

A WORLD AT BREAKING POINT

MANAGING CRISES
AND TRANSFORMATIONS

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A World at Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations

29-30 November, 2024 | Istanbul

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A World at Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations

29-30 November, 2024 | Istanbul

This book features summaries and highlights from the keynote speeches, along with eight public and eight expert roundtable sessions from the TRT World Forum 2024. The views, themes, and discussion points presented in this publication are solely those of the speakers and participants at the Forum, and do not reflect the official view of the TRT World Research Centre.



Contents

Executive Summary	9
-------------------	---

Inaugural Speeches 16

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	17
<i>President, Republic of Türkiye</i>	
Fahrettin Altun	23
<i>Professor, Head of Communications, Republic of Türkiye</i>	
Mehmet Zahid Sobacı	27
<i>Professor, Director General, TRT</i>	

Public Sessions 30

Session 1	
Elections 2024 in US and EU Members:	31
What Lies Ahead for Global Democracy?	
Akif Çağatay Kılıç	33
<i>Ambassador, Chief Advisor to the President on Foreign Policy and Security, Republic of Türkiye</i>	
Ivo Josipović	34
<i>Professor, Former President, Republic of Croatia</i>	
Matteo Mecacci	35
<i>Former Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</i>	
Valeria Giannotta	36
<i>PhD, Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye</i>	

Session 2

Transforming Tomorrow: The Power of Eco-Regeneration

37

Keynote Speech by Murat Kurum

39

Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Republic of Türkiye

Bhuwan Shukla

43

Senior General Manager, International Business, EKI Energy Services

Christopher Dekki

44

Manager, Global Climate Cooperation, Environmental Defense Fund

Oktay Tanrısever

45

Professor, Middle East Technical University

Stephen John Cahill

46

Representative and Country Director, United Nations World Food Programme Türkiye Country Office

Session 3

Türkiye's Path Forward: Fostering Dialogue and Containing Global Crises

47

Bruno Maçães

49

PhD; Former Minister of European Affairs, Portugal

Burhanettin Duran

50

Professor; Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Matthew Bryza

51

Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan

Nathalie Tocci

52

PhD; Director, The Istituto Affari Internazionali

Session 4

War and Order: Navigating Geopolitical Shifts in a Changing World

53

Keynote Speech by Hakan Fidan

55

PhD; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Fawaz A. Gerges

59

Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science

Ghassan Salamé

60

Professor, SciencesPo Paris

Hina Rabbani Khar

61

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Kılıç Buğra Kanat

62

Associate Professor; Research Director, SETA Foundation

Thomas Greminger

63

Ambassador, PhD; Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Session 5

Smart Tech, Big Issues: Navigating AI's Impact on Politics and Society

64

Keynote Speech by Mehmet Fatih Kacır	66
<i>Minister of Industry and Technology, Republic of Türkiye</i>	
Adam Mosam	69
<i>Founder, Channel 1</i>	
Louise Burke	70
<i>Chief Executive Officer, The Open Data Institute</i>	
Mark Coeckelbergh	71
<i>Professor; Co-founder, Using AI for Good; High Level Expert Group on AI, European Commission</i>	
Osman Gazi Güçlütürk	72
<i>Assistant Professor, Galatasaray University</i>	
Pascale Fung	73
<i>Chair Professor and Director, Center for Artificial Intelligence Research</i>	

Session 6

Media Distortion Exposed: Uncovering the Forces Behind Polarisation

74

Keynote Speech by Fahrettin Altun	76
<i>Professor; Head of Communications, Republic of Türkiye</i>	
Claudio Cappon	79
<i>Secretary General, COPEAM</i>	
Gilles Marchand	80
<i>PhD; Former Director General, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation</i>	
Gregoire Ndjaka	81
<i>Director General, African Union of Broadcasting</i>	
Ziad Makary	82
<i>Minister of Information, Republic of Lebanon</i>	

Session 7

The Test of International Law: Addressing Gross Violations of Human Rights in Conflicts

83

Carmel Agius

85

Judge, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; Former President of the ICTY

Cüneyt Yüksel

86

Professor; Chairman, The Justice Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Mohamed Badar

87

Professor; Comparative and International Criminal Law, Northumbria University

Omar Suleiman

88

PhD; Civil Right Activist

S. Michael Lynk

89

Professor; Former Human Rights Special Rapporteur

Session 8

Addressing Global Economic Uncertainty: Strategies for Resilience

90

Keynote Speech by Mehmet Şimşek

92

Minister of Treasury and Finance, Republic of Türkiye

Adam Yousef

94

PhD; Head of Economics, Greater London Authority

Andrew Caruana-Galizia

95

Head of Europe and Eurasia, World Economic Forum

Dalia Grybauskaitė

96

PhD; Former President, Republic of Lithuania

Vicky Pryce

97

Chief Economic Adviser, The Centre for Economics and Business Research

Expert Roundtables

98**Session 1****The New Actor in the Global Defense Industry: Türkiye****99****Session 2****Emerging Multipolarity in the Asia Pacific:
Different Players, Different Layers****102****Session 3****The Russia-Ukraine War: How to Bridge the Divide?****106****Session 4****Africa at the Epicenter of Global Rivalries****110****Session 5****New European Security Framework
and Strategic Autonomy****114****Session 6****Geopolitical Equations in the Middle East:
Gaza Beyond the Headlines****118****Session 7****Building New Frontiers: Competing Corridors
in Global Connectivity****122****Session 8****Central Asia Crossroads: Enhancing Partnerships
Amidst Global Currents****126**

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Influential leaders, intellectuals, and experts from around the world convened in Istanbul for **the TRT World Forum 2024**. Held for the eighth time this year under the theme **"A World at Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations,"** the forum took place on November 29-30, gaining global attention as a platform for exploring solutions to pressing global issues. Nearly 150 speakers from over 30 countries and more than 1,500 participants engaged in two days of discussions, fostering international solidarity and understanding.

The opening of the TRT World Forum 2024 featured a compelling address by **the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**, highlighting Türkiye's steadfast commitment to justice and peace on the global stage. President Erdoğan emphasised the forum's role in fostering dialogue and diverse perspectives to tackle pressing global crises, including wars, conflicts, and inequalities.

Focusing on the atrocities in Gaza, President Erdoğan condemned the complicity of international institutions and media in enabling oppression through misinformation and inaction. He called for an immediate ceasefire and reaffirmed Türkiye's readiness to take decisive action to stop the genocide. Erdoğan stressed that the current UN system, dominated by five permanent members, is obsolete and incapable of addressing modern challenges, calling for urgent reform.

President Erdoğan also underlined Türkiye's dual commitment to justice and truth, supported by cultural and media initiatives. TRT, as a vital platform, amplifies the voices of oppressed communities, particularly those in Gaza, ensuring their narratives reach a global audience. He reiterated that Türkiye's leadership remains a beacon of hope, offering a roadmap for peace, justice, and stability in a turbulent world.

Similarly, **Head of Communications Prof. Fahrettin Altun**

highlighted Türkiye's dual struggle for justice and truth on the global stage under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership. Prof. Altun described President Erdoğan's political journey as a testament to his commitment to eradicating injustices and championing human rights, both domestically and internationally. Türkiye's efforts, including dismantling barriers in education and reducing economic dependency, have positioned the nation as a leading regional and global player advocating for fairness and truth.

Prof. Altun criticised the global inaction in the face of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning the complicity of Western governments and media in enabling Israel's actions. He praised President Erdoğan's unyielding stance on international platforms, urging an end to genocide and advocating for a more equitable global order. Prof. Altun underscored the President's role in defending the oppressed worldwide, confronting anti-migrant and discriminatory policies, and championing humanity's shared rights.

Prof. Altun also addressed systemic global challenges, from war to climate change, positioning Türkiye as a beacon of hope grounded in its humanitarian and Islamic values. He underscored the nation's leadership in shaping a fairer media ecosystem and combating disinformation, underpinned by robust investments in technology and communication. By fostering media literacy and promoting factual reporting, Türkiye aspires to build a healthier global communication framework.

Prof. Mehmet Zahid Sobacı, the Director General of TRT, highlighted the growing impact of global crises, stating, "The foundations of the international system are being deeply shaken." He emphasised that many of these issues are unfolding in regions closely connected to Türkiye, which are marked by complex and multifaceted challenges. Yet, Türkiye views its engagement with regional and global issues not as an option but as a duty and a historic responsibility. At the heart of its ability to navigate these

trials lies its unwavering leadership. Under the guidance of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye's distinctive political and diplomatic approach not only safeguards its national rights and interests but also presents a vision for a more equitable world."

Following these compelling addresses, the forum proceeded ahead with a dynamic series of discussions that delved into some of the most pressing global challenges, ranging from the future of democracy to climate resilience and humanitarian crises, as well as Türkiye's role in shaping the international order. Distinguished speakers brought forward a wide array of perspectives, fostering a constructive dialogue aimed at addressing critical global crises.

Elections 2024 in the US and EU Members: What Lies Ahead for Global Democracy?

The first public session featured notable experts examining the implications of recent elections on the global democratic landscape. Ambassador Akif Çağatay Kılıç, Chief Advisor to the President of Türkiye on Foreign Policy and Security, highlighted the pervasive threat of misinformation and disinformation, which, he noted, often fuel violence and societal unrest.

Prof. Ivo Josipović, Former President of Croatia, emphasised the growing risks of extremism within the EU, linking the future of the European Union—not just as an economic entity but also as a peace project—to its ability to counter this rising tide.

Similarly, Matteo Mecacci, Former Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, questioned whether far-right actors would adhere to constitutional law and uphold media freedom, or attempt to subvert democratic principles.

Dr. Valeria Giannotta, Director of the CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye, offered a broader perspective, noting that *"The global system has struggled to provide sustainable solutions,"* and highlighted the intersection of globalisation, instability, and wars as key challenges to democracy worldwide.

Transforming Tomorrow: The Power of Eco-Regeneration

The second public session began with a keynote speech by H.E. Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change of Türkiye, who framed the discussion within the broader context of the world's ongoing crises. Minister Kurum underscored the urgent need to redefine humanity's relationship with nature, stating, *"Our resources are limited; we must prioritise transforming and reintegrating them into the economy. The Zero-Waste Movement is a crucial step toward achieving this goal."* He also highlighted the interconnections between geopolitical tensions, humanitarian crises, and the climate emergency, asserting that fragmented approaches would fail to address these multifaceted challenges.

Bhuwan Shukla, Senior General Manager at EKI Energy Services, stressed the importance of involving local communities in the implementation of climate projects to ensure their effectiveness.

Christopher Dekki, Manager of Global Climate Cooperation at the Environmental Defense Fund, highlighted the need for tangible results from multilateral climate conferences, urging more action-oriented approaches.

Stephen John Cahill, Country Director of the United Nations World Food Programme Türkiye Country Office, highlighted the devastating impact of climate change on global poverty, noting that it is a primary driver of instability in food prices, which disproportionately affects vulnerable populations.

Adding to the discussion, Prof. Oktay Tanrısever from Middle East Technical University explained Türkiye's need to balance its energy mix, reducing reliance on fossil fuels while supporting renewable energy with reliable baseload electricity. He noted that the construction of a nuclear power plant in Türkiye marks a significant step toward integrating renewable energy more effectively into its system.

Türkiye's Path Forward: Fostering Dialogue and Containing Global Crises

The third session of the first day focused on Türkiye's

evolving role as a mediator and peacemaker in global conflicts. Prof. Burhanettin Duran, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, underscored the country's increasing influence in conflict resolution under President Erdoğan's leadership. He noted, *"Leadership diplomacy is important; President Erdoğan's engagement with world leaders from Russia-Ukraine to Somalia-Ethiopia demonstrates his effectiveness."*

Dr. Nathalie Tocci, Director of The Istituto Affari Internazionali, lauded Türkiye's ability to anticipate and adapt to global shifts, stating that the country had recognised the emergence of multipolarity far ahead of many European nations.

Dr. Bruno Maçães, Former Minister of European Affairs of Portugal, highlighted Türkiye's unique approach, contrasting it with the West's tendency toward civilisational conflicts. He noted that Türkiye's balanced framework allows it to engage constructively with multiple sides.

Matthew Bryza, Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, illustrated Türkiye's strategic acumen, citing its role in facilitating a significant prisoner exchange between Ukraine and Russia. He remarked, *"Türkiye has proven its strategic skills, balancing a principled position by supporting Ukraine and maintaining diplomatic dialogue with Moscow."*

Overall, the opening day of **the TRT World Forum 2024** set a high standard for intellectual discourse and collaboration, addressing the urgent need for global action on democratic governance, environmental sustainability, and peace-making. The discussions underscored Türkiye's pivotal role in navigating global challenges while offering actionable insights for a more stable and fair future.

The second day of the TRT World Forum 2024 was marked by a series of thought-provoking discussions across multiple sessions, highlighting critical global challenges and their implications. Distinguished speakers shared their insights on geopolitics, technological innovation, media ethics, international law, and economic resilience, offering diverse perspectives on the pressing issues of our time.

War and Order: Navigating Geopolitical Shifts in a Changing World

This session opened with a keynote speech by H.E. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, who addressed the multifaceted challenges facing the international system. Minister Fidan highlighted Türkiye's role as a pivotal actor in achieving peace and stability within a volatile geopolitical landscape. He stated, *"The international system faces a multitude of political, military, economic, environmental, technological, and social challenges," emphasising Türkiye's proactive approach to diagnosing global problems and providing solutions. He also pointed to the Gaza crisis, underscoring that "The root cause is the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel. Without justice based on a two-state solution, no lasting peace can be achieved."*

From SciencesPo Paris, Emeritus Prof. Ghassan Salame offered his assessment of the current international system, highlighting three defining features: "the deregulation of force, where legitimizing military actions has become increasingly flexible since the Iraq war; diplomatic opportunism, allowing states to build strong trade relations with one country while maintaining poor geostrategic ties with the same; and the paralysis of international organisations, exemplified by the U.S. using its veto power 49 times in the UNSC."

Prof. Fawaz A. Gerges from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) drew attention to the rise of new fascist movements and stressed the urgent need for global leadership to address these threats.

Amb. Dr. Thomas Greminger, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, addressed the challenges of navigating a chaotic multipolar world, stating, *"We don't see positive rule-shaping forces."*

Hina Rabbani Khar, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, expressed concern the loss of clear global objectives, observing, *"During the World Wars, we knew what we were fighting for. Now, we don't. Everyone is fighting for exceptionalism"*.

Assoc. Prof. Kılıç Buğra Kanat, Research Director at the SETA Foundation, highlighted the decline of major global

powers and the rise of middle powers, emphasising Türkiye's role as a stabilising force in regional conflicts.

Smart Tech, Big Issues: Navigating AI's Impact on Politics and Society

H.E. Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Minister of Industry and Technology of the Republic of Türkiye, opened this session by highlighting both the transformative potential and ethical dilemmas of AI. He stated, *"Much of AI development is driven by private companies whose primary objectives often revolve around profit maximisation. Technology is being used to kill innocents in Palestine."* Minister Kacır also emphasised the importance of Türkiye's youth, describing them as the nation's greatest asset in meeting the challenges of the AI era.

Asst. Prof. Osman Gazi Güçlütürk from Galatasaray University stressed the necessity of a new legislative framework for AI, particularly to address risks such as job losses and industry disruptions.

Louise Burke, CEO of The Open Data Institute, shared the UK's initiative to establish a National Data Library, aimed at consolidating datasets for public benefit.

Prof. Mark Coeckelbergh, a member of the European Commission's High-Level Expert Group on AI, touched upon the importance of ethical considerations in AI development, advocating for comprehensive and societal discussions beyond technical solutions.

Adam Mosam, Founder of Channel 1, reflected on the transformative forces shaping the American society including government, technology, media, and finance.

Prof. Pascale Fung, Chair Professor and Director of the Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research, called for inclusivity in AI development, ensuring that underrepresented communities and the Global South are not left behind.

Media Distortion Exposed: Uncovering the Forces Behind Polarisation

Prof. Fahrettin Altun, Head of Communications for the Republic of Türkiye, delivered a compelling address, criticising the role of mainstream media in manipulating global information flows. He noted, "Conventional media com-

panies and social media platforms manipulate the global flow of information, increasing polarisation and divisions worldwide." Prof. Altun reiterated President Erdoğan's call for a fairer world and stressed the need for creating a just media environment.

Ziad Makary, Minister of Information for Republic of Lebanon, shared his country's challenges in navigating misinformation during the conflict, balancing freedom of speech with the need to combat disinformation.

Gilles Marchand, Former Director General of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, highlighted *"Polarisation arises from a lack of trust, which underscores the need for balanced information and dialogue."*

Gregoire Ndjaka, Director General of the African Union of Broadcasting, recounted how disinformation played a significantly adverse role in the Rwandan genocide, illustrating the dangers of unchecked media influence.

From his end, Secretary General, COPEAM, Claudio Cappon, warned against the drop in media standards, emphasising that "a shift is occurring in professional journalism, particularly regarding the media's role. The most significant concern is that information, at least in my country, is becoming increasingly emotional, I would even describe this phenomenon as a form of emotional doping."

The Test of International Law: Addressing Gross Violations of Human Rights in Conflicts

Prof. Cüneyt Yüksel, Chairman of the Justice Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, described the critical juncture international humanitarian law faces in light of the Gaza conflict, calling for a reflection on its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Professor Mohamed Badar from Northumbria University underscored that while such cases "take years to resolve, they ultimately make an impact, with the ICJ playing a crucial role in documenting history."

Carmel Agius, Former President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), expressed concern over the ICC's slow decision-making processes, which hinder timely responses during urgent crises.

Dr. Omar Suleiman, Civil Rights Activist, criticised the international system, stating, *"The problem is not Netanyahu alone; the problem is Israel. The UN is taken hostage by the US."*

Prof. S. Michael Lynk, Former Human Rights Special Rapporteur, highlighted the disparity between the Global North's responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the situation in Gaza, emphasising the need for consistent international accountability.

Addressing Global Economic Uncertainty: Strategies for Resilience

Economic resilience in an era of global uncertainty was the focus of the session *"Addressing Global Economic Uncertainty: Strategies for Resilience."* H.E. Mehmet Şimşek, Türkiye's Minister of Treasury and Finance, opened the discussion by highlighting Türkiye's potential as an investment hub, driven by robust public finances and strategic location. Şimşek underscored Türkiye's extensive free trade network and its strategic negotiations with GCC and Central Asian countries. He noted, *"We have 54 free trade agreements, including a customs union with the EU, covering 62% of our exports."*

Vicky Pryce, Chief Economic Adviser at The Centre for Economics and Business Research, remarked on the U.S.'s increasingly inward-focused policies under both the Biden and Trump administrations.

Dr. Dalia Grybauskaitė, Former President of Lithuania, highlighted Trump's unpredictability in decision-making, while Dr. Adam Yousef, Head of Economics at the Greater London Authority, warned of the potential harm tariffs could inflict on global trade. Andrew Caruana-Galizia of the World Economic Forum advised against retaliatory measures, urging constructive alternatives to protectionist policies.

