Syrian regime. However, even the United States acknowledges in its Intelligence Report, written in August 2012, that there were extremist factions in the country that were interested in violence. He states that the presence of Shiite militias in Syria can be better understood when they are taken as a response to extremist factions fighting in Syria. According to Iran, when these militias were brought in, there were already foreign fighters in the country. However, from an outsider's perspective it should be noted that for the local people, Shiite militias are as terrifying as DAESH. When the Iraqi army and Shiite militia, Hashd Al-Shaabi, took control in Kirkuk from KRG, people were fleeing like people fled Mosul when DAESH took over the

city, fearing mass atrocities. Considering the reality of Shiite militants on the ground, what Iran is seeking becomes unclear in the case of Iraq and Syria: whether spheres dominated by Iran or unified countries? On the one hand Iran is speaking of their unity and sovereignty. On the other hand, it is paving the way for further hegemony over these countries via militant groups such as Hashd al-Shaabi. The Iranian expert admits that there is a lack of trust between Iraqi citizens and the state and this is a major problem for the future of the country. According to him, it should also be noted that Iran stood with Irbil and helped defend the city when attacked by DAESH. When Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), appealed for help from the United States, his plea was largely ignored, thus allowing the return of the Iraqi military to where they were stationed before DAESH. The Iranian expert rejects the idea that Hashd Al-Shaabi is simply a sectarian force. Basing his arguments on his personal experiences in Iraq, he states that Hashd Al-Shaabi provides security and stability for the locals in and around Mosul. He mentions that there is normality in the major cities of the country such as Aleppo and Damascus. However, the Syrian

expert rejects this point by stating that Syria is a country where at least 60% of the population has been internally or externally displaced. He continues to add that the binary of people who support Assad versus those who reject him is a false one. There are numerous different political positions of Syrian society and these positions should not be underestimated. From this perspective, the presence of foreign fighters in Syria has divided society more than ever, splitting the people into various regimes and opposition-affiliated camps. As a result of foreign intervention, it is not possible to establish communication between the Syrian society and the Syrian regime.

### Conclusion: Towards a Realistic Consensus on the Future

Demilitarisation and the revival of civilian politics in Syria seem to necessitate the involvement of multiple local and international actors via processes like Astana. Despite divisions in the political landscape, the territorial integrity of Syria stands as one of the top issues. Whilst experts from different backgrounds do accept these divisions, multilateral processes and genuine negotiations handled in a realistic way seem to

ease the transition to a more stable atmosphere in Syria. In this respect, political divisions will have to be tolerated for the sake of territorially intact borders. Therefore, setting the spheres of influence of outsider actors is an important step for maintaining territorial integrity while preserving political differences. By increasing the coordination between the powerful actors on the ground, Astana is a realistic step towards de-escalation and the integrity of Syria. According to the Turkish expert, Assad will no longer be a key actor since the fighting force on the ground is not the army of Assad but that of foreign militias. Without considering this reality, it would not be possible to take a step forward. In the current landscape, there is a need to consider the multiplicity of actors on the ground and in this regard, setting up spheres of influence is a more reliable and realistic way to move forward.

Prepared by Özgür Dikmen



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Sixth Session

# **The Gulf Crisis and Geopolitical Tensions in the Gulf Region**

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Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain said they would cut air, sea and land links with Qatar.

On Monday, 5th of June 2017, 3 GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain) and Egypt cut its diplomatic relationship with Doha. This unprecedented crisis in the history of inter-Gulf relations has created a state of mistrust, not only among the governments of the Gulf States but also among the citizens of those countries. The participants in this session will discuss the reasons of the Gulf crisis, its impact on the relationship between the member States of the GCC as well as on the security in the region, and the scenarios that could be expected to resolve this crisis.

## Discussion themes of the session:

The genuine reasons of the Gulf crisis
Its impacts on the relationship between the member States of the GCC as well as on the security of the region.
Power of the media (Al/Jazeera) in the Gulf crises, how predictable are the changes that media can result in?
The possibility of playing a mediation role by a neutral state (Norway and Switzerland as example).
The scenarios that could be expected to resolve this crisis.

# Summary

## The Gulf Crisis and Geopolitical Tensions in the Gulf Region

On Monday, 5 June 2017, three GCC countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain) and Egypt cut their diplomatic relationships with Doha. This unprecedented crisis in the history of inter-Gulf relations has created a state of mistrust, not only among the governments of the Gulf states, but also among the citizens of those countries. This session discussed the reasons of the Gulf crisis, its impact on the relationship between the member states of the GCC as well as the wider security in the region. The speakers tried to draw the scenarios that could be expected to resolve this crisis.