Throughout the forum, **expert roundtable discussions** provided a platform for in-depth engagement on regional and thematic issues. The first discussion was themed **"The New Actor in the Global Defence Industry: Türkiye,"** and highlighted the dramatic evolution of Türkiye's defence sector since 1974, with a major acceleration after 2003. Through significant investments in self-reliance

and technology, Türkiye has positioned companies like ASELSAN, TUSAŞ, and ROKETSAN as global leaders, exporting advanced defence systems to over 90 countries while supporting NATO and forging strategic partnerships with allies like North Macedonia and Turkic states. Despite challenges such as reliance on foreign semiconductors and energy security, Türkiye addresses these issues through innovation, local investments, and training. With a goal of ranking among the world's top 30 defence firms, Türkiye is driving economic growth and enhancing its global influence.

The second roundtable discussion was titled **"Emerging Multipolarity in the Asia Pacific: Different Players, Different Layers,"** and examined the region's transition towards multipolarity amid intensifying U.S.-China rivalry. While ASEAN and BRICS+ underscore the rise of regional cooperation and the Global South's influence, the bipolar dynamic between the U.S. and China heightens tensions, necessitating trust-building and collaboration. Countries like Japan, Indonesia, and Australia are diversifying partnerships to navigate this rivalry, emphasising independent agency over rigid alignments. The session highlighted the importance of balancing competition with cooperation, fostering inclusive frameworks, and preserving a rules-based order to ensure stability and prosperity in the evolving Asia-Pacific landscape.

The third roundtable, **"The Russia-Ukraine War: How to Bridge the Divide?"** explored Türkiye's pivotal role as a mediator in the conflict, balancing ties with both Russia and NATO while supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity. The session stressed the importance of integrating military and political solutions, alongside human rights and women's empowerment, to address immediate challenges and ensure sustainable peace. Proposals included leveraging multilateral frameworks, addressing root causes, and investing in post-war recovery, with a focus on infrastructure and social capital to build long-term stability.

The fourth roundtable, **"Africa at the Epicentre of Global Rivalries,"** highlighted Africa's vast economic potential and its strategic importance amid growing competition among global powers like China, Russia, the U.S., France, and Türkiye. While external interests bring opportunities and risks, Africa's underutilised resources and fragment-

ed markets hinder its development. Initiatives like AfCF-TA aim to unify the continent, counter external pressures, and promote resilience. The discussion stressed the importance of robust leadership, institutional reforms, and empowering Africa's youth to transform the continent into a development zone while safeguarding its sovereignty and autonomy.

The fifth roundtable, **"New European Security Framework and Strategic Autonomy,"** examined the impact of the Ukraine war on Europe's security architecture. The conflict exposed vulnerabilities and pushed the EU's shift toward strategic autonomy, though financial constraints, national divergences, and structural issues remain challenges. NATO remains central to European security, but enhanced EU-NATO collaboration and closer ties with Türkiye are essential for addressing emerging threats and bolstering regional stability. Strengthening internal cohesion, increasing defence investments, and adopting a unified strategy are critical for safeguarding Europe's security in an evolving geopolitical landscape.

The sixth roundtable, **"Geopolitical Equations in the Middle East: Gaza Beyond the Headlines,"** highlighted the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, marked by a devastating blockade, destruction of infrastructure, and dire shortages of basic necessities. International legal bodies have been criticised for failing to hold Israel accountable, while U.S. support perpetuates impunity. The session underscored shifting global condemnation of Israel's actions, contrasting Western double standards, and the need for accurate media narratives and decisive international action to address the atrocities and work towards lasting peace and stability in the region.

The seventh roundtable, **"Building New Frontiers: Competing Corridors in Global Connectivity,"** explored the intense global competition to develop infrastructure projects that drive economic growth, enhance geopolitical influence, and secure strategic resources. Türkiye, leveraging its strategic location, plays a pivotal role with initiatives like the Development Road and Middle Corridor, fostering regional stability and energy security. While connectivity projects promote cooperation, they also face risks such as cybersecurity threats, financial instability, and geopolitical rivalries. Türkiye's approach balances competition

with cooperation, fostering multilateral partnerships that ensure long-term benefits. As global connectivity continues to evolve, adaptability and sustainability will be crucial for the success of these projects, with Türkiye's role as a strategic hub remaining indispensable in an increasingly interconnected world.

The eighth and final roundtable, **"Central Asia Crossroads: Enhancing Partnerships Amidst Global Currents,"** focused on the region's strategic role as a key global trade hub shaped by cultural ties, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and regional initiatives like the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS). Discussions highlighted growing intra-regional trade, led by Uzbekistan's proactive efforts, and collaborative solutions for shared challenges like water management and climate change. Balancing relations with major powers while advancing integration through economic zones and energy networks is essential for Central Asia to solidify its position as a dynamic and cooperative global hub.

All these roundtable sessions facilitated candid discussions on pressing global concerns, adhering to the Chatham House Rule.

The **TRT World Forum 2024** concluded with a call for collective action, structural reforms, and principled leadership to address global crises. Prominent figures from politics, academia, and media ranging from Türkiye's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Hakan Fidan, former President of Croatia Ivo Josipović, Lithuania's former President Dr. Dalia Grybauskaitė, Lebanon's Minister of Information Ziad Makary, to American civil rights activist Omar Suleiman, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Hina Rabbani Khar, Former Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lebanon Ghassan Salame. participated to the proceedings.

By bringing together diverse voices, the forum charted pathways toward a more equitable, sustainable, and stable world. Gratitude is extended to all esteemed speakers and participants for their invaluable contributions to this vital discourse.

Inaugural Speeches

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Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Inaugural Speech

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

President, Republic of Türkiye

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has served as the President of Türkiye since August 10, 2014, and is the first President of the Republic of Türkiye elected by popular vote. He is also the founder and Chairman of the Justice and Development Party. The first major breakthrough in Mr. Erdoğan's career was his election to the office of the Mayor of Metropolitan İstanbul. There, he addressed chronic problems facing the city, such as access to clean water, sanitation and traffic congestion. Prior to his presidency, he served as Prime Minister from 2003 to 2014. During his tenure, he addressed many issues ranging from democratisation to the economy; expanding the democratic rights of Kurds, Alawites and minorities in the country, as well as overseeing an increase in per capita income from \$3,500 to almost \$11,000. Leading a country in one of the most volatile regions of the world, he has been a staunch supporter of regional initiatives and reform in international institutions. President Erdoğan was sworn in on July 9, 2018, as the first President of the new Presidential System, which Türkiye adopted following a constitutional amendment approved by a referendum on April 16, 2017.

Dear Participants of the TRT World Forum, Valued Members of the Business, Media, and Academic Communities, Distinguished Guests, I extend my heartfelt greetings to you all. I would like to warmly welcome you, our esteemed guests, who have honoured this forum by coming from different parts of our country and the world to our beautiful İstanbul — the meeting point of civilisations, cultures, and people.

TRT World Forum, which has now become a distinguished brand in its field, is being held for the 8th time this year. I am deeply pleased to be here with such valuable participants who refuse to remain indifferent to the future of the world.

At the outset, I want to express a fundamental truth: our public broadcaster, TRT, is one of Türkiye's most prestigious institutions with its responsible, inclusive, human-centred, and value-oriented programming. TRT World Forum, on the other hand, is a platform that brings diversity to the global intellectual landscape. We consider this forum not

merely as a space for discussion but as a platform of will-power where solutions to the world's problems are materialised.

We are delighted to see that this platform, which addresses critical issues on an intellectual foundation, reaches more people every year, expanding its impact. I learned that this year's forum is hosting academics, politicians, civil society representatives, journalists, businesspeople, and opinion leaders from over 30 countries, in addition to Türkiye. Events like this, which break down barriers between people, are of critical importance in addressing global issues that affect the future of all humanity. The more we communicate and discuss on a shared platform based on mutual respect, the closer we come to finding solutions.

This year's theme, *"A World at a Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations,"* clearly underlines the need to discuss the profound problems facing the world and its transformations. This theme also reminds us that the current system is unsustainable and that humanity needs a fairer order.

During the forum, experts will address issues threatening our world and evaluate the steps that need to be taken to resolve them. I hope the meetings, which will cover topics such as technology, geopolitics, war, security, climate change, energy, economy, media, broadcasting, international law, politics, and diplomacy, will yield beneficial outcomes.

As we always say, the spark of truth emerges from the clash of ideas. I hope that the views shared by our participants will offer innovative and effective solutions to the challenging issues of our time.

I wholeheartedly congratulate TRT, which serves both as a repository of memory and a forward-looking institution, as well as the TRT management and everyone who contributed to organising this excellent program.

Distinguished Guests, today, the world is writhing in the grip of wars, conflicts, violations, and inequalities, enduring a profound crisis of conscience and leadership. Wherever we turn, we see instability, tragedy, and deepening injustice.

es. On opposite ends of the same city, two entirely different lives are being lived. In one neighbouring country, prosperity and wealth prevail, while in the other, millions of people struggle with hunger and poverty. From trade to diplomacy, competition between states is becoming increasingly destructive and aggressive. Events that might inspire hope and allow us to look to the future with optimism are becoming fewer by the day.

It is undeniable that humanity stands at a turning point. Events that will affect not just the next 5–10 years but the futures of our children and grandchildren are unfolding. Ongoing humanitarian crises from Gaza to Ukraine, from West Africa to South Asia, repeatedly highlight the fragility of the current world order in stark terms. Yet, these crises also serve as undeniable calls for stronger solidarity for the shared future of humanity.

As I often say, every crisis is also an opportunity — a window to justice, peace, tranquillity, security, and stability. For those who can seize it, every crisis holds the potential to herald a new era and a fresh beginning. History is replete with countless examples of this. One of the most significant outcomes of the Second World War, which claimed millions of lives, was the establishment of the United Nations system — the broadest platform where countries, large and small, could come together.

However, can we continue with the current structure of the United Nations? The answer is no. The United Nations must be reformed entirely. The world cannot be left at the mercy of five permanent members. This change is urgently needed. Five permanent members and 15 temporary members — this is not sustainable. The world cannot be governed this way. We are no longer living in the conditions of the Second World War; the world has changed and continues to change. Therefore, a serious reform aligned with this change is essential. I know it will not be easily accepted, but the fate of 194 countries cannot be left to the whims of a single member of these five permanent members.

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees individual rights and freedoms, is another example. Similarly, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, tasked with prosecuting perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes, following the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, is another.

The Alliance of Civilizations initiative, which we launched

with Spain during a period when scenarios of civilisational conflict were being written after the September 11 attacks, is a historic step taken with this understanding. This list could go on. Many institutions, organisations, and initiatives have been established during or after crises to ensure that similar tragedies, issues, conflicts, and severe human rights violations are not repeated.

Undoubtedly, the existence of these entities is a valuable achievement for humanity and the future of all. However, as we all know, what truly matters is practice and implementation. It is the effectiveness of all these institutions, which have billions of dollars in budgets and tens of thousands of personnel.

Dear Friends, we witnessed this truth again in a striking way through the Gaza crisis. Similarly, the Russia-Ukraine War, now approaching its fourth year, has shown us the weakness of the rules-based international system. Let me be clear here: in Gaza, not only were humanitarian values test-

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These figures, each representing a life full of hope, immense pain, and a shameful mark on humanity, lay bare the grim reality before us. Look, in the war to our north, nearly half a million people have lost their lives according to some estimates. In the attacks by Israel on Gaza, 50,000 innocent Palestinians have been torn away from life before the eyes of the world. The number of deaths in Lebanon has approached 4,000. Seventy per cent of those massacred in Gaza are women and children. Over 100,000 Gazans have been injured in these same attacks. Cities have been destroyed along with all their infrastructure and buildings. Almost no structures remain intact in the Gaza Strip, which was home to 2.3 million people before the attacks. Hospitals, schools, places of worship, and countless civilian areas have been targeted. Every principle, rule, norm, and red line of the laws of war and humanitarian law has been violated, trampled upon, and utterly disregarded.

Since October 7, 189 journalists have been killed in Gaza. Hundreds of others have been injured, becoming targets of bullets and bombs. Seeing children standing barefoot in the rain and mud, waiting for hours for a bowl of soup, breaks our hearts. I ask you: can anyone with a heart in their chest remain silent in the face of such a tragedy?

Can we say, "This is none of our concern," in response to the aggression of the Israeli government, which endangers the security of its citizens as well as everyone else living in the region? When peace is possible, when living side by side in harmony is achievable, why this bloodshed, this conflict, this war? For God's sake, if we don't act today, then when?

Esteemed Participants, the pain of the oppressed in Gaza, Palestine, and Lebanon is our pain—it must be so. To consent to tyranny is itself tyranny. Those who side with oppressors share in their oppression. Each crime left unpunished emboldens its perpetrator, encouraging even greater atrocities. From the very first day of the atrocities in Gaza, Türkiye, as a state and as a nation, has raised its voice against the injustice. Inspired by the poet Necip Fazıl, we cry out with open arms:

"Stop, crowds, this street is a dead-end

If I shout, arms outstretched like scissors

Stop, stop, a world is falling on our heads

We hear the cracks from our dark dome."

Indeed, the end of this humanitarian disaster, enabled by the shame of the Holocaust, is a dead-end—a catastrophe, a greater tragedy. What Türkiye does is for peace, justice, and the security of the entire region. What we say, just as our ancestors did in their four-century-long administration, is for all people of all faiths to live side by side in peace and harmony.

We bear no categorical hostility toward any nation or people. We harbour no anger toward anyone merely because of their faith, culture, or background. We hold no hatred, nor do we nurse grudges. Throughout history, we have opened our doors wide to anyone oppressed, whether Jewish or Christian. It was this nation that welcomed over 500,000 Jews expelled from Spain. We opened our doors, and they have lived with us ever since, as our guests.

In our mindset, we do not ask the oppressed for their iden-

tity, nor do we judge the oppressor by their beliefs. I say this clearly and unequivocally: for 420 days, we have desired and wished for an end to this insanity that has turned our region into a sea of blood.

We find the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Galant to be very significant in this regard. Similarly, we hope that the ceasefire recently achieved between Israel and Lebanon will be permanent. Before harsher winter conditions set in, before more innocent blood is spilt, before more parents are left mourning their children, before more children are orphaned, before trust in international institutions is further eroded, and before humanity loses more of its moral compass, a sustainable ceasefire must be established in Gaza without delay. From the first day, Türkiye has supported this cause and continues to stand firm in its stance today.

We are ready to do whatever is necessary to stop the genocide in Gaza and open the path to lasting peace—not just lending a hand but putting our entire being into the effort. On November 29, International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I once again declare that we stand by our Palestinian brothers and sisters resisting oppression, occupation, and injustice, and that our unwavering support

for their rightful cause will continue even more strongly.

Dear Friends, I must also mention this: During this more-than-a-year-long process, in which we have witnessed the hypocritical stances of biased media outlets, our TRT has devoted the vast majority of its national and international broadcasting to Gaza. From the very first day of the attacks, TRT has opened a communication corridor from Gaza to the world. TRT continues to keep this crucial corridor open today, despite all the risks. With its documentary *Holy Redemption*, TRT has also shed light on how and with what motivations Palestinian lands have been usurped. I congratulate the TRT staff for their courage, sacrifice, and devotion, and I pray for their safety and success.

This year, as TRT celebrates its 60th anniversary, we closely follow its wide range of work across various platforms. Today, TRT represents our country with dignity through its 17 television and 17 radio channels, dozens of digital applications, and other projects. Reaching more than half of the world's population in their native languages through internet and radio broadcasting in 41 languages and dialects, TRT World and TRT Arabi are leading examples. Events like the TRT World Forum, which bring us together today, provide common platforms for fair discussions on global



issues for the sake of humanity.

In this era, when Turkish TV series reached nearly 1 billion people globally, TRT continues to lead the way in the drama industry. We are proud that TRT-produced series are broadcast in over 110 countries and in more than 50 languages today.

In recent weeks, we have witnessed this painful reality within our country: TV series, films, and programs produced purely for the sake of ratings provide no benefit to our culture, social harmony, or the preservation of our values. In fact, we see that, in an effort to achieve higher ratings, violence—especially against women and children—is legitimised, alcohol and drug use are encouraged, and deviant and immoral relationships are normalised.

The more dangerous aspect of such broadcasts is their provocative policy, which aims to weaken the common ground among different segments of our society. While the religiously conservative segment of our population is portrayed as bigoted, ignorant, rude, and uncivilised, citizens with more secular lifestyles are depicted as if they are morally deficient. Using exceptional cases, our entire family structure is targeted, and the family—considered the cor-

nerstone of society—is portrayed as the root of all evils.

As you know, as Türkiye's ruling party, we are already opposed to the so-called LGBT movement, which we see as a structure hostile to the family. Frankly speaking, we observe that, in recent times, deliberate attempts are being made to provoke our nation's sensitivities. The sudden proliferation of television programs that cause public outrage among various segments of society cannot simply be explained by a desire for profit. We believe this is part of a social engineering project whose outcomes will emerge in the future. Türkiye has frequently been subjected to such social and political engineering projects. We all remember very well how the road to the February 28 process was paved.

We have not forgotten how FETÖ's media outlets used TV series to fuel a climate of hatred against our Kurdish citizens. FETÖ consistently led efforts to undermine the eternal and unbreakable unity of our nation. Incidentally, as Türkiye pursued a firm and resolute policy on the Gaza crisis, we also observed a noticeable increase in broadcasts aimed at disrupting our domestic unity. We firmly believe that the rising intensity of provocative content in both traditional and social media is not innocent. While our region is in turmoil, we evaluate any attempt to create divisions within our nation from a national security perspective.

In such an atmosphere, the unique, high-quality, and successful productions of TRT and other media outlets that operate with national sensitivities—ranging from TV series and films to news and discussion programs—do not merely bring peace to our homes. Thanks to the export of these productions abroad, many people in different geographies have the opportunity to learn Turkish and become acquainted with our history, culture, and national and spiritual values. I congratulate TRT for these broadcasts.

With these thoughts, I wish the TRT World Forum to bring about positive outcomes. On behalf of myself and my nation, I extend my gratitude to all participants who have attended this program from different parts of our country and the world, and who are willing to shoulder the burden for the establishment of a fairer world.

Once again, I greet you all with respect and affection. Stay well.

Indeed, the end of this humanitarian disaster, enabled by the shame of the Holocaust, is a dead-end—a catastrophe, a greater tragedy. What Türkiye does is for peace, justice, and the security of the entire region. What we say, just as our ancestors did in their four-century-long administration, is for all people of all faiths to live side by side in peace and harmony.

Fahrettin Altun's Inaugural Speech

Fahrettin Altun

Professor; Head of Communications, Republic of Türkiye

Prof. Fahrettin Altun is a prominent academic in communication sciences and the Head of Communications for the Presidency of Türkiye, a role he has held since July 25, 2018, following his appointment by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Prof. Altun earned his Ph.D. from Istanbul University and pursued studies in the United States. He has held various academic leadership roles, including Department Head at Istanbul Şehir University, faculty member at Istanbul Medeniyet University, and Dean at Ibn Haldun University. Additionally, he served as the General Coordinator of SETA Istanbul.

His professional background spans academia, media, and public communication. Prof. Altun has contributed as a columnist and editorial director for leading publications such as Sabah, Akşam, Daily Sabah, Kriter, Anlayış, Yöneliş, and Küre. He also produced and hosted news and discussion programs for major television networks, including TRT 1, TRT 2, and TRT News.