During the session, the two speakers shared their analyses on the Gulf crisis with the other experts. The first speaker focused on the root causes of the current Gulf-Qatar crisis, which dates back to 1995 when Qatar left the umbrella of Saudi Arabia to adopt an independent and open foreign policy. He explained that despite Qatar not giving in to the demands of the four countries that cut their ties with Doha, it is not likely that this crisis will cause a breakdown, at least in the short term, of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The second speaker described the strong relationship between Qatar and Turkey, as well as Turkey's ties with the rest of the Gulf states. He explained that Qatar and Turkey have the same view regarding almost all issues in the region, particularly since the Arab uprisings started in 2010.

After the presentations of the senior experts of the Gulf, discussion was opened to the floor and distinguished participants shared their analyses. One of the participants argued that the crisis was implemented after getting the green light from the White House following Donald Trump's historic visit to Riyadh in May 2017. According to him, the most important cause of the current Gulf crisis is the divergence of opinions between Qatar and the states that are party to the crisis regarding the best way to manage regional issues. The second speaker's analysis supported the idea that assumes the creation of a new alliance in the region, which could contain Turkey, Iran and Qatar. Another participant in the session found that the main reason of the Gulf crisis is the role of the media in different Gulf countries, especially the role that Al Jazeera Media Network played in the last two decades to change the mentality in the Arab world by supporting the people.

Finally, the participants in this session concluded that the solution to the Gulf crisis should be resolved through dialogue among all concerned parties. Three main themes have been discussed during this session:

1. The real reasons of the Qatar-Gulf crisis;
2. The impact of this unprecedented crisis on the security of the region;
3. And the scenarios expected to resolve the crisis.



# The Gulf Crisis and Geopolitical Tensions in the Gulf Region

## Introduction

n Monday, 5 June 2017, three GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain) as well as Egypt cut its diplomatic ties with Qatar. This unprecedented crisis in the history of inter-Gulf relations has created a state of mistrust, not only among the governments of the Gulf States, but also among the citizens of those countries.

TRT World Forum organised a closed session on October 19, 2017, on the Gulf Crisis to discuss the reasons behind this unprecedented event in the region, its impact on the relationship between the member states of the GCC as well as on the security of the MENA region. The participants at the panel attempted to describe, analyse and present the outcomes of their in-depth research to suggest solutions and offer scenarios that could be expected to resolve this crisis.

They were focused on the roots of the current Gulf-Qatar crisis that dates back to 1995, when Qatar decided to leave the umbrella of Saudi Arabia to adopt an independent and open foreign policy. One of the speakers explained that despite Qatar not accepting the terms imposed on it, it is highly unlikely that this crisis will cause a breakdown of the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC), in the short term at least.

They also described the strong relationship between Qatar and Turkey, and the ties that Ankara has with the rest of the Gulf capitals. One of the points highlighted that Qatar and Turkey have the same view regarding almost all issues in the region, particularly since the start of the Arab uprisings in 2011.

## Origin of the Crisis

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt severed diplomatic ties with Qatar as they claimed its regional policies fueled terrorism and extremism according to the official statement diffused by the blockade countries. However, there is no longer any doubt that the diplomatic crisis was pre-planned and implemented after getting the green light from the White House following Donald Trump's historic visit to the Saudi capital in May 2017.

The roots of the Gulf crisis go much deeper, specifically to 1995 when Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the former Emir of Qatar, took power on 27 June 1995. His arrival to power, was not well received by Qatar's neighbours such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular. Sheikh Hamad quickly understood that he needed to build a brand image for his country, based on several leverages such as education, diplomacy, sport, media, culture and mediation to safeguard the legitimacy of his monarchical rule.

Qatar's new foreign policy is characterised by two main factors: its independence and openness. At the same time, its foreign policy is based on two strategies: its relationship with its neighbours in the region like Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran, and the alliance with the strong powers and actors in the world such as France, UK and the United States of America respectively.

## Reinforcing the Image of Qatar

The Qatari leaders are aware that their country is a very small state in the region, with respect to its geographical area, its military forces and its population size. However, Qatar possesses a lot of natural energy resources, gas in particular. Hence, Qatar had to rely on building its knowledge capital to create its own brand image. Aljazeera Media Network, Western-based universities such as the Northwestern University and Georgetown University in Education city (Qatar's education hub), and even the use of sport all sought to create a significant brand image of Qatar that was progressive and capable of development, despite its challenges as a small state.