Prof. Altun's research focuses on Turkish modernisation, political communication, and cultural studies. His publications include Modernleşme Kuramı (2002) and Türkiye as a Stabilizing Power in an Age of Turmoil (2021). He has also contributed as an editor and chapter author to works such as Press Freedom in Türkiye (2016), The Triumph of Turkish Democracy (2016), 15 Temmuz'da Medya (2017), Terörün Kökenleri ve Terörle Mücadele Stratejisi (2018), and Toplumlar Arası İletişimde Yeni Dönem: Enformasyon Savaşından Dezenformasyon Savaşına (2023).

Honourable Mr. President and Distinguished Guests; I respectfully greet you all and say welcome you to TRT World Forum 2024, you honour us with your presence. The theme in this year's Forum is "A World at Breaking Point; Managing Crises and Transformations." Why are we talking about Managing Crises and Transformations?

For, as humanity, we face two choices in this global envi-

ronment afflicted with crises; we either watch the developments unfold in silence and suffer from these crises; or we fight, to manage the crises before us, generate lasting solutions to them and ensure necessary transformations. We, together with esteemed academics, opinion leaders, business people, journalists and intellectuals, prefer the latter.

Through our international platforms such as TRT World Forum, Antalya Diplomacy Forum, İstanbul Security Forum, and STRATCOM, we make an effort to build grounds for authentic dialogue to tackle fundamental issues and pressing problems that affect our world, and us, and raise global awareness of peace, security, prosperity and the wellbeing

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of humanity. Our goal is to make the proposed solutions of neglected, silenced and marginalized groups, a subject of global negotiation, beyond the Western mainstream narratives, in response to the wars, genocides, increasing instability and hybrid threats facing our world. And today we are delighted to see that such platforms, the chief of them the TRT World Forum, are becoming more established, and are gaining growing international recognition.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, Türkiye is currently engaged in two significant struggles on the global stage. One of them is the struggle for justice. The other is the struggle for truth. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the flag bearer and the leader of both these struggles. The political biography of Mr. President is, above all, a symbol of his struggle for justice. Since the very first day he entered politics, Mr. President has fought primarily to eliminate the

injustices, human rights violations, and the socio-economic problems that have been advancing in parallel with them in our country. After his discourse and political proposals gained the favour of our nation, which carried him to power, Mr. President made a great effort to eliminate the injustices and problems in question. As a result of these efforts;

- The democratic arena was cleared of tutelage.
- Human rights violations in the public sphere were eliminated.
- Obstacles to equal opportunities in education were removed.
- The chains of dependence on economy and foreign policy were broken.

Thanks to brave steps, injustices, rights violations and oppression, suffered by Türkiye and our citizens, were buried in the dark pages of history. Mr. President's struggle for justice and development was accompanied at all times by the struggle for truth. Despite all the threats and attempts to silence him, he proclaimed justice and truth in the most difficult times. And in the end, Türkiye won. And thanks to this struggle for justice and truth, Türkiye was able to grow, turned into a regional power and global player by taking itself out of the exploitative relations. And today, under the leadership of Mr. President, Türkiye is once again engaged in a struggle for justice and truth, this time on a global scale."

Take note; since October 7, 2023, Israel has been committing genocide against the Palestinian people in front of the whole world. And in the face of this genocide, Western governments and mainstream Western media unfortunately have buried their heads in the sand! Instead of attempting to stop Israel, they are making up excuses to justify this. Today, as the Israeli genocidal machinery and its accomplices commit these crimes, Mr. President is, with all his soul, striving in the clearest and most open way to put an end to this massacre and genocide. Through international platforms and meetings with world leaders, he works to help heal the wounds of the oppressed. He tells Western leaders live on air, "Sorry, we don't have a history of genocide and the shame that comes with it, like you do". From the UN podium, he emphatically says, "The world is bigger than five," and calls for "A more just world is possible." In the matter of Palestine, he asks "What more is the United Nations Security Council waiting for to stop the genocide in Gaza and put an end to this oppression and barbarism?" That is why, poems are being written and prayers are being offered for Mr. President in all oppressed parts of the world.

Mr. President is also taking a dignified and courageous stance against the forces in the world that pursue anti-refugee and discriminatory policies. He calls on the whole world to stand by the oppressed, away from the affliction of populism and political opportunism. He is fighting alone against those who attempt to turn opposition to immigrants into political capital. He is working to ensure the same opportunities and same rights for every human being, regardless of their faiths, nationalities, races and ethnicities. That is why, he stands out as the only leader capable of throwing the painful photo of baby Aylan in the faces of those responsible for this situation. He takes off their masks, and so is able

to give them a lesson in humanity.

With the courage and strength provided by this humanitarian and Islamic stance, Türkiye stands out as a sun and a beacon of hope in the darkness and pessimism, created by systemic crises such as climate change and pandemics that threaten all humanity.

Mr. President is also setting barriers against the waves created by dark lobbies in the fight against moral and social distortions that threaten humanity and our families on a global scale. He is bringing this struggle for truth and justice to the centre of our foreign policy with a strong stra-

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tegic framework. Today, Türkiye as a country whose fundamental principle is justice and truth, and whose main goal is peace and stability for everyone, works like a compass in the global systemic crisis.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, undoubtedly, the age we live in is an age of communication; even a digital age. This era, where we expect authentic communication and inter-societal interaction to grow, has unfortunately become an age of lies and disinformation. In this age, the injustice in global power relations is being reproduced in the global media sector as well.

Mr. President, in line with Your Excellency's vision of building a more just world, we too are fighting for a fair global media and communication ecosystem. As Türkiye, we are more confident than ever in meeting today's challenges. Thanks to our people's dynamism, we are rapidly adapting to new technological developments and innovative solutions to emerging problems. Our national technology initiatives, supported by serious public and private investments in areas such as artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicles, and space research/technologies/studies, are also showing themselves in the field of communication.

On the other hand, we continue to make serious investments in initiatives to develop media literacy and prevent disinformation on social media. Both nationally and internationally, while encouraging the production of real news and information from the field, we are also conducting a systematic struggle against disinformation and black propaganda activities. We believe that "a more just, more prosperous, more democratic international system" is only possible through building a healthier communication ecosystem. In our world which is at a breaking point, managing crises and transformations requires a comprehensive political vision and resolute and determined political leadership.

Mr. President, in line with your vision and leadership, Türkiye has the will and capacity to manage these crises in all areas, especially in communication. This Forum is one of the concrete reflections of this strong will.

Mr. President, we express our gratitude to Your Excellency for honouring our forum, TRT World Forum 2024. We thank all our colleagues who contributed to bringing the event to life, and all panelists and participants. I respectfully

greet you, hoping that the ideas, solutions, and collaborations born here will inspire new and fair global initiatives in communication and diplomacy and contribute to building a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Best regards.



Mehmet Zahid Sobacı's Inaugural Speech

Mehmet Zahid Sobacı

Professor; Director General, TRT

Prof. Mehmet Zahid Sobacı graduated from Uludağ University's Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences in the Department of Public Administration in 2001. He completed his Master's (2005) and Doctorate (2009) in Education at Uludağ University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration. He became an associate professor in 2013 and a professor in 2020.

His areas of expertise are reform in public administration, public policy and the relationship between social media and politics. The books "Administrative Reform and Policy Transfer," "Public Administration in Theory and Practice," "Social Media and Local Governments: Theory and Practice," "Sub-National Democracy and Politics through Social Media," and "E-Parliament and ICT-Based Legislation: Concept, Experiences and Lessons," are among his main works. He has also published articles in multiple national and international journals in his areas of expertise.

In 2014, he received the TÜBA (Turkish Academy of Sciences) Notable Work (Honorable Mention) Award in the field of Social Sciences with his editorial work titled "Public Policy: Theory and Practice".

Between 2015-2018, he carried out studies in the field of Internal Politics at the think tank SETA. He served as the Vice Director of the Directorate of Communications of Presidency for the Republic of Türkiye between 2018 and 2021. At the same time, he served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Press Advertising Agency between 2019-2021. He is married and with two children.

Honourable Mr. President, Distinguished Guests, welcome to the eighth annual TRT World Forum. Once again, we are grateful to have our Honourable President with us, gracing this gathering with his esteemed presence. This year's Forum brings together nearly 150 speakers from over 30 countries, along with more than 1,500 participants from various regions.

Over the next two days, we will together discuss a wide ar-



ray of topics, from climate change to the energy crisis, from geopolitical transformations to economic resilience strategies and from international law to artificial intelligence.

This year, we set the main theme of the TRT World Forum as "A World at Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations". Because we are going through a period where we are being tested by crises that will determine the destiny of all humanity. Today, the world is in the shadow of wide-ranging problems from genocide and wars to climate change, from irregular migration to social injustices and risks posed by new technologies. The human cost of these crises continues to rise, with more people suffering every day. The very foundations of the international system are being deeply shaken in the face of these developments. Most of the challenges currently occupying the world are unfolding in the very region to which our country belongs. Therefore, for Türkiye, which is located in a geography surrounded by multidimensional and challenging trials, engaging with regional and global issues is not a choice but a necessity and a requirement of historical responsibility.

At this point, it must be stated unequivocally that our country's greatest asset in confronting these challenges is, without doubt, our strong leadership. Under the leadership of our Honourable President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a unique model of politics and diplomacy not only safeguards and elevates our nation's rights and interests but also presents

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a vision for a more just world for humanity.

Mr. President, distinguished guests, today, we face a crisis far more destructive and annihilating than all others we know. This is the crisis of conscience. The most concrete manifestation of this is the genocide in Gaza. For over a year, Israel's genocide has claimed the lives of more than 44 thousand Gazans, injuring over 100 thousand. Among the victims, more than 17 thousand were children, and over 2 thousand were infants. I would particularly like to emphasise that those observing these events from afar need to understand that the victims of genocide are not just numbers. The lives perished by a bullet, a piece of shrapnel, or the poisonous gas of a phosphorus bomb are the lives of real people! These people are trying to live an ordinary life under the same sky as all of us, sharing the same hopes and dreams! People who dream of nothing more than a safe place to live, a meal on their tables, and a better future for their children.

These are not numbers; they are real people!

Despite this truth, Western countries that are insistently ignoring the real suffering and the most fundamental human demands of these people, have failed the test of Gaza, burying the so-called universal values they attempt to export to the world and shelving humanity itself. Meanwhile, media organisations, now complicit in the machinery of genocide, have sold their souls and consciences by staying silent—or worse—supporting the perpetrators. Yet, as in every humanitarian crisis, it is Türkiye that has assumed the responsibility of standing against the oppression in Gaza. At every platform he attends, our Honourable President raises his voice as the herald of justice, unmasking the bloody faces of tyrants for the whole world to see.

As TRT, under the leadership of His Excellency, we are striving to embody the vision of our country that prioritises truth and justice on the global stage. Since the onset of the genocide, we have dedicated our full capabilities and resources to be the voice of Gaza, bringing the truth to billions in their native languages. In doing so, we have faced harassment, attacks, and obstacles from genocide perpetrator Israel, whose actions recognise no moral or human boundaries. Yet, we are compelled to carry the cries rising from every corner of Gaza to the farthest reaches of the world. We must place the ignored stories of the oppressed

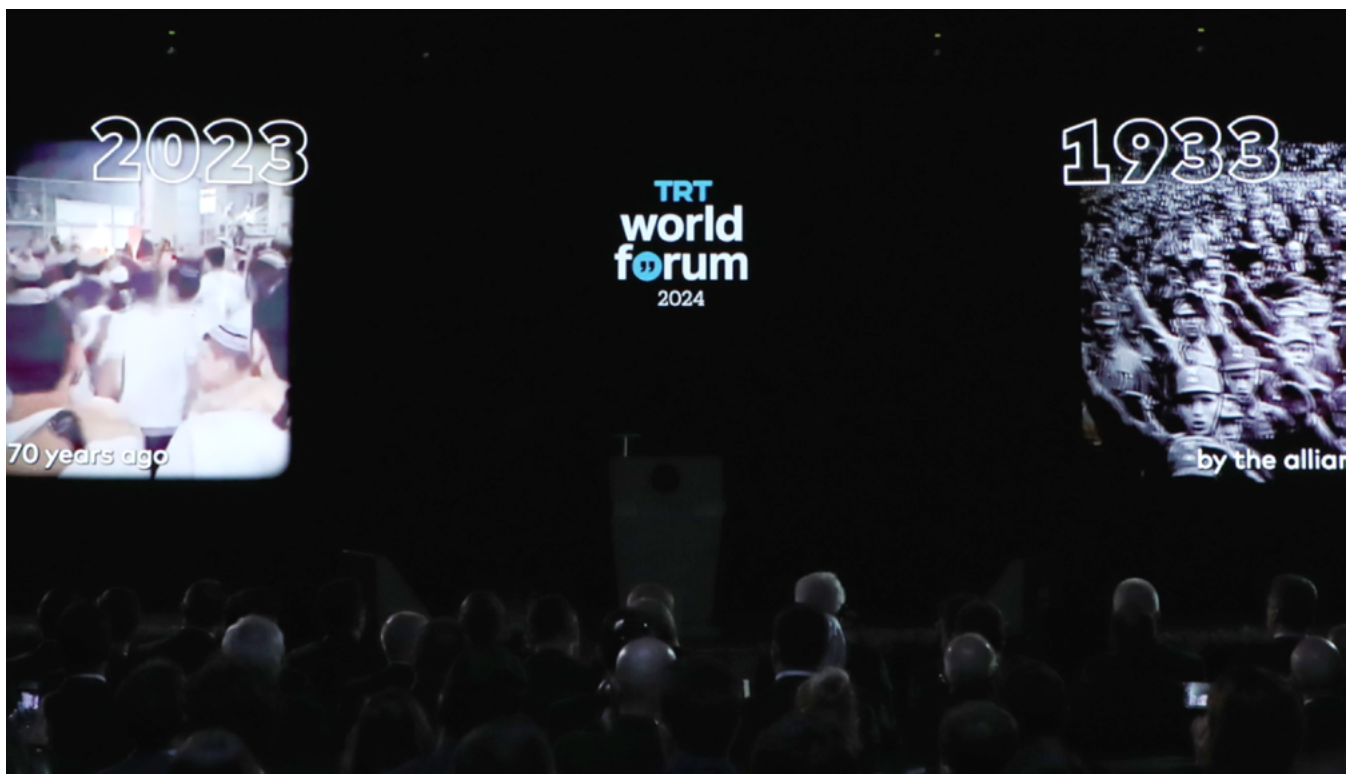
Palestinian people at the heart of the narrative. This is our debt to Rim, whose grandfather buried her after kissing her eyes, to Hind, who was targeted by hundreds of bullets in the vehicle where she waited for help for days, to Palestinian parents who were forced to carry the dead bodies of their beloved children in bags, and to our oppressed Gazan brothers and sisters.

Let me state clearly: as long as Türkiye's TRT exists, every moment of the genocide they try to make invisible will be documented; the noble march of the Palestinian people, ignored by the West yet inspiring the oppressed everywhere, will continue to be told so loudly that it will shatter the silence. For we believe this: Falsehood is destined to perish!

My Esteemed President, as TRT, in our commitment to maintain the dignity of the media, we draw inspiration and courage from your unwavering and uncompromising stance. With these thoughts in my mind, I extend my deepest gratitude to Your Excellency for honouring our event with your presence. I sincerely hope that the TRT World Forum will contribute to the construction of a more just future.

I also thank our distinguished guests for the valuable contributions they will make to our Forum. With my respectful regards...

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Public Sessions



Session 1

Elections 2024 in US and EU Members: What Lies Ahead for Global Democracy?



Moderator

Andrea Sanke, Senior Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Akif Çağatay Kılıç, Ambassador; Chief Advisor to the President on Foreign Policy and Security, Republic of Türkiye

Ivo Josipović, Professor; Former President, Republic of Croatia

Matteo Mecacci, Former Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Valeria Giannotta, PhD; Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye

Key Takeaways

- People's votes reflect their voice, and accepting election outcomes is fundamental to respecting democratic processes, despite challenges posed by crises.
- While globalisation connects the world, it also amplifies shared problems. Differences in political ideologies across the US and EU further complicate global governance.
- The rise of extremism and populism threatens democracy and human rights. The EU has been relatively successful in managing this, but its future remains uncertain.
- A lack of reliable information fosters mistrust and societal unrest, underscoring the need for transparent communication.
- Ruling parties face declining support due to social changes and public pressures. Upholding constitutional norms and democratic values remains critical.
- Failures in global governance have fueled nationalist and far-right movements, reflecting dissatisfaction with existing systems.

Summary of the Session

The session delved into the dramatic shifts in the global political landscape marked by the 2024 elections in the US and EU member states. These elections represent a pivotal moment for democracy worldwide, with unexpected outcomes in key nations reshaping global politics. A primary focus was the alarming rise of far-right movements across Europe, bringing with it threats such as antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups. In the US, the elections highlighted a critical choice for the future of its democratic institutions.

Speakers explored how these developments reflect broader trends, including the growing influence of extremist elements and the erosion of trust in governance. The discussion underscored the urgent need to counter these threats to democracy by reinforcing democratic values, addressing disinformation, and adapting to social changes to ensure stability and inclusivity in global politics.

Highlights

Akif Çağatay Kılıç

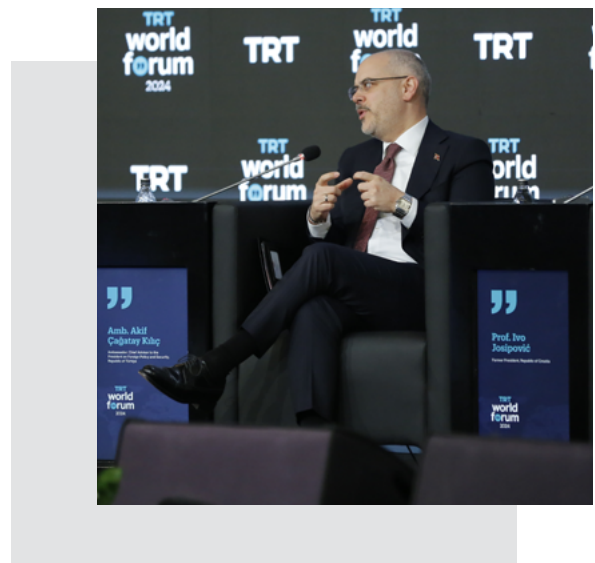
Ambassador; Chief Advisor to the President on Foreign Policy and Security, Republic of Türkiye

Akif Çağatay Kılıç studied economics and political sciences at the University of Hertfordshire in the UK. Following graduation, Kılıç held various positions in the private sector and served as an advisor and deputy chief of cabinet to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current President of Türkiye.

He was elected as a Member of Parliament for Samsun Province in the 24th Parliamentary General Elections and has participated in numerous roles, including serving on the Turkish Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and as Chairman of the Türkiye-Germany Friendship Group.

Kılıç was appointed Minister of Youth and Sports in the 61st Government of Türkiye on December 25, 2013, and continued in this role under the 62nd and 63rd Governments. He was re-elected as an MP for Samsun in the 25th and 26th terms and served again as Minister until June 2017. In the 27th Parliamentary elections, Kılıç was elected from Istanbul Province and held various leadership positions, including Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He is currently the Chief Adviser to the President and is fluent in German and English. Kılıç is married with two children.