## Qatar's Foreign Policy

Relationship with countries and actors in the region is one of the most important drivers for Qatar's foreign policy. Qatar has strengthened its relations and worked on building strong diplomatic ties - since Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani came to power in 1995 - with states such as Iran, Israel and Turkey. On the other hand, Qatar built strong relations with non-state actors in the region like Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. In fact, there was a Commercial Israeli bureau office in Doha from 1996 to 2009, despite Qatar having close relations with Hamas and Hezbollah during that same period.

Qatar is also well aware of its geopolitical position, being located between powerful neighbours such

as Saudi Arabia and Iran. It is quite important for Qatar to be able to maintain the balance of power in the region. This is why Doha signed a number of agreements with great powers including the US, UK and France so that it could become a more important geopolitical actor in the Gulf.

It is important to note that Qatar hosts the largest American military base in the Middle East and North Africa, which includes more than 11,000 US troops. A new Turkish military base has been established in Doha last June, few days after the Gulf crisis started.

## Crisis as a Result of Qatar's Influence in the Region

The Gulf-Qatar crisis that emerged on the 5th of June in 2017 must be seen as an accumulation of factors leading to the Gulf powers' severing of ties with Qatar. It is Qatar's adoption of an open and independent foreign policy, dating back to 1995, that put Qatar in an untenable position with respect to the geopolitical dominion that the other Gulf powers sought to carve.

According to one of the participants, Qatar decided to pull itself out of the Gulf umbrella headed by Saudi Arabia and draw its own path, while respecting its relationship with its neighbours. Iran is especially an obstacle issue with respect to Qatar's relations with the other countries in the Gulf. In September 2014 for example, Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar called from the platform of the United Nations General Assembly



the Arab States, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in particular to have a direct dialogue with Iran to improve diplomatic relations and solve the regional conflicts through dialogue. He even offered to host this dialogue in Doha. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia identifies the dispute with Iran as one of an ideological struggle for geopolitical supremacy. After the last crisis in the Gulf region, it is clear that the GCC states are no longer as a homogenous an entity however. The Gulf can further be divided into two blocks. The Gulf trio of Saudi-UAE-Bahrain strongly oppose any dialogue or engagement with Iran at the moment at least. The second block of Qatar, Kuwait and Oman are ready to have a dialogue with Iran, especially since these countries already maintain good relationship with Iran in the economic and political spheres.

### The Arab Spring as a Backdrop to the Current Crisis

For over two decades Qatar has been accused of overstepping boundaries in the Gulf by pursuing an independent foreign policy that is often incompatible with the foreign policies of its Gulf neighbours. It is accused of relying on the 'paper of the Arab peoples', until it became an influential player in the region. On the other hand, other Gulf countries have relied on 'building an internal, national orientation' that has strengthened their capability to adopt an approach that enables them to form political alliances, which contribute

to regional and international influence - even to the point of foreign military intervention. For the past decade and a half (1995-2010), Qatar's foreign policy has been neutral, with a focus on resolving conflicts as a key principle, enforcing Article 7 of the Qatari constitution which stipulates that 'the foreign policy of the State shall be based on the principle of the consolidation of international peace and security by promoting peaceful settlement of international disputes.' When the so-called 'Arab Spring' broke out in 2010, Qatar shunned the impartiality that had previously characterised it based on one of its constitution's articles which stipulates: 'supporting the peoples' right to self-determination'. Therefore, Doha adopted a position in favor of Arabs standing up to their tyrannical rulers, and in support of these peoples' demands for freedom and dignity. This shift in the course of Qatar's foreign policy—from neutrality to influence—resulted in Doha playing a leading role in the changes and transformations witnessed in the region at the time. They filled the void created by the absence of conventional regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

The events of the Arab Spring on the one hand, and the preoccupation of some regional powers with domestic concerns on the other hand, opened the door for Doha to enter the fray in an attempt to take over leadership of the region in that period.

### New Features for Saudi Arabia

King Salman's ascension to the top of the power structure in Saudi Arabia in January 2015, and the arrival of the descendants of the founding King Abdulaziz Al Saud to the top ranks in the Kingdom's leadership—through the appointment of emirs Muhammad bin Nayef as Crown Prince, and Muhammad bin Salman as Deputy Crown Prince—changed the equation and shifted balance in the region. This shift became even clearer following the formation of the Riyadh-led Arab coalition in March 2015, and the declaration of war in Yemen against the loyalists of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the allied Houthi group supported by Iran. The war in Yemen is often viewed as simply a 'proxy war' between two regional rivals—Iran and Saudi Arabia—for leadership in the region.

### New Team in the White House

Donald Trump became President of the United States of America in the end of 2016, and built an affinity with Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS), who is mainly a businessman by background like Trump. It seems that the two leaders agreed closely on the geopolitical threat Iran posed in the region, and that countries close to Iran such as Qatar had to be dealt with severely. It was soon after Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia on 20-21 May 2017 that the three Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain) plus Egypt unanimously decided to cut ties with Qatar.