- It is the right of the people to vote and once they have cast their ballot and the result has been achieved, this is what they have decided. So that is the result and the voice of the people that you have to respect and accept. The crisis in the world is not caused by a single factor; there are different issues that are coming together to create a perfect storm. Accepting the results and adapting oneself to the situation is the key.
- Globalisation brings us together but it also brings our problems together. When we are looking from the political point of views, the classical left and right understanding that we have of policies and policy making, it is also differently seen in Europe and the US. I think it is not the same democracy in the sense that how it is reflected in sociology. What can be seen as being far right, is seen as center right in other places. Or what is seen as far left is seen as central left in other places.
- In today's world unfortunately we are experiencing very violent outcries for a lot of things. But the most of the problems that we are having is from lack of information. For example, some uprisings and violence in the streets occur when people come together, often without understanding why they are united. Much of this is due to disinformation or misinformation.
- A society that consumes information in 140-character snippets rarely seeks the deeper truth behind events, leading to chaos. We experienced this in Türkiye, while so-called "greater democracies" lectured us. Yet, when similar events unfold in their own countries, they dismiss them as isolated incidents. The Norway terrorist attacks are a case in point—the world expected the perpetrator to be linked to Islam, but he turned out to be a Norwegian extremist. Quickly, the focus shifted from his background to his mental state. When trust erodes over time, such disruptions become inevitable.



Ivo Josipović

Professor; Former President, Republic of Croatia

Ivo Josipović served as the President of Croatia from 2010 until 2015. As a politician, he promoted reconciliation in South-eastern Europe, human rights, and the fight against corruption. Before and after his presidential mandate, Ivo Josipović served as a university law professor and composer. He has published several books and 85 scholarly papers dealing with international criminal law, criminal procedure and human rights. As a composer, Ivo Josipović has written roughly 60 compositions which have been performed and recorded by prominent artists



- When we look into history, it is quite obvious that in most countries, left and right policies are switching. We have period of right governments, and then left governments. But the problem today is that extreme left and extreme right have the same result, neglecting human rights, democracy and prosperity. The problem we are facing is not left or right governments, but the problem that we are facing in some countries is very extremist forces having success at the elections. It generates problems in human rights, in common politics in the European Union. Up to now, EU has successful attempts to prevent far right to take global power, but we do not know what tomorrow holds. I think, democratic political parties should do everything to prevent that trend goes to extremism..
- The biggest problem in the political scene, especially in the Balkans, is populism and nationalism. They feed off each other. Many countries around the world are showing the weakness of democracy.
- One of the most important questions regarding democracy is what will happen to the EU. Will the success of far-right parties change the essence of the EU? Paradoxically, they are anti-EU but also part of the European Parliament. The EU is a peace project, not only an economic one.
- One of the most important tasks for the European Commission is how to build a second identity — to be proud to be European, regardless of our ethnicity.



Matteo Mecacci

Former Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Matteo Mecacci is a distinguished international expert in democratic governance, human rights, and politics, who served as Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) from December 2020 to September 2024.

Before his role at ODIHR, Mr. Mecacci spent seven years as President of the International Campaign for Tibet. He also led the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission to Georgia in 2013 and served as a Member of the Italian Parliament, where he was part of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (2008–2013). From 2000 to 2008, he represented “No Peace Without Justice” and the “Transnational Radical Party” at the United Nations in New York. He holds a Juris Doctor in International Law from the University of Florence.



- The main indicator that we have to look at is whether these governing powers will continue to abide by the constitutional norms, the rule of law, the independence judiciary, and the freedom of media or they will try to change the rules of the game.
- We will have to see what happens, as the result of these elections are now taking shape in the form of government, and I think one key indicator in any of these countries is whether the opposition has a fair shot at winning the elections. Actually if you look at this year, we had the number of countries where the opposition won, such as the UK, Pakistan and Indonesia. In political terms, even in the US, you have the opposition who is winning now. But this is also an indication of the challenges that many governing parties face in maintaining power, even in the context of the EU we have seen the ruling parties generally losing support. This is a sign of the think of the changing in our society, which is putting a lot of stress on the governments.
- The rise of the far-right is a reflection of popular discontent. This is also part of democracy, and political leaders must take the requests of the people into account.



Valeria Giannotta

PhD; Director, CeSPI Observatory on Türkiye

Valeria Giannotta is the academic and scientific director of the Observatory on Türkiye, CeSPI (Centre Studies of International Politics), based in Rome. She studied in Milan at Catholic University where she obtained her PhD in Institution and Politics. Since 2009 she has been active as an academic in Istanbul, Gaziantep and Ankara. As an expert in Türkiye, she engages in high-level strategic meetings and contributes regularly to media and think tanks. In 2017 she was awarded 'Cavaliere della Stella d'Italia' by the Presidency of the Republic of Italy for her analytical objectivity and efforts in supporting Italian diplomacy in Türkiye.



- There are some common points in the US Presidential Elections and European Parliamentary Elections, one of which is that they brought this tendency towards nationalism and the center-right and far-right instances into the political and social environment. There is much to do with the main challenges and issues populating the global system and also the global governance as the system which is attempting to govern us was not able to provide concrete and sustainable solutions.
- The global system was unable to provide sustainable solutions. We are living in a globalised world with many challenges, and we face numerous problems such as instability and wars. The global governance system -i.e. the UN- has not been able to offer lasting resolutions, which has led to the rise of more nationalistic approaches and tendencies.
- Regarding the European Union and the full accession of Türkiye, we are not going anywhere, and it is really sad. This issue is not solely related to Türkiye, as the main critical issue is the ongoing Cyprus problem. At this point, we are in a deadlock. However, there are also good relations concerning security and migration.



Session 2

Transforming Tomorrow: The Power of Eco-Regeneration



Keynote Speaker

Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Reagan Des Vignes, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Bhuwan Shukla, Senior General Manager, International Business, EKI Energy Services

Christopher Dekki, Manager, Global Climate Cooperation, Environmental Defense Fund

Oktay Tanrısever, Professor, Middle East Technical University

Stephen John Cahill, Representative and Country Director, United Nations World Food Programme Türkiye Country Office

Key Takeaways

- Vulnerable communities are disproportionately affected by the crises, including climate-induced natural disasters, forced migration, and biodiversity loss.
- Community cohesion, active local involvement and necessary urgent global action are critical for successful ecological projects.
- Renewable energy, coupled with reliable energy sources like nuclear power, plays a pivotal role.
- Türkiye's Zero-Waste Movement has achieved significant milestones, including widespread waste management systems and reforestation efforts.
- Current climate finance levels are insufficient to address the scale of the crisis effectively.
- Climate change exacerbates global food insecurity, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- A collective effort is required to prevent further environmental degradation, with an emphasis on justice, financial support, and immediate implementation of climate policies.

Summary of the Session

The session “Transforming Tomorrow: The Power of Eco-Regeneration” focused on the urgent need for transformative approaches to address the global climate crisis. Speakers emphasised that the world is at a breaking point due to the compounding effects of climate change, such as natural disasters, migration, food insecurity, and biodiversity loss. These challenges, caused by human activities since the Industrial Revolution, require a fundamental rethinking of humanity's relationship with nature.

Eco-regeneration, grounded in the preservation and restoration of biodiversity, was highlighted as a critical pathway to sustainability. The session also stressed the importance of community-driven initiatives, recognising that projects cannot succeed without the active participation of local populations. The role of clean energy and transitioning to low-carbon economies was

underscored as a key strategy.

The speakers addressed global inequalities in climate impact, noting that the most vulnerable communities bear the brunt of a crisis they contributed to the least. A fair distribution of climate finance, increased global cooperation, and an urgent scaling up of efforts were called for to mitigate the crisis. Türkiye's Climate Law and Zero-Waste Movement, which has gained international recognition, was presented as a model for addressing waste management and environmental sustainability.

Keynote Speech by Murat Kurum

Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Republic of Türkiye

Murat Kurum is the Minister of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change of Türkiye. Born on May 7, 1976, in Çankaya, Ankara, Kurum completed his early education in Ankara and Mardin before graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering in Konya. He later earned a master's degree in Urban Transformation.

From 1999 to 2005, Kurum worked on numerous construction projects across Türkiye. He joined the Housing Development Administration of Türkiye (TOKİ) in 2005, where he served as an expert and later held various positions. In 2009, he was appointed General Manager of Emlak Konut REIT Inc., during which the two largest public offerings in Turkish history were executed.

In 2018, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan appointed Kurum as the Minister of Environment and Urbanization in the first cabinet of the Presidential Government System. During his tenure, he has focused on urban resilience, social housing projects, national gardens, and environmental sustainability. He has also been instrumental in disaster recovery efforts and promoting the Zero Waste initiative, launched under the leadership of Emine Erdoğan.

Dear participants, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to be with you at the TRT World Forum, one of the world's largest media summits.

I wholeheartedly congratulate the TRT family, the pride of Türkiye, and especially the Director General of TRT, the staff and TRT World, on the eighth forum held this year. I welcome you, our distinguished guests who have come to our beloved İstanbul from more than 30 countries and I respectfully greet you all.

Today, we are discussing how we can manage crises in a world that is at a breaking point. Yes, our world is perhaps experiencing one of the most difficult and challenging periods since its creation.

Today, we have a world struggling with tensions around the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the terrible genocide

carried out in Gaza by Israel, and the pain caused by the Russia-Ukraine war.

In addition to these; we are standing on the brink and even in the middle of a global destruction with problems brought by the climate crisis. At this point; it is very important to talk about the self-renewal capacity of our nature.

I think that we agree with all the participants in this hall that the climate crisis was caused by human hands because all scientific studies point to the industrial revolution as the starting point of climate change. I also share this common opinion, but I think that pollution that started with the industrial revolution is not only a cause, but also a result of humanity's distorted understanding of nature. As we will all agree; In terms of climate change, the issue is nature, humans, our common home is the world. For this reason; every step we take without correctly defining the relationship between "nature and humans" will be fragmented and



will not show the whole. When it comes to nature-human harmony, our source of reference is directly our civilisation, our culture, and the Turkish-Islamic civilisation's perspective on nature and humans.

Our civilisation is a civilisation that orders to establish a home in the most suitable way for the requirements of the four seasons; does not interfere with the natural state of mountains, forests, seas, animals and plants, and considers harming even a single branch a crime.

We are a nation that has built its home according to the sound of partridges and the smell of thyme for centuries; that has believed that wind, rain and snow are living beings and has considered them as friends. We are representatives of scientific experience who wrote works on the rights

of plants in the 14th and 15th centuries, which the world describes as the dark ages.

Some must have heard that when ants raided the trees in the Topkapı Palace, Suleiman the Magnificent applied to the qadi for a solution. The qadi responded by saying, "Don't kill the ants because when you go to God's court tomorrow, the ants will demand justice from you " and did not allow the ants to be killed.

If humanity wants to take a positive step for the world; it must first recognise this experience. It must see nature as a sibling, not a raw material; it must understand that it is not the master of nature, but its servant.

I am saying it openly and clearly. Humanity can achieve success to the extent that it understands this, and it can reveal the power to stop the climate crisis. Otherwise, it can never reach a result. As Türkiye, we act with this consciousness in every policy and action we take. The words of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which he announced to the whole world and created great excitement, especially in countries that were left behind, have been the loudest voice of this consciousness.

And now, we are honoured to express once again to the whole world from İstanbul the "vision of a just future" that Mr. President has offered to humanity. Yes, a Fairer World is Possible with its nature, environment, economy, democracy and respect for human rights, and this fair world will definitely be established one day!

Distinguished guests, Türkiye is one of the countries in the Mediterranean basin that is most affected by the climate crisis. We see this in our cities with the disasters we experience and we witness that these disasters damage the lives and property of our people and the infrastructure of our cities. Every year, these lands experience an average of approximately one thousand five hundred climate-related natural disasters such as floods, forest fires, inundations and droughts. For this reason, we place the main theme of the forum, "climate and energy", at the centre of our work.

As you know, the energy sector is responsible for more than 70% of greenhouse gases. In our country, we have doubled our renewable energy capacity in the past ten years; and we will increase our solar and wind energy capacity by four times in the next 10 years.

I think that pollution that started with the industrial revolution is not only a cause, but also a result of humanity's distorted understanding of nature. As we will all agree; In terms of climate change, the issue is nature, humans, our common home is the world. For this reason; every step we take without correctly defining the relationship between "nature and humans" will be fragmented and will not show the whole. When it comes to nature-human harmony, our source of reference is directly our civilisation, our culture, and the Turkish-Islamic civilisation's perspective on nature and humans.

Approximately two-thirds of emissions occur in cities. For this reason, we produce innovative solutions in transport and construction. As you know, on 6 February, we experienced the disaster of the century. We lost thousands of lives in that disaster, which affected 11 cities and 14 million citizens and caused deep pain to all of Türkiye on the morning of 6 February. However, we showed the unity of the century in 11 cities, and we continue to build 453 thousand houses with zero waste compatible and energy efficient practices. Inshallah, tomorrow, with the honour of our President, we will hand over the keys of our 155 thousandth house in Kahramanmaraş to our citizens as we promised. Of course, while rehabilitating our cities and transforming our earthquake residences, we also care that these residences are compatible and sensitive to climate change. We are constructing our buildings with the understanding of zero waste, and we endeavour to take steps to reduce raw materials, i.e. consumption, by utilising renewable energies and collecting rainwater, and to protect the water, air and greenery entrusted to us by nature. Within this framework, we are making an intense effort to double our metro, light rail and tram systems in urban transport.

Dear friends, of course, while reducing emissions on the one hand, on the other hand, we are increasing the number of sink areas in our cities, and within this framework, we are decisively implementing our 521 nation gardens with a size of 77 million square metres and our 2 thousand km bicycle path network, which will increase micromobility in cities and reduce the emission values of cities in this sense, and our vision of green cities with the understanding of reducing urban heat islands.

With Zero Waste Movement, which we deeply care about, when we see that the balance of nature has completely changed and with the awareness that resources are not unlimited, we have to transform all our wastes. And we have to transform these wastes and bring them into the economy, and within this framework, we are taking very significant steps in our zero waste movement. But in order to better understand the importance of zero waste, I would like to share a striking fact with you. It has been about 10 minutes since I started my speech, and in these 10 minutes, a total of 5,900 tonnes of plastic waste was generated in our world; 370 tonnes of waste was mixed into the oceans. Unfortunately, 20 seabirds and 2 turtles died, and 77 hectares of forest were destroyed. And the saddest of all is that with the

25 thousand tons of food we threw away in the last 10 minutes, we have thrown away the food needs of our 2.2 million Gazan brothers and sisters for 1 week.

Within the framework of this project and mobilisation that we carry out under the auspices of Mrs Emine Erdoğan, the Zero Waste Project is the only way to stop this tragic picture and the most important step to save humanity from this global waste abyss.

Today, Zero Waste has become a global environmental movement. Türkiye has established a zero waste management system in 193 thousand buildings, recycled a total of 60 million tons of waste, and prevented the cutting down of exactly 498 million trees.

Now, we will take another very valuable step in the new period. We will determine our Zero Waste pilot districts in 7 regions. We will establish our Deposit Management System by the end of 2025 and implement it throughout the country.

The way for all these steps I have mentioned to become more meaningful will be the passage of our Climate Law, which will actually complement all projects, by the Veteran Parliament. Hopefully, within this year, our Climate Law will enter into force in our Veteran Parliament and will be enacted as a law that will support all the steps we will take within this framework, and in this sense, it will benefit us in taking our steps to support both financial access, adaptation to climate change and mitigation activities at the point of climate change.

Dear participants, among us there are climate scientists, experts and environmental activists. As you have closely followed, we attended the COP29 meetings in Azerbaijan for the past two weeks. Here, we held a very crucial meeting where all the countries of the world came and shared their projects and dreams regarding this struggle within the scope of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. We went to Azerbaijan under the leadership and with the honour of our President and shared our strategies and goals for 2053 with the whole world.

As Türkiye, we have loudly expressed that it is unfair, unjustness and mercilessness to put the cost of the climate crisis on states that have not contributed to this crisis in the slightest.

We have defended the fact that this injustice should not continue in an environment where the richest 1% of the world causes more carbon emissions than the poorest 66%.

Now I am saying from here that if humanity wants nature to recover, then the issue of financial support must be resolved quickly, and everyone must urgently fulfil the promises they have made. When you look at the historical responsibilities, the historical responsibility of the Republic of Türkiye is almost negligible. In other words, the State of the Republic of Türkiye is almost not to blame for the pollution of the world. But today we are struggling for our average temperature, which we are trying to keep at 1.5 degrees Celsius. When I participated in such a conference abroad, a young activist there stated that he lived in an island country, that the glaciers were melting and that his country was in danger of extinction with the melting of these glaciers and the increase in the average temperature. And he urgently requested all the countries of the world to take precautions there, and he loudly expressed that the green areas where he used to play, his old house, his village and district where he had memories were facing the danger of extinction. Perhaps those cities, those houses, those green areas where many of our young people have memories, are in danger of extinction. We have to stop the rot together, you are the last generation to stop this terrible situation. And if we do not take these measures urgently, if we do not reduce the emissions in the world, perhaps many of our brothers and sisters will no longer have a country to live in.

I am saying clearly that the current level of climate finance is far behind when you consider the magnitude of the problem the world is facing. In other words, countries that will provide financial support are literally pouring water into a burning house and believe me, unless the issue of climate finance reaches a fair level this fire will grow even bigger.

I hope that the decisions of the 'Baku Climate Unity Pact' at the COP29 meeting will be implemented rapidly and we can quickly rehabilitate our common home, our world. When we look at today's world, there is a great drama in Gaza, which is living in very difficult conditions, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech. While we are talking about climate change, renewable energy and the revitalisation of cities, children from Gaza are being massacred there. And with the leadership of our President, Türkiye continues to be the loud voice of our Palestinian brothers and sisters for a just

world, for the freedom of Palestine. I am very clear, today the Republic of Türkiye has completely suspended its relations with Israel and when you look at all the countries of the world, it is the country that provides the most aid to its Palestinian brothers and sisters. We will never compromise on this decision, this stance, we will continue to stand by our Palestinian brothers and sisters at all costs. I say that our President will continue to express everywhere the freedom of Palestine and that the world is bigger than five, and I hope that this meeting will be an opportunity for the liberation and the beautification of the world, and I congratulate all my young brothers who came here. I wish success to all our participants, and I greet you once again with love, respect and reverence.



Highlights

Bhuwan Shukla

Senior General Manager, International Business, EKI Energy Services

Bhuwan Shukla is the Senior General Manager of International Business at EKI Energy Services Ltd., specialising in Climate Change and Sustainability. With nearly 18 years of experience in sectors such as Manufacturing, Technology, and Chemicals, he holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering and a PGDBM from Symbiosis. At EKI, Bhuwan manages project development, investments, and carbon offset trading across the Middle East, EU, and Americas. His expertise lies in forming global partnerships and leveraging business strategies to drive sustainability and combat climate change effectively.



- Natural disasters related to climate change are increasing year by year. This is not a phenomenon limited to India; we are witnessing this globally. People are being forcibly displaced from their homes and moved to new locations due to the devastating impacts of climate change.
- If you understand the word eco-regeneration it basically depends on biodiversity, which is the major pillar of eco-regeneration. Biodiversity contributes to all the elements, whether the forests or the soil, which kind of power is used in communities.
- If we look at what plastic has brought to the world and the people, we can say “ease of availability” and “slight reduction in the cost”. But the use of plastic increased, the pollution also increased. While recycling may seem like the only short-term solution, stopping plastic production may offer a more permanent solution in the long run.
- It is essential to maintain cohesion within communities. Unless local communities are actively involved, projects aimed at addressing these challenges cannot be successful.