### Turkish position on the Gulf crisis

Since the beginning of the crisis in the Gulf region last June, Turkey called to solve the conflict between the blockade countries and Qatar through dialogue and negotiation. The President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar in July 2017, and offered his mediation as well as his support to the Kuwaiti mediation led by Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait. According to one of the participant, it seems that some parties in this crisis, such as Egypt and the UAE, do not want Ankara to play the role of a mediator and prefer that the solution come from within the GCC community.

Ankara offered its strong support to Doha since day one of the crisis, since Turkey perceives Qatar as one of its key allies. Qatar and Turkey share the same vision on many issues in the region, particularly with regard to events in the Arab spring countries.

In less than 48 hours of the blockade, Turkey sent cargo ships and hundreds of planes loaded with food and medical equipment's to avoid potential food shortages. In addition to this, Turkish exports to Qatar increased by 90 percent since the blockade started, according to statistics released by Turkey's Aegean Exporters' Association. Turkey has a military base in Qatar since last July, and deployed more troops after the crisis erupted. In fact, in an extraordinary session on June 7, two

days after the start of the Gulf crisis, Turkey's parliament ratified two earlier agreements allowing Turkish troops to be deployed in Qatar and another approving an accord between the two countries on military training cooperation. The closure of the Turkish military base was one of 13 demands presented to Qatar by the Saudi-led coalition of countries in order to lift their embargo on Doha.

### Conclusion

The blockade countries have presented to Qatar a list of 13 demands, including shutting down Al Jazeera Media Network 'one of the most important soft powers of Qatar' based in Doha, reducing their relationship with Iran and closing the Turkish military base established last July in Doha. Beyond that, a possible scenario in this crisis would be for the four countries to engage Qatar at the negotiating table. This scenario has so far proven to be improbable. What is more likely though is that Saudi Arabia and the other three parties will continue their embargo on Qatar until Qatar accommodates their thirteen demands, but it seems that Qatar will not accept this list of demands as it affects its sovereignty as an independent state.

Although it is unlikely that Qatar will be expelled from the GCC since this expulsion will need an approval from Kuwait and Oman, the two member

countries in the GCC that are not part of this crisis. Kuwait itself, offered to play the role of mediator in this crisis, but the interests of the bigger powers in bringing Qatar to task, limits its role. Turkey similarly has its role of mediator restricted as it is challenged by states such as Egypt and the UAE who do not wish to see Turkish influence in the region.

Finally, we can conclude that the United States of America remains the single party capable of influencing all parties in this crisis, as it has strong relationships with the GCC countries. It is in America's interest to find a solution to the Gulf-Qatar crisis as soon as possible. The Gulf region contains more than 60% of the energy reserves of the world, and any attempt to destabilize this region will have a negative impact on global security and economy.

Prepared by Dr. Jamal Abdullah



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Seventh Session

**Setting an  
Example: Turkey's  
Humanitarian Role**

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Red Crescent members preparing aid bags at Al-Bab district in Aleppo before the arrival of the first group of civilians who left al-Waer neighborhood in Homs, due to a Russian-backed deal between opposition fighters and the Syrian regime, on March 18, 2017. (AA/ Ensar Özdemir)

*Humanitarian Aid is help and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies. The characteristics that mark it out from other forms of foreign assistance and development aid are that it is intended to be governed by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as it is intended to be short-term in nature and provide for activities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. This session will discuss the responsibilities of humanitarian aid work, the funding for this kind of operations and the struggles to deliver the humanitarian aid in the conflict zones.*

## Discussion themes of the session:

**Emphasising on the human dignity in contemporary world**

**What drives Turkey to be one of the most generous country?**

**Turkey's approach on humanitarian crisis and refugee issues**

**Possibility of becoming a role model for the other countries**

## Summary Setting an Example: Turkey's Humanitarian Role

This session mainly discussed Turkey's current position as a leading humanitarian actor in the international arena. Turkey, as a rising power, has been playing a crucial role in the humanitarian field in the last 15 years, presenting new strategies for humanitarian activism around the world. In 2017 the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report ranked Turkey as the world's second largest humanitarian donor after the U.S. and the world's most generous nation compared to its gross national income. As such, this session discussed how Turkey has reached this position and the potential challenges it faces. The main point made in the discussion was that although Turkey has shouldered a significant part of the financial burden in relation to the refugee crisis, the international community, particularly the EU, has not been involved in burden sharing. One of the main speakers listed the Turkish humanitarian aid in numbers. According to the figures, Turkey has spent 25 to 30 billion USD for Syrian refugees so far, while the EU pledged to pay Turkey 3.4 billion USD as part of the refugee deal reached in 2016. The aid would be used for projects that would increase the quality of life of the refugees living in Turkey. Yet, there has been little to no progress on provisions in the agreement since money under the deal has been delivered at a slow pace, and only partially. Therefore, the EU has abstained from complying with the refugee deal and Western countries are