Christopher Dekki

Manager, Global Climate Cooperation, Environmental Defense Fund

Christopher Dekki is the Manager of Global Engagement and Partnerships at the Environmental Defense Fund, where he leads strategic engagement in multilateral processes on climate change, sustainable development, and transport. Previously, he served as Director of Global Advocacy and Engagement at the SLOCAT Partnership, where he helped shape the transport policy agenda for the COP28 Presidency in the UAE. With extensive experience working with the UN, civil society platforms, and youth-led organisations, Chris is also a professor of political science and law at St. Joseph's University and the City University of New York.



- Since these are international agreements that need to be implemented in an integrated way to make sure that each aspect of them is actually having an impact at the local and national level, one of the main focusing points in COP29 was to promote the synergies process. This process is important to make sure that the national implementation of each of these conventions is actually happening in an efficient synergistic meaningful way that the policies that are being put forward around biodiversity, climate change, combating desertification are integrated. This is the main question we need to focus on.
- Preventing methane emissions is a quick way to combat the climate crisis, and this issue is very much on the agenda now. Something that we have been pushing now, with COP28 Presidency and also with over 50 National oil companies, is the oil and gas decarbonisation charter working with these companies, to preventing the leakage of methane and other harmful gases, and also to supporting them in terms of policies and finance to make sure they are able to actually go about.
- One of the key areas of focus is avoiding gas operations at farms and branches, particularly at dairy farms, where significant amounts of methane are emitted. This is something we have been pushing through the COP 28 process over the last couple of years.
- We prefer to see how we can transform economies by focusing on quick wins around methane abatement, while also starting the transition towards more sustainable economies that rely on clean energy and cleaner fuel technologies.



Oktay Tanrisever

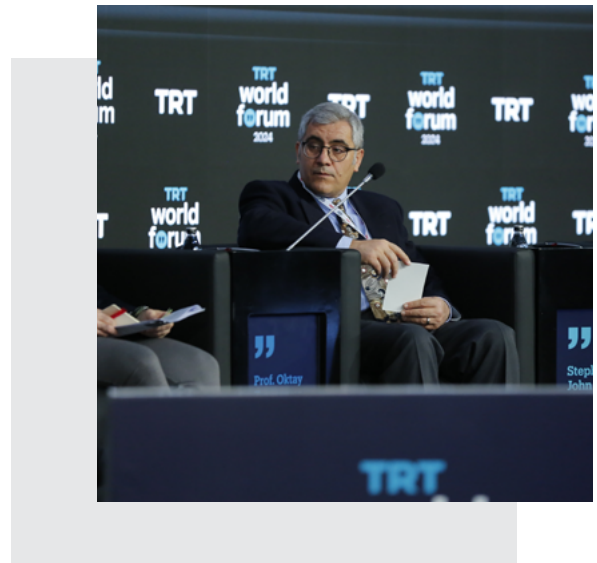
Professor, Middle East Technical University

Prof. Oktay F. Tanrisever is a Full Professor of International Relations at Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Türkiye. He earned his BA and MA degrees from METU and completed PhD at the University of London, specialising in Russian politics.

He has held several key academic positions at METU, including Chairperson of the International Relations Department, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, and Chairman of the Area Studies and Eurasian Studies Programmes. From 2017 to 2019, he chaired the Energy Diplomacy Working Group at the World Energy Council Turkish National Committee (WECTNC).

Dr. Tanrisever's expertise lies in diplomacy and international negotiation, energy, water, climate, and environmental diplomacy, as well as regional security and peace-building in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean regions. His work focuses on fostering cooperation and addressing pressing global and regional challenges

- Countries like Türkiye need to achieve transition to a low-carbon economy. This is the way to address the challenges posed by climate change. It is essential to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels while increasing the use of renewable energy. However, for renewable energy to be effective, there needs to be a reliable base for electricity generation, which could come from coal or nuclear power. Türkiye is building a nuclear power plant in this regard, which will begin operating in the coming years. This will enhance Türkiye's capacity to utilise renewable energy.
- Türkiye's success in aligning its energy strategy with the broader Green Deal framework enables it to export this experience to neighbouring countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa. Through this transition to a low-carbon economy, Türkiye is also developing its technology and its efforts in this direction have increased Türkiye's capacity to generate more renewable energy. Compared to the 2000s, Türkiye is in a better position, to deal with these challenges, but there is still a long way to go, it is a process going on.
- New technologies are quite important in terms of irrigation systems and the satellite technology and use of new Technologies would contribute to this eco-regeneration strategies. In this context, Türkiye has been reforming the agricultural strategy to fit the needs of environment friendly transition.
- Countries like Türkiye need to achieve a low-carbon economy as this is the way to solve these challenges. Currently, Türkiye depends heavily on fossil fuel imports from other countries. Therefore, it is crucial to reduce the amount of fossil fuels used and increase the focus on clean energy, including nuclear power.



Stephen John Cahill

Representative and Country Director, United Nations World Food Programme Türkiye Country Office

Stephen John Cahill is currently the Representative and Country director of the World Food Program in Türkiye. He has 30 years of experience spanning the humanitarian and private sectors in more than 10 countries. After holding key positions in the private sector across various regions, including the United Kingdom, Brazil, and the Middle East, Stephen joined WFP in 2004 and has since worked in several large-scale, complex emergencies including the Ukraine conflict in 2022 and the West Africa Ebola Outbreak (2014-15). He also played a crucial role in responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic by working closely with WHO, UNICEF, and other partners in establishing a worldwide platform for logistics services. This approach culminated with Stephen becoming Director of Humanitarian Logistics Services in 2021, offering critical emergency supply chain support to 900 humanitarian and development partners globally.



- Today we see the direct link between climate change and migration, climate change and conflict, climate change and hunger. This year, we saw that 72 million people fell into poverty, a situation directly linked to climate change.
- We see these people who are affected by climate change in the least way possible but are feeling the effect more than anybody else. There needs to be a step up from the world to say that we understand where this is coming from, and who are affected most. Without that understanding, things are going to get worse which we can not accept today.
- We are deeply concerned about global food prices, as the instability in food affects the most vulnerable people. If food prices go up it means that people have need more money to buy the same food, it means that we need as an organization which feeds 123 million people a year, we need more money to feed the same people. At the same time, recognizing that farmers need to

earn a living as well. So, the balance with those sides is something hard to get. If there is an impact on that, the people we feed would be devastating, literally. So we have an extremely strong motivation to make sure that climate change is minimised. Global climate change is directly related to food production, and its impact is increasingly evident. Thus, local food production for local people is crucial and truly matters.

- We are moving so much food from Türkiye into Gaza, it is instrumental for what we are doing. We need to keep that moving, that can not be interrupted in any way, because the effects on the people who are literally weeks away from starvation will be catastrophic. The first and foremost in Gaza, we need peace.

Session 3

Türkiye's Path Forward: Fostering Dialogue and Containing Global Crises



Moderator

Aican Ayanlar, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Bruno Mações, PhD; Former Minister of European Affairs, Portugal

Burhanettin Duran, Professor; Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Matthew Bryza, Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan

Nathalie Tocci, PhD; Director, The Istituto Affari Internazionali

Key Takeaways

- Türkiye's geographical, historical, and cultural attributes position it as both an insider and outsider, allowing it to navigate multiple sides in global conflicts. Rejecting the "civilisational war" narrative, Türkiye promotes inclusive dialogue and cooperation.
- Under President Erdoğan's proactive diplomacy, Türkiye has played a pivotal role in mediation, including initiatives like the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Russia-Ukraine prisoner exchange.
- Türkiye has worked to enhance international mediation mechanisms and hold constructive criticisms against outdated systems like the UN, advocating for reforms through the principle of "The world is bigger than five".
- Türkiye has excelled in reading and responding to the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar one, maintaining principled yet pragmatic positions.
- Türkiye's strategic vision prioritises action, as demonstrated in its decisive yet understated role in key conflicts, such as the Second Karabakh War and its balanced approach to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Summary of the Session

The session "Türkiye's Path Forward: Fostering Dialogue and Containing Global Crises" emphasised Türkiye's unique role in the global arena, shaped by its geography, history, culture, and political outlook. Türkiye occupies a critical position both as an insider and outsider, offering a much-needed perspective in today's fragmented world. Rejecting the notion of a "civilisational war," Türkiye has embraced a framework that enables dialogue and engagement with multiple sides, rather than aligning with a single bloc. This approach has strengthened its role in fostering stability and peace, guided by the principles of proactive diplomacy under the leadership of President Erdoğan.

Türkiye's international efforts are marked by mediation, institutional development,

and a commitment to regional security through a win-win approach. Türkiye's ability to adapt to the shifting dynamics of an asymmetric, multipolar world has made it an influential actor capable of balancing principled positions with pragmatic actions.

Türkiye's ability to anticipate and respond to global changes is unique. However, Türkiye faces challenges, including the declining appeal of interdependence and the risks of becoming entangled in complex regional conflicts. Despite these challenges, Türkiye continues to leverage its position to mediate and shape a role in the emerging multipolar world, balancing opportunities and constraints in a fractured global landscape.

Highlights

Bruno Maçães

PhD; Former Minister of European Affairs, Portugal

Bruno Maçães is a senior advisor at Flint Global and a columnist for the New Statesman. The author of "Belt and Road"; 'History Has Begun'; and 'The Dawn of Eurasia', he advises some of the world's leading companies on geopolitics and technology. His latest book is "Geopolitics for the End Time".



- Not only geography but also history, culture and a certain understanding of politics put Türkiye in its unique role.
- One fundamental role that Türkiye has been playing is to be critical consciouss with its historical role of being inside and outside which is crucial for this role. And the West is in dire need of this consciousness today.
- Türkiye does not subscribe to the concept of a civilisational war, as some in the West do. This different framework allows Türkiye to play a unique role, as it is able to speak with different sides. While some believe that in a fragmented world, you can only thrive by aligning with one bloc, I am inclined to think that it is possible to trade and engage with multiple blocs.
- With its combinations of words and action, it was, in fact, Türkiye and its actions in Syria and Caucasus that started to contain and balance Russian power, not the speeches of Western think tanks.



Burhanettin Duran

Professor; Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Prof. Burhanettin Duran serves as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, having previously served as Professor of International Relations at Ankara Social Sciences University. Prior to these roles, he was the General Coordinator of SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research) and taught at Ibn Haldun University. He earned his Ph.D. from Bilkent University's Department of Political Science and International Relations. His expertise spans Turkish political thought, Turkish foreign policy, and Middle Eastern politics. He has published extensively on Türkiye's domestic politics and regional relations.



- Türkiye is playing an increasingly significant role in peacemaking, under the strong leadership of President Erdoğan and his proactive diplomacy. The concept of leadership diplomacy is crucial. President Erdoğan's engagement with world leaders has made him effective in various international contexts, from the Russia-Ukraine conflict to the Somalia-Ethiopia situation.
- Türkiye is trying to strengthen institutional mechanisms for peaceful affairs. As a first aspect of this, Türkiye is leading mediation efforts with Finland regarding the UN. And the second aspect is Türkiye's criticism towards the UN system, with President Erdoğan's "The world is bigger than five" understanding. The third aspect is about Türkiye's policy regarding the surrounding regions. All these aspects are influencing Türkiye's international role, as an influential actor.
- Türkiye is regarded as a new influential actor by the neighbouring regions, because Türkiye tries to provide stability and security for the region, based on a win-win approach.
- Türkiye, tries to manifest a new understanding, that is composed of adaptability to the changing conditions in an asymmetric multipolar world.



Matthew Bryza

Former U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan

Ambassador (ret.) Matthew Bryza is a former senior White House and State Department official, currently serving on the Board of the Jamestown Foundation. He was Ambassador to Azerbaijan (2011-2012) and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State (2005-2009), with prior roles at the National Security Council and U.S. missions in Russia and Poland. From 2012-2015, he led the International Centre for Defence and Security in Estonia. Now based in Istanbul, Bryza is Managing Director at Straife, a consultancy focused on risk management and corporate strategy.



- We did not fully appreciate Türkiye's strategic vision because it speaks quietly but acts decisively. For example, in the case of Azerbaijan-Armenia Second Karabakh War, there was not a lot of rhetoric out of Türkiye but it provided a critical role, there was action rather than rhetoric. There were not only drone support, but also supports in the meaning of tactics, and Türkiye was helping the Azerbaijan side to understand how to bring together both drone capacity to use to develop real time intelligence and then use standoff weapons to have impact on the battlefield.
- Türkiye, which has NATO's second largest military and the only military that has confronted Russia on the battlefield in Idlib, when Russia was violating the protection agreement it had agreed with Türkiye, and remained anchored in the NATO. Türkiye has proven skillful at standing on principle, supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but not overdoing it, keeping communication channels with Russia even though it sometimes get a need to use military force as a tool of diplomacy.
- In Russia-Ukraine War, Türkiye has played a unique role. Washington always expects NATO allies sort of to follow its lead and if the United States has decided that it is going to impose sanctions on Russia and the other NATO allies have there is an expectation that Türkiye will as well. But Ankara was able to do much more, expressed very strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but has not joined the sanctions. Türkiye also has kept the channels of communications open to Moscow, it has avoided harsh rhetoric, excessive condemnation and President Erdoğan has cultivated the ability to talk to Putin when need be and that has resulted in something great, as in Grain Deal in July of 2022, and in prisoner exchange process.



Nathalie Tocci

PhD; Director, The Istituto Affari Internazionali

Dr. Nathalie Tocci is the Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali and a part-time professor at the European University Institute's School of Transnational Governance. She also serves as an Honorary Professor at the University of Tübingen and is an independent non-executive director at Acea.

Previously, she was a Special Advisor to EU High Representatives Federica Mogherini and Josep Borrell, where she authored the European Global Strategy. Dr. Tocci has held prestigious roles including Europe's Futures Fellow at IWM and Pierre Keller Visiting Professor at Harvard Kennedy School.



- More than other European countries, Türkiye's foreign policy is adept at reading, adapting to, and anticipating global changes. When the EU failed to recognise that the unipolar world was fading and a multipolar world was emerging, Türkiye anticipated this shift.
- Now, it is a time of fracture between the Global West and Global East, as well as between the Global North and Global South. In this context of fracture, Türkiye's role has two points on opportunities and two points on challenges. One the opportunities, first point is mediation role. There are plenty of examples for this, such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, or the prisoners exchange deals between Russia and Ukraine. The second point, the global South is emerging, and Türkiye is one of these players which uses its potential leverage not to fit in either one camp or the other.
- As for the two main challenges of Türkiye's role, the first point is interdependence, on which Türkiye's foreign policy was premised, is no longer as attractive as it once was, as it used to be considered as a source of prosperity. Today, it is considered as a potential security threat. The second challenge point is what role can Türkiye play in those conflicts where it risks becoming entangled in the dynamics of the conflict itself such as the case with Azerbaijan and Armenia.



Session 4

War and Order: Navigating Geopolitical Shifts in a Changing World



Keynote Speaker

Hakan Fidan, PhD; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Adnan Nawaz, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Fawaz A. Gerges, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science

Ghassan Salamé, Professor, SciencesPo Paris

Hina Rabbani Khar, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Kılıç Buğra Kanat, Associate Professor; Research Director, SETA Foundation

Thomas Greminger, Ambassador, PhD; Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Key Takeaways

- Increasing geopolitical competition and polarisation undermine the effectiveness of the international system. In addition, the UN Security Council's paralysis and selective application of international law have deepened mistrust.
- Rising global armament and the integration of technologies like AI and cyber into defence systems heighten instability.
- The nuclear threat and ongoing wars, such as those in Gaza and Ukraine, amplify risks of global fragmentation.
- Neutral powers, including Türkiye, have a critical role in stabilising regional conflicts and facilitating dialogue amidst the absence of global leadership.
- The failure of international institutions to address crises fairly and effectively underscores the need for comprehensive reform. The influence of non-state actors, including multinational corporations, should be integrated into a new rules-based order.
- Issues like climate change, pandemics, and economic inequality necessitate a reimagined multilateral framework based on justice, equity, and collaboration.
- A new international order is emerging, but its shape remains unclear amidst declining major powers and the rise of regional actors. The lack of cohesive global leadership exacerbates uncertainties and complicates efforts to address systemic challenges.

Summary of the Session

The session “War and Order: Navigating Geopolitical Shifts in a Changing World” analysed the current geopolitical landscape, marked by escalating tensions, the erosion of multilateralism, and a legitimacy crisis in international institutions. It was noted that the international system struggles to address global challenges effectively, such as climate change, nuclear security, and AI regulation, amidst the growing militarisation of global politics and the rise of new power dynamics. The discussion emphasised the role of powers like Türkiye in mediating regional conflicts and contributing to international stability while highlighting the limitations and paralysis of major powers in shaping a cohesive global order.

The session also examined the impact of ongoing wars, including in Gaza and Ukraine, on global security and justice, noting how they underscore systemic inequalities and hypocrisy in international relations. The rise of far-right movements, ethnic nationalism, and populism were identified as contributors to global fragmentation, while the weakening of agreements on weapons control and the failure of the UN Security Council to uphold its mandate were highlighted as critical challenges. The speakers called for renewed political commitment, reform of multilateral institutions, and the creation of a rules-based order that includes emerging actors like multinational corporations.

Keynote Speech by Hakan Fidan

PhD; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

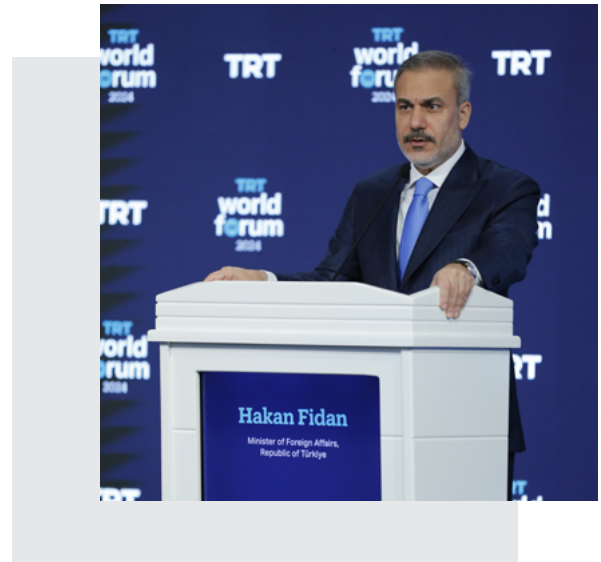
Hakan Fidan was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in Türkiye's new cabinet following the second round of presidential elections on May 28, 2023. Born in Hamamönü, Ankara, in 1968, he graduated from the Turkish Military Academy and the Land Forces Language School. While serving in the Turkish Armed Forces, he earned a bachelor's degree in Politics and Administrative Science from the University of Maryland University College during a NATO mission abroad. He later completed his master's and doctoral degrees in International Relations at Bilkent University.