no different towards most of the humanitarian crises around the world. As mentioned by another speaker who had experience in the field, this attitude can be seen in the latest Myanmar tragedy. Disregarded by many developed countries, Turkey was first to extend its helping hand to the region and its people, once again highlighting the country's prominence in humanitarian aid.

The analysis of the Turkish model demonstrated several distinct features of Turkey's aid campaigns. Firstly, Turkey's approach is a human-centred one and its actions are not based on any calculation of political interest but the stability of the region and wellbeing of the people. Hence, Turkey's priority is the survival of the people facing humanitarian crises. Secondly, Turkey's understanding of humanitarian diplomacy places human beings at the centre of diplomacy, regardless of their nationality, religion or ethnicity. Thirdly, the Turkish model provides a comprehensive and inclusive framework within which both state and non-state agencies like NGOs, charities, businesses and civil society organisations take an active part in an organised manner. Finally, the success of the Turkish model comes from the fact that it does not impose politics on people and does not interfere in countries' decision-making processes, rather focuses on supporting people's lives.



# Setting an Example: Turkey's Humanitarian Role

## Introduction

Turkey's efforts in international humanitarian aid have long been applauded by actors operating in the field of aid. In the closed session, 'Setting an Example: Turkey's Humanitarian Role'; diplomats, human rights activists, representatives from the state and civil-society aid organisations came together with participants from international aid networks and NGOs to discuss the distinctiveness of Turkey's model. Participants made presentations on regions where Turkey has been traditionally active and where it has recently improved its aid operation. It was put forward that Turkey has not been discriminating between the suffering of people on the basis of their race, ethnicity and gender. Later, the relations between Turkey's state and civil society humanitarian aid organisations were juxtaposed for comparison with other states' models. In the closing remarks, how the current Turkish model could be improved was discussed in detail.

## Human Centred Approach

Most of the world's crises now are so intricate that unilateral solutions prove inefficient in addressing them. From weapons of mass destruction to environmental problems, poverty to inequality in distribution of wealth and international terrorism to refugee crises; the world's problems require global and multilateral solutions. For this, the concept of humanitarian diplomacy is essential. Humanitarian diplomacy is the use of diplomatic tools to influence decision makers to ensure adherence to fundamental principles. In other words, it aims at preventing occasions which require humanitarian aid rather than intervening after the eruption of the crisis

to tend the wounds. Turkey is considered a world leader in its human centred approach and humanitarian diplomacy. Its diplomatic effort to convince international actors for establishment of protected zones for refugees in Syria is an example of this.

Moreover, as one participant held, Turkey's human centred approach differs significantly from other aid campaigns on the ground that it does not seek improving economic or political interests through the aid efforts. Therefore, it is not a calculated action but an initiative that concerns only with the relief of the humanitarian sufferings. In this regard, Turkish model does not interfere into countries' domestic decision-making processes and

only focuses on supporting people's lives. Additionally, Turkey's aid concerns do not only cover its immediate neighbours or ethnic and religious hinterland. To this day, Turkey has conducted aid operations in over 160 countries without a consideration of race, religion or gender. Thanks to its increasing capacity and tools, the country has been able to carry out humanitarian diplomacy. And these activities, has turned Turkey into one of the leading actors of the global humanitarian system. Especially, its role of being the number one patron of the Syrian refugees and thereby, being the host of the largest number of refugees have made Turkey a moral authority in humanitarian issues.

## Humanitarian Crises and Turkey

Turkey has traditionally been a country putting a lot of effort in humanitarian aid activities and helping regions/peoples in crisis. Its assistance is provided on the basis of reaching people who suffer from humanitarian catastrophes like natural disasters, war, conflict and poverty regardless of ethnic, cultural, national or religious differences. Turkey's humanitarian activities have intensified in the last decades giving a leading role in the humanitarian field in the world. Moreover, its efforts have expanded across countries and diversified in terms of types of activities. In this sense, a recent report ranked Turkey as the world's second largest humanitarian donor after the U.S. and the world's most generous nation compared to its gross national income after spending around \$6 billion on humanitarian aid in 2016.

Humanitarian aspects of the war in Syria constitute the central component of Turkey's assistance as Turkey bears the brunt of the burden in the refugee crisis and hosts more than 3 million Syrian refugees. Both within Turkey and Syria, many Turkish aid agencies including state and civil society organisations, conduct diversified humanitarian operations to relieve the sufferings of Syrian people. In this line, Turkey was the first country to enter city of Aleppo, Syria to assist the evacuation of people after days-long siege in 2016. But its activities are not limited to Syria. Africa comes

as another area where the aid efforts of Turkey have gained remarkable strength. For instance, the number of TIKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency) offices operating across the African continent has reached to 21 starting from the scratch in 15 years. In this line, Turkey has increased the number of diplomatic representation offices in African countries from 12 Turkish embassies in 2009 to 39 as of 2017. The diplomatic presence contributes to the coordination of the aid assistance programs in the countries. Turkey's recent humanitarian activities cover various countries and regions that have different nationality, ethnic and religious features. For instance, Turkey conducted aid operations after the devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Chile in 2010 and in Japan in 2011. Moreover, Turkey sent humanitarian agencies to help people suffering from typhoon and floods in Philippines in 2013 and Balkan countries. Turkey has also taken part in relief efforts in many conflict-ridden areas such as Iraq, Yemen and Libya in order to diminish the negative effects of the clashes. And, very recently, Turkey sent urgently needed supplies to people in Mexico after the country was hit by a demolishing earthquake.

## State and Civil Society Partnership in Humanitarian Aid

For a long time, Turkey has enjoyed a normative power thanks to its activity in international

humanitarian aid and efficiency of its methods. The country conducts numerous aid operations through its bilateral relations with the developing world as well as taking part in the efforts of international organisations. In addition to the state initiatives in aid, there is a vibrant civil society working in general aid and single-task aid issues. Turkey's position as the most generous state is no surprise when history and culture of humanitarian aid is taken into consideration. It is true that the sector was dormant after the world wars but it has been revived after 1980s. Especially after the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, where both the state and civil society provided help to war-stricken regions, there has been an increasing activity in terms of amount of help and coordination. Yet, the sad memories of Marmara Earthquake have led to a spirit of humanitarian aid which brought the sector to its current state. As to institutionalisation of efforts, changes in the Law of Associations in 2004 is a significant milestone which boosted the number of aid organisations, their numbers of personnel and operation capacity.

It is possible to confidently claim that state aid agencies and civil-society aid actors in Turkey have been collaborating more each passing year. The relations are mature in contrast to many other countries yet, there is always room for improvement. For their international operations carried out in hard

political environments, the state has been a source of support for civil-society aid actors. The ministry of foreign affairs of Turkey has been covering them with diplomatic support where needed. Furthermore, more experienced state organisations such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) share their field experiences with civil-society organisations and serve as facilitators where needed.

Many participants raised concern over the fact that although the humanitarian aid is alive and booming in Turkey, what is urgent is a mechanism to increase the level of cooperation between civil society organisations operating in the humanitarian sector. In order to coordinate and pool the efforts of several humanitarian aid organisations, which mostly work independently and prevent the loss of professional experience over time, a framework organisation for humanitarian aid organisations would be helpful. Such an organisation would be beneficial in terms of reducing fix costs of conducting international aid operations and sharing the know-how of more experienced aid institutions with newcomers to the field. Furthermore, such a framework organisation would ensure the stability of the operations and development of coherent strategies on the ground while allowing faster action in dire circumstances. Additionally, it would

lead to the advancement of some of the issues related to improvement of aid operations such as domestic and international lobbying and education of the necessary personnel in the sector.

### Global Perspectives of Humanitarian Aid

Lack of cooperation and collaboration among world countries for settling humanitarian issues is a significant challenge. Shortage of burden-sharing mechanisms cause some countries to shoulder the most burden on their own while others remain indifferent on the side-line. Most international actors' lack of effort in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Syria, for instance, aggravate the situation further for the people who actually experience sufferings on the ground as well as the negative implications and immeasurable consequences on the regional countries. For instance; Turkey, as being one of the countries putting enormous effort to tackle this humanitarian crisis, has spent more than thirty billion dollars for the Syrian refugees. However, the EU has acted slowly to share the burden of the refugee crisis. In this sense, the EU has failed to fully comply with the EU and Turkey refugee deal of 2016, which required the EU to send 3.4 billion dollars to Turkey for the use of refugees. The EU has not entirely kept its promise so

far. One of the participants of the session claimed that while the EU represents itself as the moral authority over humanitarian issues and human rights, the union shows reluctance and indifference to most tragic issues, as in the case of refugee crisis. Additionally, the EU's attitude towards refugees in the member countries and overall policies regarding the refugee problem reveals ineffectiveness and aloofness of their approaches. Dreadful camp conditions, treatment of refugees in detention centres and lack of concern for missing refugee children are some of the imperfect implementations of the EU's refugee policy. In another instance; in Myanmar, the international community preferred to remain silent and kept a blind eye to the persecution of Rohingya people for a long while. This is one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes and mass migrations in the continent. Turkish state agencies and civil society organisations were the first to provide humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya people.