After his military service, Fidan pursued an academic career, lecturing in International Relations at Hacettepe University and Bilkent University. He then held key roles in foreign policy and security within the Turkish government, including serving as President of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, Deputy Undersecretary for Foreign Policy and Security at the Prime Ministry, Board Member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Special Representative of the Prime Minister. He also served as Deputy Undersecretary and later as Undersecretary/Director of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), a role he held for 13 years until his appointment as Foreign Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to thank the TRT World Forum for inviting me to address this distinguished audience.

TRT World Forum has become a prominent platform to exchange views on a broad range of regional and global issues. TRT World Forum provides alternative narrative compared to many similar organisations. It allows free discussion with multiple perspectives. Today, I would like to share our views regarding the current geopolitical context and its transformation.

Distinguished Guests, the international system faces a multitude of political, military, economic, environmental, technological, and social challenges. Amidst these challenges, we are going through a critical geopolitical and strategic transformation. Strategic and geopolitical competition has intensified. Global politics is characterised by increasing tensions. Polarisation is on the rise. The erosion of multi-



lateralism and the rules-based order further deepens this polarisation. Mistrust among countries and in the system is growing. This intensifies the search for new alliances and partnerships. As a result, the international security architecture is weakening.

Global armament is on the rise, particularly in the Middle East, Asia Pacific and Africa. As history reminds us, the vicious circle of armament race and mistrust can bring the world to the edge of the cliff, ending up with the nuclear war threat. Technopolitics significantly affects international affairs and the global balance of power. Integration of AI and cyber into the defence systems enhances national security while it also increases threat perceptions. All these challenges bring about profound unpredictability for the international system. The current international system is far from providing solutions to the unpredictability or any kind of crisis. This calls for multilateral responses.

Esteemed Guests, given the general overview of the current global dynamics, the international system faces two conventional wars at the same time in different continents having an impact on the rest of the world. Türkiye is just in the centre of these wars. In this fragile geography, Türkiye

plays an ever-increasing role in achieving regional peace and stability. The stability in Syria, Iraq, the Middle East, the South Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the Black Sea is a primary goal for us. Displaying a principled and effective stance, Türkiye constructively contributes to the resolution of conflicts by deploying intense diplomatic efforts as an honest broker, facilitator and mediator between parties. Türkiye always stands for the principle that “the continuation of wars is not an impediment in front of holding dialogue”.

Distinguished Guests, at the same time, Türkiye never shies away from underlining the deficiencies of the system vocally. We diagnose the problem, propose solutions, and work towards the transformation of the international system. In today's international order, injustices continue in every sphere and unfortunately, this makes the perception of might is right a reality. As a result of this, the current international order does not generate peace or stability. It does not provide justice or equality.

The current impasse in the UN Security Council is a case in point. An organisation created for the maintenance of international peace and security fails to fulfill its mission. This, in turn, leaves the international system increasingly out of

balance, harbouring further unpredictability, and vulnerability. No order can be sustainable if it is not based on justice.

It is time to reconfigure multilateralism towards more effective, responsive and accountable institutions based on solidarity and equity. Therefore, we must reform and strengthen the multilateral institutions in the political, security, justice, financial and economic fields, and make them accountable. To this end, we support all efforts to render regional and international organisations more effective.

Distinguished Guests, the genocide in Gaza is the most evident sign of the legitimacy crisis of the international system. It casts a shadow on the credibility of multilateral institutions. Each and every day Israel violates international law and puts the whole world in jeopardy. As we speak today, more than 44 thousand people lost their lives in Palestine. The suffering of Palestinians increases every day at an unprecedented level. UN agencies, humanitarian institutions and journalists have all become victims of Israeli aggression. This aggression reached the level of directly attacking international organisations. The Israeli attacks against UNIFIL and calling UNRWA as a terrorist organisation are another blatant disregard of the Netanyahu government of international order. Widening its attacks on Lebanon and Iran demonstrates Netanyahu's delusion. While Netanyahu continues his barbarian violence, some countries keep silent and even prevent the international organisations to stop Netanyahu. This clearly displays the hypocrisy and double standards of the international system.

Türkiye approaches the Gaza crisis and the war in Ukraine from the same perspective. We have a principled position regarding the two wars. However, we do not observe this policy in many countries. We should clearly state this: There is an obvious double standard here.

The continuation of the arms and ammunition support to Israel is making this country more aggressive. Therefore, we launched a joint letter initiative on this issue at the UN. Our initiative was supported by 52 countries and 2 international organisations. We call for the international community to immediately increase pressure on Israel to end its attacks altogether. Türkiye is also at the forefront of the initiatives to put an end to the genocide in Gaza. Therefore, from the very early days, we put forth “regional ownership” and formed the Contact Group within the OIC/Arab League, advocating for the necessity of a two-state solution and the recognition of

Displaying a principled and effective stance, Türkiye constructively contributes to the resolution of conflicts by deploying intense diplomatic efforts as an honest broker, facilitator and mediator between parties. Türkiye always stands for the principle that “the continuation of wars is not an impediment in front of holding dialogue”.

the State of Palestine. Hence, we managed to change their policies. Those who could not talk about ceasefire, now call for a two-state solution.

At the same time, we have strongly urged that international law should be upheld and the perpetrators of the ongoing war crimes in Gaza must be held accountable. That's why, we intervened in the case at the International Court of Justice against Israel. This reflects Türkiye's belief in and respect for international law. Interim decisions of the Court revealed the scale of Israel's crimes and called for their immediate end. The recent decision of the ICC issuing arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Gallant is a promising crucial step in bringing Israeli officials who committed genocide to justice.

Palestinians deserve immediate justice. We will continue to work to ensure that international law is implemented to punish genocide.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in order to restore peace and security in the Middle East and revitalise trust in the international system, we need to address the root causes of the Gaza crisis. The root cause of the problem is the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel. There can be no lasting peace without a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a two-state solution.

Distinguished Guests, another pressing challenge that needs to be overcome to sustain global security is the Russia-Ukraine war. Many civilians died and injured while critical infrastructure destroyed. The war led to the revision of policies on defence, food and energy security, connectivity and transport. It has detrimental consequences not only for the warring parties but also on a global scale.

The escalation in the Russia-Ukraine war brings us to the beginning of our discussion: how the armament race is growing and how close the nuclear threat is. Until Kursk, the war was only within the Ukrainian territory and weapons of mass destruction were not utilised. Now, with the recent developments, the situation evolved into a riskier and more unpredictable state. This further increases polarisation and consolidates fragmentation. As long as the conflict is not resolved, both sides will continue to rearm and push towards further consolidating their alliances or creating new alternative structures.

Against these risks, it is still essential that we prioritise diplomacy and dialogue to put an end to the war through a permanent ceasefire and a lasting peace agreement. As one of the few countries that has high-level contacts with both parties, Türkiye continues to be ready to make every effort to facilitate peace negotiations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the agreements against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction are important for the international security architecture. These agreements are almost universal agreements. Whatever paradigm that could be out there, I would say that these instruments and mechanisms need to be upheld. We should keep in mind that the weakening of these instruments could be exploited by terrorist organisations, further worsening the security environment. States commit to conventional or strategic

We strive for a robust system based on solidarity, rather than polarity. In our bilateral and multilateral contacts, we will continue to emphasise the necessity of global justice, starting with the most acute crisis, Gaza. We will continue to be the voice of the oppressed around the world. We will continue to collaborate with other countries to defend our shared values and fulfil our shared responsibilities in establishing an international system that generates peace, stability and prosperity.

arms control agreements of their own will. As such, the emergence of non-Western paradigms should be a part of universal approaches, to the benefit of global security. Whether it is “western” or “non-western”, the main issue is the maintenance of peace and stability.

Distinguished Guests, we should have a forward-looking perspective. We will continue to shape our foreign policy with this understanding.

Türkiye stands out as a constructive, problem solver and system-transformer actor in its region and in international affairs. We will continue to call for and to contribute to a more inclusive and effective international system capable of addressing current global and regional challenges. We strive for a robust system based on solidarity, rather than polarity. In our bilateral and multilateral contacts, we will continue to emphasise the necessity of global justice, starting with the most acute crisis, Gaza. We will continue to be the voice of the oppressed around the world. We will continue to collaborate with other countries to defend our shared values and fulfil our shared responsibilities in establishing an international system that generates peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you.



Highlights

Fawaz A. Gerges

Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science

Fawaz A. Gerges is a Professor of International Relations and holds the Chair in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He was the founding Director of LSE's Middle East Centre (2010–2013). Gerges earned his Ph.D. from Oxford University and an M.Sc. from LSE. He has taught at Oxford, Harvard, Columbia, and Sarah Lawrence College and was a research scholar at Princeton University.

His latest book, *What Really Went Wrong: The West and the Failure of Democracy in the Middle East* (Yale University Press, 2024), examines the region's political crises. His forthcoming book, *The Great Betrayal: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in the Middle East*, will be published by Princeton University Press in 2025.

Gerges' writings have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, and *Foreign Policy*. He has received MacArthur, Fulbright, and Carnegie fellowships, with his works translated into multiple languages.

His areas of expertise include international relations, the Middle East, Islamist and jihadist movements, and American foreign policy. Gerges is a frequent media commentator on outlets like BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera.

- A big picture of what we have witnessed in the past 20 years or so includes the rise of China, emerging markets, Türkiye, Brazil, and others. This is the most dangerous moment since the end of World War II, marked by the convergence of economic, military, and political crises.
- When we look at cultural and social dynamics, we see the rise of new fascist movements. This is an inflexion point. Given this inflexion point in the international system, where is global leadership? Is it the most powerful country, the US? The US is literally an arsonist, militarising the world, particularly in the Middle East.

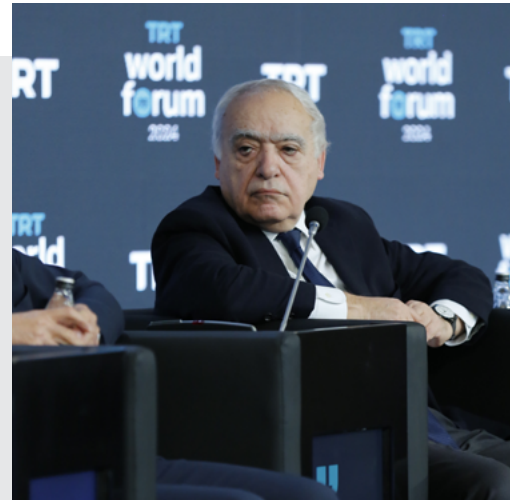


- When we take a look at what is happening in terms of cultural and social dynamics, we see the rise of far-right movements across the world, ethnic nationalism, populism, the fragmentation of international political and economic order and economic collapse in many countries. The reality is that given this turning point in the international system, as a human being, a simple question comes to mind, where are the firefighters? Where is the global leadership?
- We see militarisation of the international system from the China Sea to Europe and we have a vacuum of global leadership. My hope is that the third powers, as an alternative, a global coalition would fill this particular global leadership
- It is not the West versus the rest. The West is now a monolith. Instead, it is the rest versus the hegemons.

Ghassan Salamé

Professor, SciencesPo Paris

Ghassan Salamé is Professor of International Relations Emeritus at SciencesPo Paris and founding dean of its Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA). He served as Lebanon's Minister of Culture (2000-2003) and was Senior Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2003-2007). Salamé was a member of the Annan Rakhine State Commission (2016-2017) and served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative in Libya (2017-2020). He sits on the boards of several international NGOs and has authored or edited numerous books.



- The international system today is characterised by three features. First, the deregulation of force. For now, there is a need for some legitimation in the use of force, as seen in the case of the Iraq war. This deregulation of force was emulated by other powers since the principal power was using force without authorization, other powers in the world started doing the same. We saw Russia invading Georgia, and then Ukraine, other Powers started using force in Africa and in the Middle East. And with Netanyahu in Gaza, we have reached the sort of maximum of deregulation of force, both in the legitimacy of the recourse of the force and in the way you conduct your war using all violations of international humanitarian law. The second feature is diplomatic opportunism. Countries can join as many international organisations as they wish and establish strong trade relations with one country while maintaining poor geo-strategic relations with the same country. Third, the paralysis of international organisations. The United States has used its veto power in the UN Security Council 49 times to protect Israel. If you consider these three factors, you can understand where we are today.
- The Security Council is in a state of paralysis. There are still a few agencies in the UN system, which are basically humanitarian agencies such as HCR and WFP, but these are exceptions and not enough to allow a multi-lateral system to be operational.
- Gaza may set a standard that will be used elsewhere, because of impunity, it will be emulated elsewhere. And there are enough conflicts in the world such as Asia and Africa, where these kind of things could happen.



Hina Rabbani Khar

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Hina Rabbani Khar, the 26th Foreign Minister of Pakistan, is best known for her “Regional Pivot” in foreign policy, focusing on strengthening ties with neighbouring countries. During her tenure, she initiated the normalisation of trade relations with India and pursued an inclusive approach in Afghanistan, advocating for an Afghan-led peace process. She also worked to reinforce relations with Iran amid economic sanctions. Khar has held various other key roles, including Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs, and Finance, playing a crucial part in Pakistan’s economic diplomacy.



- Nobody today is fighting for the leadership of the world, anyone who does this has to deal with issues like climate change, how to control and regulate AI, and how to ensure nuclear security remains. What we see is a fight for hegemonic power. The most important thing is that a lot of people think that there has been a lot of peace in the world since 1945, but the truth is that there is a lot of peace in Europe, not the world.
- The world is fracturing before us, and what we don't see is leadership. During the Cold War, we knew what we were fighting for, but now, we do not. Everyone is fighting for exceptionalism and wants a rules-based order, "but not for our friends."
- If you look at the cost of War, researches state that 38 million people have been displaced after 9/11 Wars, in Iraq, in Afghanistan and etc. So while there was balance, there was no chaos or general peace in the heartland of Europe. How those wars played out which were in the name of human rights, democracy, liberal values, how they played out in the world was not according to the values that were spoused within the mainland. And now we are watching a genocide happening in daylight, and the people who were supposed to be the preserv-

ers of that order and the rules-based system, are actually breaking it down and calling into question every institution exists which is supposed to create that order.

- This is not a sudden breakdown of the international rules-based order. It is the breakdown of major powers' willingness to follow that order. The international order has not broken, but governments are using their power, including veto power, to support the perpetrators of violence, not to uphold the rules-based order.



Kılıç Buğra Kanat

Associate Professor; Research Director, SETA Foundation

Kılıç Buğra Kanat is a Senior Fellow at TRT World Research Centre and the Research Director at the SETA Foundation, Washington, DC. He is also a Professor of Political Science at Penn State University, Erie, Pennsylvania. Kılıç Buğra Kanat was awarded the Outstanding Research Award and Council of Fellows Faculty Research Award at Penn State. He is the author of 'A Tale of Four Augusts: Obama's Syria Policy' (2015). He is co-editor of the edited volumes 'History, Politics and Foreign Policy in Türkiye' (2011) and is a columnist.



- There is a new emerging international order, yet we do not even agree on what is emerging right now. There are also new actors coming to the forefront, such as multinational corporations and tech giants. We need a rules-based order that involves these companies.
- Such transformations usually happen after one big war, followed by a shift in literature and thinking. But now, we are seeing a blurring of wars and conflicts, making the situation more complex.
- Major powers are in decline, and middle powers or regional powers can play a significant role. This role involves stabilising regional conflicts, and Türkiye has been trying to do that.
- I don't want to be too pessimistic, but the situation could get worse, and here are the reasons: First, regarding our panel's topic of war and order. Second, in relation to the new emerging international order, we do not even agree on what is emerging right now.
- Everybody knows that we face global governance challenges. Issues like the pandemic, climate change, and other global problems require state-level cooperation. The most significant lesson in the last two or three years is the need for such global cooperation.



Thomas Greminger

Ambassador, PhD; Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Ambassador Thomas Greminger has been the Director of the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) since May 2021. Prior to this, he served as Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from 2017 to 2020. Throughout his diplomatic career, he held various positions within Switzerland's Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, both in Bern and abroad. Greminger holds a PhD in history from the University of Zurich and is a Lieutenant Colonel GS, with numerous publications on military history, conflict management, peacekeeping, and human rights.

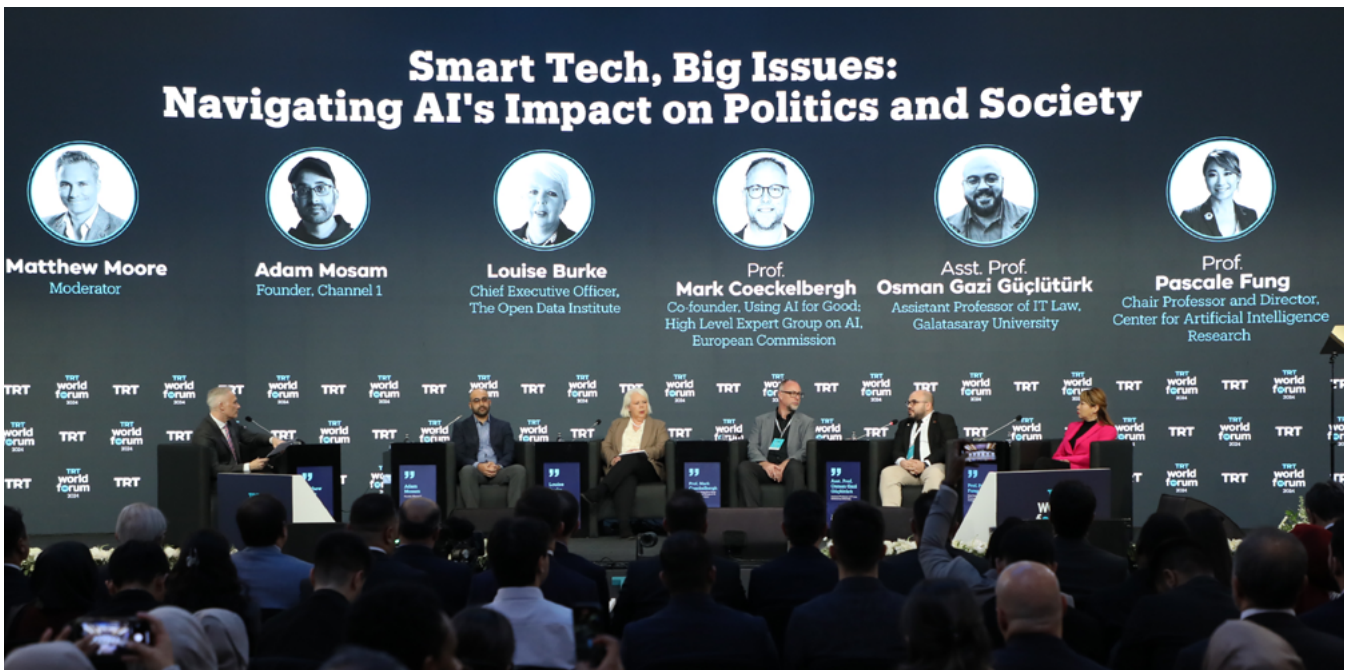


- What we need today is political commitment and political leadership. States and leaders must be ready to invest in multilateral institutions that help us recreate a global order. If you look back, you have had more leaders that invested and believed in transactional approaches to problem solving instead of investing in rules-based approaches in creating sustainable long term mechanisms and platforms. Major powers grossly violating international law and humanitarian law, and in this sense, the major wars we witness are just mirrors of these trends in global order.
- What we are questioning is that currently this multi-polar order looks very chaotic and we do not see positive, order shaping forces in this order. As we see it now, it is inherently instable. What we are looking forward in a medium and long term is positive or shaping forces. And here, middle powers can play important role. When you look back, we dealt with polarisation during the Cold War with "Helsinki Process". And in facilitating between the superpowers within this process, the so called neutrals and non aligned played a fundamental role. So there is no quick fix in reforming multilateral bodies and in the short term, small and medium states can assume an important role in getting us to a more stable, multipolar world order.



Session 5

Smart Tech, Big Issues: Navigating AI's Impact on Politics and Society



Keynote Speaker

Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Minister of Industry and Technology, Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Matthew Moore, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Adam Mosam, Founder, Channel 1

Louise Burke, Chief Executive Officer, The Open Data Institute

Mark Coeckelbergh, Professor; Co-founder, Using AI for Good; High Level Expert Group on AI, European Commission

Osman Gazi Güçlütürk, Assistant Professor, Galatasaray University

Pascale Fung, Chair Professor and Director, Center for Artificial Intelligence Research

Key Takeaways

- AI drives innovation in public and private sectors, optimising operations and creating opportunities in various fields. It also poses risks such as job displacement, bias reinforcement, and concentration of power.
- Initiatives like the National AI Strategy and AI Institute aim to build robust infrastructure and foster collaboration across academia, industry, and government.
- Investments in supercomputing and international collaborations enhance Türkiye's technological capabilities.
- The centralisation of AI power risks marginalising less dominant nations, necessitating inclusive frameworks and transparency. Open-source AI research fosters collaboration and innovation while ensuring inclusivity.
- Ethical considerations must be central to AI development, focusing on justice, accountability, and societal benefits.
- AI may displace jobs but also create new roles if investments in education and reskilling are prioritised.
- Democratising AI development is crucial to ensuring diverse perspectives and equitable outcomes. New governance mechanisms are needed to address AI's unique risks, moving beyond ad hoc measures to proactive, permanent solutions.

Summary of the Session

The session titled “Smart Tech, Big Issues: Navigating AI's Impact on Politics and Society” explored the profound impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on governance, society, and global dynamics. Speakers highlighted AI's transformative potential in optimising industries, governance, and public services, but also underscored the accompanying risks, such as deepening inequalities, ethical challenges, and the centralisation of power among a few global entities. Examples from Türkiye's National Technology Initiative, AI-driven employment transformation, and collaborations in the Turkic world illustrated proactive measures to harness AI responsibly. Additionally, the session emphasised the need for global collaboration, ethical governance, democratised development, and

new institutions to manage AI's societal impact effectively.

The discussion acknowledged the potential for AI to address societal challenges but stressed the importance of aligning technological progress with moral principles. Initiatives such as open-source AI research and global ethical standards were presented as key to fostering inclusive and diverse innovation. Examples from various nations demonstrated how AI could contribute to sustainable economic growth if paired with forward-thinking policies. The overarching message was clear: AI's trajectory will significantly shape the future, and its development must be guided by justice, accountability, and shared values of humanity.

Keynote Speech by Mehmet Fatih Kacır

Minister of Industry and Technology, Republic of Türkiye

Mehmet Fatih Kacır served as the Deputy Minister of Industry and Technology, appointed on July 31, 2018, through a Presidential Decree. In this role, he was responsible for overseeing the National Technology Move and strategic transformation policies within the ministry. During his tenure as Deputy Minister, Kacır assumed various critical roles, including chairing the TEKNOFEST Executive Board, leading the Steering Committee of the DENEYAP Türkiye project, and heading the Technology-Oriented Industry Move Program Committee. He also played a crucial role in the development of the Research Infrastructure Monitoring and Competence Evaluation Committee and chaired the National Technology Entrepreneurship Council.

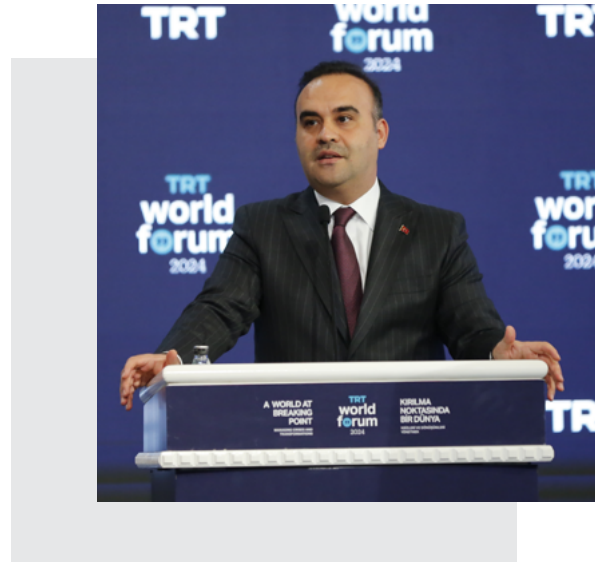
Before his role as Deputy Minister, Kacır actively participated in non-governmental organisations, serving as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Türkiye Technology Team Foundation (T3 Foundation). He played a significant role in the establishment of initiatives such as DENEYAP Technology Workshops, the Future Technology Stars Program for exceptionally talented students, Science Centers, Entrepreneurship Centers, and the renowned Aviation, Space, and Technology Festival, TEKNOFEST.

Distinguished participants, I am very pleased to be with you at the 'TRT World Forum 2024', I greet you all with respect.

Since its inception, the TRT World Forum has evolved into a globally influential platform, serving as a vital hub for ideas and dialogue. I firmly believe that this year's forum will once again be a crucial venue for engaging discussions and the sharing of transformative ideas.

Dear Guests, the technologies of the future are no longer distant aspirations; they are unfolding here and now, creating pathways to entirely new possibilities. In every area of life—whether in how we connect socially, operate businesses, produce goods, or interact as consumers—technology is driving transformation. Leading this revolution is one field with the power to reshape how we live, work, and govern: artificial intelligence. It serves as both a driving force for innovation and a catalyst for disruption.

AI enables organisations to make smarter, data-informed decisions, optimise their supply chains, and deliver highly personalised customer experiences. Companies are har-



However, with these advancements come new questions and responsibilities. At present, much of AI development is driven by private companies, whose primary objectives often revolve around profit maximisation and maintaining a competitive edge. The growing divide between the United States, China, and the rest of the world in AI development and deployment raises serious concerns about the concentration of power. This imbalance risks marginalising many nations in an AI-driven future, leaving them without a voice in shaping the global AI landscape. Without strong legal frameworks and collective accountability, the current trajectory signals the potential for what some have termed 'digital fascism.'

nessing AI to uncover new revenue opportunities, automate repetitive processes, and innovate at an unprecedented pace. Governments around the world are increasingly recognising the transformative potential of artificial intelligence to improve public services, strengthen governance, and address complex societal challenges.

However, with these advancements come new questions and responsibilities. At present, much of AI development is driven by private companies, whose primary objectives often revolve around profit maximisation and maintaining a competitive edge. The growing divide between the United States, China, and the rest of the world in AI development and deployment raises serious concerns about the concentration of power. This imbalance risks marginalising many nations in an AI-driven future, leaving them without a voice in shaping the global AI landscape. Without strong legal frameworks and collective accountability, the current trajectory signals the potential for what some have termed 'digital fascism.'

Today, language models are often trained on datasets reflecting specific geopolitical or cultural biases, further reinforcing these challenges. They sometimes reinforce stereotypes, amplify biases, and promote monocultural narratives. Piling a list of issues demands not only reflection but decisive action. Our collective responses will also determine whether AI becomes a tool for empowerment and progress or a mechanism of control and exclusion. Turning a blind eye to AI's rapid advancement is neither a realistic nor a wise answer. Let me provide a more concrete example from Türkiye.

Today, our employment levels are approaching the 33 million mark. However, due to the impact of innovative technologies, particularly automation and AI, more than 7 million people may no longer be able to perform their current jobs by 2030. Yet, if we take the right steps to harness the benefits of emerging technologies, we have the potential to replace these jobs with 9 million new roles. Moreover, entirely new opportunities could emerge, particularly in technology-related fields, potentially creating an additional 2 million jobs. The key to unlocking these benefits lies in proactively preparing our society for this transformation. This means investing in education and reskilling programs to equip our workforce with the competencies needed for emerging industries. It requires fostering innovation ecosystems, supporting startups, and ensuring inclusive access to opportunities in the digital economy.

This comprehensive strategy lies at the heart of our National Technology Initiative, aimed at cultivating a future-ready workforce, fostering sustainable growth, and establishing Türkiye as a global leader in innovation and technological excellence. In 2021, we introduced our National AI Strategy, presenting a detailed roadmap aimed at actively contributing to the global transformation driven by artificial intelligence. Our strategy encompasses robust policies and ambitious projects designed to activate the AI ecosystem and foster collaboration among all stakeholders. As a key initiative, we established the AI Institute within The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) to lead cutting-edge research, foster innovation, and enhance collaboration between academia, industry, and government.

We firmly believe that Türkiye's greatest asset is its young people. Their energy, creativity, and potential are the driving forces behind our efforts to prepare the nation for the chal-

Technology is being used to kill innocents, becoming an enabler of atrocities instead of uplifting humanity. Tragically, international organisations have been unable to present a cohesive moral response to the clear violations of human rights. Similarly, there is a glaring lack of mechanisms designed to address the growing concentration of power among a handful of technology giants, whose reach now extends into nearly every corner of our daily existence. Such centralisation endangers the diversity and fairness that are crucial for fostering balanced technological growth.

allenges and opportunities of the future. Recognising this, we are equipping our youth with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an era shaped by rapid technological advancements.

TEKNOFEST, the world's largest aerospace and technology festival, inspires and nurtures young innovators, offering a platform to showcase their creativity, collaborate with peers, and engage with cutting-edge technologies. Sector in Campus program provides students with practical insights and hands-on experiences that align with the demands of emerging industries. Deneyap Technology Workshops are maker labs which offer comprehensive training in disruptive technologies such as robotics, AI, and programming.

We understand that robust and advanced data processing infrastructure is fundamental to the successful development and deployment of AI technologies. We have enhanced our capabilities by adding a new supercomputer to the Turkish National Science e-Infrastructure (TRUBA). Through our active participation in the Digital Europe Program, we are laying the groundwork for strategic infrastructures in high-performance computing (HPC) and artificial intelligence. Moreover, our involvement in the EuroHPC Joint Initiative has provided us with access to one of the most advanced supercomputers in the world, MareNostrum 5.

We are deeply committed to fostering a global framework that prioritises ethical standards, transparency, and accountability in the development and deployment of artificial intelligence technologies. In line with this; we became one of the countries to adopt the G20 AI Principles and became a member of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI). We are also a party to UNESCO's AI Ethics Recommendation, the first global ethical standard for AI. With our robust technological infrastructure and highly skilled workforce, we are eager to collaborate with other nations to create AI solutions that reflect diversity, embrace cultural nuances, and address the needs of a global society.

The first Meeting of Ministers of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation of the Organization of Turkic States in Istanbul represented a major step forward in uniting efforts for AI development and technological leadership within the Turkic world. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding to launch the Turkish Large Language Model Project. This initiative will integrate the meaning, context, and cultural subtleties of the Turkish language into AI systems, ensuring these technologies deliver more precise and effective

results. These collaborations will play a crucial role in our mission to establish Türkiye as a hub for innovation and advanced technology.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to share my final thoughts on what our response to AI's impact on politics and society should be. While embracing technology as a tool to address complex challenges, we must not overlook the dangers of technological advancements in the absence of moral principles and values. A stark example of this can be seen in Palestine, right on our doorstep.

Technology is being used to kill innocents, becoming an enabler of atrocities instead of uplifting humanity. Tragically, international organisations have been unable to present a cohesive moral response to the clear violations of human rights. Similarly, there is a glaring lack of mechanisms designed to address the growing concentration of power among a handful of technology giants, whose reach now extends into nearly every corner of our daily existence. Such centralisation endangers the diversity and fairness that are crucial for fostering balanced technological growth.

We stand at a pivotal moment, faced with a choice: to guide technology with wisdom or to let its unchecked power widen divides and cause further harm. Let us choose the former, building a future where progress is defined by the strength of our shared humanity.

In this context, humanity's most urgent need is to establish a moral alliance grounded in justice and compassion. We must prioritise the human dignity and rights of every individual above profit or power. We need to create mechanisms to ensure transparency and give communities the power to shape how innovations impact their lives. Without a guiding framework, no matter the value it creates, the economic growth it fuels, or the prosperity it promises, technology will ultimately lead us into new disasters, repeating the mistakes of the past.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the realisation of the 'TRT World Forum 2024' and express my gratitude.

Thank you.

Highlights

Adam Mosam

Founder, Channel 1

Adam Mosam is the founder of Channel 1, a global leader in AI for news and publishing. From 2003 to 2018, he built and successfully sold two technology companies. Most recently, he served as CTO of a public media company in the U.S., overseeing its streaming business and technology operations. In addition to his entrepreneurial ventures, Adam has invested in over 170 startup companies.

He earned his Bachelor's degree in Software Engineering & Management from McMaster University in Canada in 2003 and was later recognised as one of the Top 150 graduates from the engineering faculty's 60-year history.

- In the future, there will be news tailored to your interests and presented in the right way according to your expertise. However, echo chambers can be a disaster. It is important to present both sides of an argument. Two things are crucial: news that is relevant to you, but also news that includes multiple opinions. Ultimately, this is a risk, and we still need to approach it with responsibility.
- When it comes to the issue of echo chambers, if done poorly, it could be a disaster. But I believe there are companies, and we hope to be one of them, that operate in good faith and recognise the responsibility we have to present both sides of an argument. In fact, I would say that with the technology we have developed, we can do a more effective job than traditional cable news.
- When we think about the forces shaping our society, there are four main areas in the United States that drive this: 1- Washington DC, which oversees citizenship and, of course, the defence industry; 2-Silicon Valley; 3- Hollywood; and 4- Wall Street for finance. If you think about every single one of these, they are all undergoing a complete reinvention at their core—the value they deliver to society is being redefined. This is one of the



few times in history when other players can have an effect because the gatekeepers are changing. So, if you are in what we consider a developing nation, or if the world is shifting from unipolar to multipolar, there are various power centres emerging. There will be a vacuum to fill, and strategically, outside of the West, you will want to move as fast as possible. You need to look at the value and the values that these emerging power centres are putting out into the world and figure out the right way—and the fastest way—to establish yourself.



Louise Burke

Chief Executive Officer, The Open Data Institute

Louise Burke is the Chief Executive Officer of the ODI, leading the organisation to achieve its mission and vision. Since joining in 2012, she has held roles as Chief Finance Officer and Chief Operating Officer, bringing expertise in data governance, data literacy, and data institutions. Named one of the UK's Top 100 Influencers in open technology in 2021, Louise has a strong background in accountancy, fundraising, and business development. She has also lectured for ACCA and CIMA, authored academic books, and contributed to business articles, showcasing her commercial acumen and commitment to ODI's success.



- One of the initiatives in the UK at the moment, with the new government, is the creation of this National Data Library. The idea is to bring together datasets and, as the Minister's speech earlier highlighted, make that data available in order to enhance public awareness about what is happening within the UK. Additionally, it aims to create innovative products and services using that data for the common good. I think that this initiative is a significant step forward.
- The important thing to be considered is the data that AI uses. There are a lot of bad data filling AI now, which gives you very bad results. The quality of the data is not enough now. We are usually talking about outputs, not inputs.
- Using personal data is another question. There has to be a user-centric responsibility over personal data and people can decide who they want to share that data, not anyone else



Mark Coeckelbergh

Professor; Co-founder, Using AI for Good, High-Level Expert Group on AI, European Commission

Prof. Mark Coeckelbergh is a Professor of Philosophy of Media and Technology at the University of Vienna and was recently Vice Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. He also holds an ERA Chair at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague and serves as a Guest Professor at WASP-HS and Uppsala University. Previously, he was President of the Society for Philosophy and Technology (SPT).

Prof. Coeckelbergh's expertise lies in ethics and technology, particularly in robotics and artificial intelligence. He is an active member of policy-building organisations, including the European Commission's High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence, the Austrian UNESCO Commission's Expert Council on AI Ethics, the Austrian Council on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, and the Austrian Advisory Council on Automated Mobility. He also serves on the advisory board of the University of Milan's Research Center on the Philosophy of Technology (PhilTech@UNIMI) and is on the editorial board of Cambridge Forum on AI: Law and Governance.

An author of 17 philosophy books and numerous articles, Prof. Coeckelbergh is involved in multiple national and European research projects on AI and robotics

- We should focus on the responsible development of AI. The usual pattern with technology in human history is that we innovate, bring things to market, then face problems, and finally, new regulations are needed. We need seat belts for this new technology, and we need to check its ethics.
- It is important to think about the ethical implications of AI, not only in general terms and not only by listening to technical experts, but also by having a broader discussion in society about the risks and limitations of artificial intelligence. This includes how ethics can contribute to thinking about what constitutes a good life with technology and what makes a good society with technology.



- We also need to think about the future of our democracies or the future of our political systems in light of these rapid and drastic technological changes. Therefore, we need new institutions that link real expertise with legitimate bodies like parliaments, in order to react in a more permanent way. Instead of relying on ad hoc councils, we need something more permanent and proactive built into our democracies.



Osman Gazi Güçlütürk

Assistant Professor, Galatasaray University

Dr. Osman Gazi Güçlütürk is an Assistant Professor of IT Law at Galatasaray University and an Affiliated Fellow at Yale Law School's Information Society Project. Specialising in technology law and policy, particularly artificial intelligence, he holds a PhD from Galatasaray University, where his thesis was awarded the 2022 Best Thesis Award by Türkiye's Council of Higher Education. Dr. Güçlütürk also holds degrees from Oxford (MJur), LSE (LLM), and Ankara University (MA), and actively contributes to global tech policy through OECD.AI, CAI, and AI standardisation bodies at CEN/CENELEC and ISO.



- Neither the analysis nor the risks and benefits of AI are fully understood. Recently, the balance between risk and benefit has shifted, with increasing conflicts of interest. Most interestingly, our current governance mechanisms may not be able to handle these emerging risks. In the past, there were control-based mechanisms and well-established governance frameworks, including legislation and regulations, to manage these systems. As a result, the risks and benefits of AI systems were balanced and governed by these structures. However, quite recently, we've seen a shift in AI systems. This shift has potentially placed us in a less favourable position, and we don't fully understand how this change occurred.
- AI has become an economic topic. Many people risk their jobs, and many sectors are changing significantly. We don't know how the economic effects will unfold. Therefore, we are now discussing these issues, including whether we need a new legislative structure, in a very heated manner.
- We have to narrow the gap between global AI powers and non-AI powers. All legislative attempts regarding the AI in the EU, OECD, Türkiye and so on are trying to make AI better for everyone. When we talk about better, accessible, responsible AI, we should also talk about the actor. If an AI can do a job that many people do, is that good for the people who lose that job, or if an AI can use personal information to advertise a product

much more successfully, is that good for customers? There must be this understanding of holistic, responsible AI governance schemes, with as many stakeholders as possible, and introduce and implement different perspectives.