Another significant issue related to the world's humanitarian approach is the problem of high costs emerging out of logistic and operational spending during aid efforts. Extreme flight prices, exorbitant staff expenses and other logistics-related costs constitute the better part of the budget allocated for the humanitarian

assistance. Such inefficiency decreases the effective use of the budget while causing money collected for the people in need to be wasted. As one of the participant maintained, the level of operational costs of UN reaches to 60 percent of the total collected grant. In this sense, Turkey stands as a good example of how a good humanitarian assistance operation can be handled with low expenditures. By avoiding from holding luxury and fancy fund drive and aid campaigns and by minimising the costs of stuff and transportation through partnering with the local organisations, Turkey manages to keep logistic costs of aid operations at around 5 percent of the budget. This means that other countries or agencies can adopt more efficient methods in order to enhance their capacity. Turkish approach, with its distinguishing features, has attracted other world countries and as one of the participant held, Colombia sent a high delegation to Turkey to observe the Turkish model over how to manage high number of refugees.

### Future of Humanitarian Aid

Turkey with its vast experience in humanitarian assistance, has been a staunch supporter of the international efforts to overcome the difficulties in the operation of aid institutions. One relatively recent example of this is the World Humanitarian Summit which was

hosted by Turkey in May 2016. In the summit, strategies for surmounting the problems facing the international aid system were discussed by the leading figures in the field of humanitarian aid under the leadership of the UN.

As a result of the discussion in the session, it was a united issue that in order to fix the inherent problems of the humanitarian aid and make them more efficient in the future, the first measure should be the education of the next generation of humanitarian aid. Lack of personnel who have the necessary education and experience in operations, logistics, and communication, constitutes a threat to the future of the sector. Steps should be taken to develop professional human resources in these areas. Another area that requires immediate attention is the development of legal frameworks to increase aid organisations' capacity and freedom of movement. In parallel to the increased capacity, there is a dire need of increased oversight of donation, a more transparent system which can be scrutinised from end to end and mechanisms of accountability to be able to hold relevant officials responsible in cases of misconduct.

### Conclusion

The session provided better insights into how a more efficient and functioning humanitarian

aid model can be achieved, and which aspects of the current Turkish model can be improved and transformed into other countries and areas. In this regard, the participants agreed that a Turkish approach to the humanitarian assistance differs essentially from other methods by putting greater emphasis on the human-centred approach. By accelerating the humanitarian diplomacy in cases of conflicts and wars, Turkey pioneers the aid efforts in many humanitarian crises. Moreover, the coordination and collaboration between civil society and state agencies should be further improved and strengthened in order to act faster, reduce fix costs and share the experience of others. Additionally, cooperation between countries should be increased since some countries are incommensurably inundated by the costs and burdens of the humanitarian crises. Particularly, wealthier countries should be more actively concerned and engaged in humanitarian crises outside their territories.

Prepared by Muhammed Lütfi Türkcan  
and Ozan Ahmet Çetin





## Memories from the TRT World Forum 2017





Prime Minister Undersecretary, Fuat Oktay, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Bekir Bozdağ, Prime Minister of Turkey, Binali Yıldırım, Director General and Chairman of TRT, İbrahim Eren and Co-founder of the Ennahdha Party, Tunisia, Rached Ghannouchi (from left to right) waiting for opening ceremony of TRT World Forum.



Director General and Chairman of TRT, İbrahim Eren talking with Co-founder of the Ennahdha Party, Tunisia, Rached Ghannouchi after he arrived to the place where TRT World Forum is held.



Other participants of TRT World Forum 2017 welcome President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and First Lady, Emine Erdoğan.





President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and First Lady, Emine Erdoğan and Former Prime Minister of Spain José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero are in their seats for the Keynote Speech given by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.



Many participant from various institutions attended TRT World Forum 2017.





People in break are enjoying to participate TRT World Forum 2017.



Staffs of TRT World guiding to the participants of TRT World Forum 2017.



A man looking through studies of TRT World Research Centre.





During the forum, questions asked by participants to the speakers.



TRT World Forum 2017 witnessed a broad range of participants from various backgrounds.



Participants and speakers conversing during the coffee breaks.





Attendees collect their badges at the entrance before TRT World Forum kicks off.







Participants awaiting the start of the upcoming sessions at TRT World Forum 2017.



Director of News and Programmes at TRT World, Fatih Er, being interviewed about TRT World Forum 2017.



During the forum, questions asked by participants to the speakers.



Different media channels showed interest to TRT World Forum 2017.



Prime Minister Undersecretary, Fuat Oktay gave interview to Ali Mustafa from TRT World.



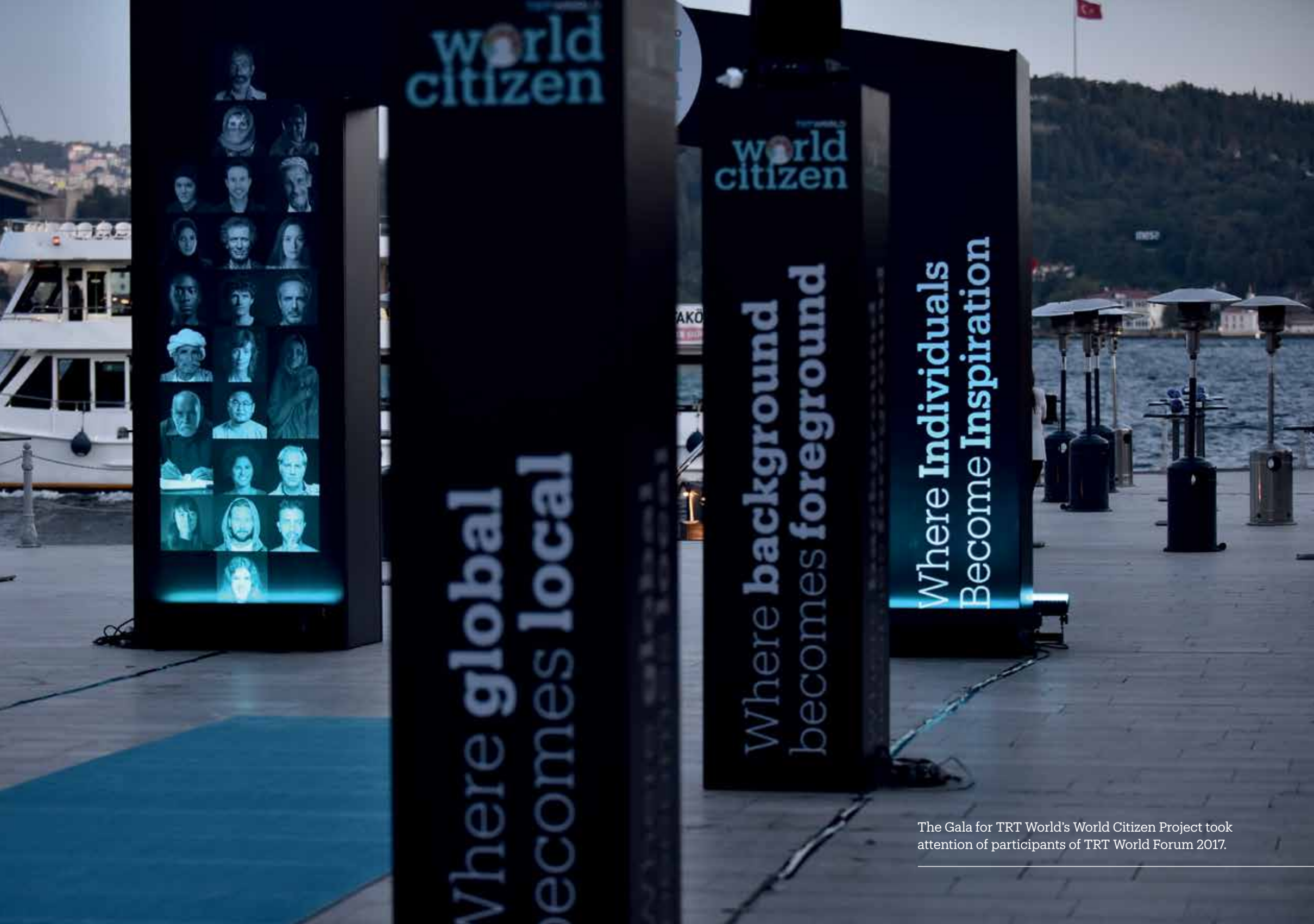


Backstage at TRT World Forum 2017 as staff followed and updated our social media channels.





TRT World's humanitarian project World Citizen was presented at Esma Sultan.



The Gala for TRT World's World Citizen Project took attention of participants of TRT World Forum 2017.





18 - 19 October 2017  
[forum.trtworld.com](http://forum.trtworld.com)  
Istanbul