- When we talk about governance mechanisms, laws, regulations and resistance we should take the development gap between those countries and AI benefits into account. When we take a look at technology trends, the first movers always have the advantage; they develop the product, and at some points they may create a regulatory capture framework that will actually prevent new actors from emerging.



Pascale Fung

Chair Professor and Director, Center for Artificial Intelligence Research

Pascale Fung is Senior Director of AI Research at Meta and a Chair Professor of Electronic & Computer Engineering at The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST). She is also a visiting professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. A Fellow of AAAI, IEEE, ACL, and ISCA, she has served on the IEEE Signal Processing Society Board and as Editor-in-Chief for leading speech and language processing journals. Her team has won multiple best paper awards at ACL and NeurIPS workshops.

Fung has been an expert on the Global Future Council of the World Economic Forum since 2016 and is part of the UN's AI Advisory Body. She has advised the EU, UAE, Japan, and the U.S. Academies on AI governance and ethics. Fluent in seven languages, she is based at Meta-FAIR in Paris and was named one of Forbes Asia's 2024 leaders.



- AI cannot be solely developed by male engineers in the laboratory; it has to involve the whole society. When you talk about raw quantisation, it is important to democratise the usage of AI, of course, but it is even more important to democratise the development of such a consequential technology that is going to affect our future society and future generations. It is crucial to bring in different stakeholders and empower women and girls to enter STEM fields, and to become part of the core AI development and research.
- In today's global-scale technology and AI development cycle, it is important to continue to open-source what we do and to enable people to do research directly on these open-source platforms. It is very important to keep AI science open because it allows for wider participation and encourages global collaboration.
- I think there are ample regulations in many sectors. For example, the internal sector, the financial sector, and the Geneva Convention that governs the use of weaponry. These regulations are there to be respected. There are also privacy and security regulations, such as those related to data security. Every technology, whether AI or some other technology, needs to be made compliant with these regulations. This is not up for debate; it is a requirement for responsible technological development.



Session 6

Media Distortion Exposed: Uncovering the Forces Behind Polarisation



Keynote Speaker

Fahrettin Altun, Professor; Head of Communications, Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Maria Ramos, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Claudio Cappon, Secretary General, COPEAM

Gilles Marchand, Former Director General, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation

Gregoire Ndjaka, Director General, African Union of Broadcasting

Ziad Makary, Minister of Information, Republic of Lebanon

Key Takeaways

- Media historically served power structures, particularly the Western hegemony, masking exploitation and dominance under claims of impartiality. The shift to digital media has not alleviated this bias but has intensified the spread of distorted information.
- Digital platforms manipulate emotions (“emotional doping”) and amplify global divisions, undermining meaningful dialogue and balanced information exchange.
- Examples from Lebanon and Africa illustrate how misinformation fuels hate speech, political and social unrest, and even loss of life, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Lack of infrastructure, such as education, electricity, and internet access worsens misinformation damage in developing regions, demonstrating the need for systemic improvements.
- Educating future generations on critical media consumption and reinstating fact-checking cultures are crucial to mitigating the effects of misinformation and fostering informed societies.
- Reliable public service media can counter disinformation, promote accurate narratives, and serve as a tool for rebuilding trust and informed participation in society.

Summary of the Session

The session ‘Media Distortion Revealed: Exposing the Forces Behind Polarisation’ addressed the role of both traditional and digital media in perpetuating misinformation, disinformation and social divisions. Participants highlighted how historical claims of media neutrality have often been a front to legitimise power dynamics, particularly Western domination. With the advent of digital media, these problems have intensified as global corporations and social media platforms reinforce distorted narratives, manipulate emotions and exacerbate polarisation. Speakers highlighted the growing influence of media on political, social and individual dynamics, citing examples such as hate speech, misinformation during conflicts, and the challenges faced in regions such as Lebanon

and Africa. The discussion emphasised that distorted media narratives often undermine justice and truth, framing social crises in ways that serve the interests of the powerful. The global reach of misinformation has devastating effects particularly in politically or economically fragile regions, where individuals lack the means to critically analyse or verify information. The panellists argued that this distortion contributes to a broader ‘digital fascism’ that strains cohesion and deepens global inequalities. It is stated that prioritising the promotion of transparency, objectivity and inclusivity in global communication systems should be highlighted in order to tackle this issue.

Keynote Speech by Fahrettin Altun

Professor; Head of Communications, Republic of Türkiye

Prof. Fahrettin Altun is a prominent academic in communication sciences and the Head of Communications for the Presidency of Türkiye, a role he has held since July 25, 2018, following his appointment by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

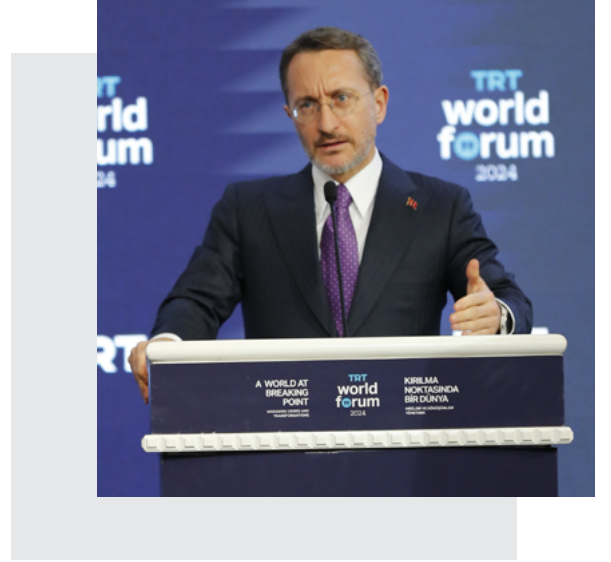
Prof. Altun earned his Ph.D. from Istanbul University and pursued studies in the United States. He has held various academic leadership roles, including Department Head at Istanbul Şehir University, faculty member at Istanbul Medeniyet University, and Dean at Ibn Haldun University. Additionally, he served as the General Coordinator of SETA Istanbul.

His professional background spans academia, media, and public communication. Prof. Altun has contributed as a columnist and editorial director for leading publications such as Sabah, Akşam, Daily Sabah, Kriter, Anlayış, Yöneliş, and Küre. He also produced and hosted news and discussion programs for major television networks, including TRT 1, TRT 2, and TRT News.

Prof. Altun's research focuses on Turkish modernization, political communication, and cultural studies. His publications include Modernleşme Kuramı (2002) and Türkiye as a Stabilizing Power in an Age of Turmoil (2021). He has also contributed as an editor and chapter author to works such as Press Freedom in Türkiye (2016), The Triumph of Turkish Democracy (2016), 15 Temmuz'da Medya (2017), Terörün Kökenleri ve Terörle Mücadele Stratejisi (2018), and Toplumsal Arası İletişimde Yeni Dönem: Enformasyon Savaşından Dezenformasyon Savaşına (2023).

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, esteemed participants, good afternoon. It is an honour to address such a distinguished audience on this panel!

The title of this panel is Media Distortion Exposed: Uncovering the Forces Behind Polarisation. This is a strong claim. We assert that the media adopts a biased attitude. And this claim is not one that can be easily refuted. According to the modern Western paradigm, media is valuable and necessary because it supposedly guarantees individuals' right to access information. In this understanding, media is the fourth estate that is a mechanism above politics. Historically, the media has added to its news delivery mission functions like entertainment and advertisement sales. In this process, has the media provided individuals with a healthy flow of information? Have people been able to access and freely disseminate information through the media



This time, global media corporations and social media platforms began to ideologically steer global communication flows. They spread distorted information. They systematically produced disinformation. Their biased stance has worsened the crises of justice and truth in the global communication domain. And along with all this, through their partisan approach, they deepened polarisation and divisions on a global scale. In fact, all of this should be considered severe human rights violations.

in a healthy manner? No!

Mainstream media outlets have conveyed selected, filtered, and edited information and news to society. They managed this process in accordance with the interests of the power mechanisms they were subject to. They presented the information they wanted in the way they preferred and concealed what they did not wish to show. And in doing so, they cloaked themselves with an armour of untouchability. They did not share truth, reality, or accurate information but only fragments of the truth. Ultimately, the information they provided was not truthful; it was distorted. In addition to this, conventional media in the analogue era fueled political and ideological polarisation in different countries and societies.

Today's communication and media regime, of course, is nothing like it was in the 19th or the 20th centuries. We have transitioned from the analogue media and communication regime to a digital one. Although this new regime offers many new possibilities, when we look at the bigger picture, we, unfortunately, see that the dominance of distorted information over genuine information persists in this new era as well.

In the digital media environment, it was claimed that individuals and media consumers would produce content, democratise information, and the centrifugal structure of information flows would allow more space for the non-Western world's perspectives. Has that been the case? Clearly, no.

This time, global media corporations and social media platforms began to ideologically steer global communication flows. They spread distorted information. They systematically produced disinformation. Their biased stance has worsened the crises of justice and truth in the global communication domain. And along with all this, through their partisan approach, they deepened polarisation and divisions on a global scale. In fact, all of this should be considered severe human rights violations. This is the proposal I am making before you.

Today's dominant digital and analogue news conglomerates reproduce manipulative and distorted information repeatedly. I propose that we define this practice as a violation of fundamental human rights. Genuine information is one of the most fundamental components of individuals' participation in public life, social and economic activities as well as political life. In this respect, accessing genuine, accurate,

and truthful information and freely disseminating it is a fundamental human right.

Today, both major global conventional media companies and social media platforms serve to sustain and legitimise the Western exploitative order and the unjust international system. Let us acknowledge that we are now facing a regime of digital fascism. And unfortunately, we also face digital dictators trying to uphold this fascist regime. Their primary strategy is to colonise and exploit our daily lives. To achieve this goal, they promote an artificial culture of hyper-consumption. They strive to maintain a digital addiction system that numbs people. Through covert censorship and subtle promotion mechanisms, they aim to induce changes in political behaviour. In all these processes, they seek to exempt themselves from the oversight, regulation, and legal interventions of non-Western states, positioning themselves above the law to avoid accountability.

With the transition from the era of conventional media tools to the era dominated by digital media tools, we see that the media has not only fueled political and ideological polarisations but also contributed to social polarisations. This situation threatens the sense of peace, dialogue, and coexistence in the social realm. Individuals of the new era are confronted with the "obligation to express" their polit-

Today, both major global conventional media companies and social media platforms serve to sustain and legitimise the Western exploitative order and the unjust international system. Let us acknowledge that we are now facing a regime of digital fascism. And unfortunately, we also face digital dictators trying to uphold this fascist regime.

ical identities in the public sphere through digital media platforms. This is a new form of fascism. As Roland Barthes puts it, "Fascism is not the prohibition of speech but the obligation to speak".

The claim of impartiality, even in the traditional media era, has been used as a tool to conceal power asymmetries in society and the international arena. This was essentially a situation that had to do with the powerful's expectation of "consent" and "participation" from the weak. After 1945, when the United States emerged as the leader of Western global dominance and took the stage as the leading force of the West, the traditional Western colonial system of the 19th century was reformulated. The traditional Western colonial system of the 19th century was based on the plundering of the wealth of the non-Western world through coercion. During the interwar period, societies subjected to exploitation initiated a wave of liberation, which became a major challenge to Western global hegemony. Faced with this challenge, the post-World War II American hegemony adopted an understanding aimed at making the non-Western world dependent by giving them a share of the global system. And a new international system was built.

In this system, the non-Western world was asked to consent to the Western hegemony led by America. The mainstream media in the West and the pro-Western media outside the West tried to institutionalise this dependency relationship and create "consent" mechanisms in the process. The discourse of impartiality became the shield of the mainstream media during this process. However, the truth was that the media has been a partisan entity aiming to reinforce Western global dominance.

Today, this pursuit of consent and the discourse of impartiality have become a luxury or perhaps even a burden for the dominant Western communication and media regime. The global information regime dominated by Western media is no longer attempting to establish an environment of consent in the non-Western world. From the 1950s until recent times, political correctness was the compass of the Western media. Hiding Western ethnocentrism, making exploitation relationships invisible, and propagating humanism became the ethical framework of the media.

However, in recent years, this picture has changed. In the mainstream Western media, politically correct language directed toward non-Western societies, the "victimised," the

"oppressed," and the "subaltern" has started to disappear. The search for impartiality has been replaced by efforts to rally supporters. Ethnocentric attitudes reminiscent of 19th-century Orientalist texts have become mainstream in the Western media. Anti-Islamic sentiment and xenophobic propaganda, once marginal, have become the norm for mainstream media outlets. The idea of Western superiority and arguments suggesting that the non-Western world has become a burden for the West have regained popularity.

In my view, this process began during the pandemic, accelerated with the Russia-Ukraine war, and reached its peak with Israel's genocide in Gaza. Today, we are witnessing a massive genocide unfolding before our eyes. While this genocide is taking place in front of the entire world, the Western media focuses on promoting Israel as a crucial ally of the Western world. Without feeling the need for a politically correct language, they do everything they can to justify Israel's actions. They circulate blatant hate speech not only against Gazans or Palestinians but against all Muslims. They strive to rally more supporters for the "white man." They have abandoned the approach of fostering participation in the system; and reverted to crude exploitation and occupation. Instead of building consent, they are working to create a climate of fear.

Yes, the conventional and digital media actors are as responsible for the injustices, polarisations, and sufferings in the global arena as the perpetrators themselves. I must also confess that I have always found the claim of impartiality misplaced. For me, what is valuable is the pursuit of objectivity, what matters is integrity, and just as much transparency. Throughout my academic life and during my engagement with media studies, this has always been my stance. The compass of the media should be justice and truth.

However, today, in the face of crimes against humanity, wars, terrorism, irregular migration, financial turmoil, food, and supply chain crises, including the genocide in Gaza, the media does not act as an advocate for the "righteous," but as a propagandist for the "powerful." This system must change. Just as our President declares that a fairer world is possible, we assert that a fairer global media environment is both possible and essential. And we invite you to heed this call and work together toward this goal.

Thank you.

Highlights

Claudio Cappon

Secretary General, COPEAM

Claudio Cappon has held several prominent managerial roles in the Italian public sector. He served as Deputy Director General and Director General of RAI from 1998 to 2002, and again as Director General from 2006 to 2009. He was Vice President of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) from 2009 to 2014. Since 2016, he has been Secretary General of COPEAM. Cappon was also a professor at SciencesPo Paris, teaching “Public Service Media in Europe” (2010-2019), and since 2018, he has chaired the JTI Project, promoting media quality standards.



- Media organisations have been forced into different ways of making money, primarily through clicks and likes. This has changed the attitude of the journalism profession. It has made it easier for unconfirmed news and misinformation to spread rapidly. Disinformation and misinformation are closely linked, and I think we have to be aware that this issue stems from the digital revolution and the rise of social networks. As Marshall McLuhan said, “The medium is the message”—the changing devices and the ways we consume media fundamentally change and shape the content of information.
- The big issue, I think, is that we must start to consider media literacy in schools. As the media landscape continues to evolve, it is essential that we equip future generations with the tools to critically assess the information they encounter.
- Apart from the issue of fake news, there is a broader shift in professional journalism. The most significant change is that information, at least in my country, is becoming increasingly emotional. I would call this “emotional doping”. The danger lies in the manipulation of emotions through information, which distorts the way we perceive reality.



Gilles Marchand

Former Director General, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation

Gilles Marchand served as Director General of SRG SSR, the Swiss public service broadcaster, from 2017 to October 2024. Prior to this, he was Director of Télévision Suisse Romande (TSR), which became RTS (Radiotélévision Suisse) in 2010 after merging radio and television operations.

Marchand holds a master's degree in sociology from the University of Geneva and began his career at La Tribune de Genève. He later joined the Ringier media group in French-speaking Switzerland, where he led the research, marketing, and communications department and became director of the group in 1998.

In addition to his leadership roles in broadcasting, Marchand serves on several boards, including TV5 Monde, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), where he is a member of the Executive Board and Chair of the Audit Committee, the University of Geneva's Strategy Committee, and SwissMediaForum



- Polarisation is a growing reality, but it has nothing to do with critical thinking or partisanship. It is a different issue altogether. When you are in a situation of mistrust, then polarisation emerges. What is needed in such a situation is balanced information and trustworthy dialogue. Media should provide context in a balanced way and should foster dialogue.
- Digitalism also brings some problems that exacerbate polarisation. In a distressed situation, polarisation naturally arises, and I think it is very dangerous for global society. This global sense of polarisation is likely to have been further amplified by two main trends. The first is the globalisation of the world, which brings anxiety and complexity. The second major factor is the increasing digitalisation, which brings its own set of challenges. For example, social media amplifies these problems at a very high level, making it increasingly difficult to find common ground and engage in meaningful dialogue.
- In the example of Switzerland, there is a federal system with four languages and direct democracy system. This direct democracy system means that citizens have to vote at least four times per year and each time they vote for five to six topics. To be a reasonable citizen, you need to have correct and balanced information. You need dialogue, discussion and a good media coverage. If you can not do that, the whole system is down. So, the media coverage is crucial for the system in the example of Switzerland.
- In a democratic system, if the population is not able to vote, all the system is down. We should ask why the media are components of this polarization. I can stress five key elements: failing trust, fragmentation of the media landscape, news fatigue, algorithmic news and economic pressure. A well-made public service could be a good response to this problem. Because the public media service, since it has to reach everyone, unifies people. Secondly, public media boost interest for political issues. And thirdly, public media tries to protect people from manipulation.

Gregoire Ndjaka

Director General, African Union of Broadcasting

Grégoire Ndjaka has been CEO of the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB) since January 2016, with over 33 years of experience as a senior journalist. Elected in October 2015 and confirmed by the AUB General Assembly in Abuja, he was re-elected in June 2022 for a second four-year term (2023-2027).

Before joining the AUB, Mr. Ndjaka held several senior roles at Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV), including Director of Human Resources, Senior Advisor to the Director General, and Deputy Director of Cooperation.

A 1988 graduate of the Advanced School of Information Science in Yaoundé, Cameroon, he is a Japan Foundation fellow with a keen interest in promoting Africa-Asia news exchange. He holds master's degrees in Human Rights and Humanitarian Emergencies and in Project Management from the Catholic University of Central Africa.

Mr. Ndjaka is a Knight in the National Order of Value and an active member of several professional organisations.



- There are two important challenges for Africa: the level of education and the level of development of electricity and Wi-Fi networks. These two aspects make the position of media crucial in the context of polarisation. People often take what comes from TV and radio as the truth, without the ability to cross-check. The Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, for example, was fueled by misinformation spread through the radio. People did not have the possibility to cross-check the information they were receiving.
- In this context, the role of public service media becomes very important. Public service media can help provide reliable and accurate information, counteracting the spread of misinformation and playing a key role in fostering a more informed society.
- The level of instruction and lack of electricity causes a lot of misinformation damage in some regions in Africa. For instance in the vaccination process in the Covid-19 pandemic, many people lost their life because of following fake news.



Ziad Makary

Minister of Information, Republic of Lebanon

Ziad Theodor Makary holds advanced degrees in architecture from the University of Balamand's Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) and the Paris-Belleville School of Architecture (EN-SAPB), focusing on Islamic architecture and Mediterranean heritage. As a full-time professor at the Lebanese University, he is an expert in Lebanese architecture and cultural heritage preservation.

Makary founded and leads ARCA – Architecture & Design, a prominent firm with projects across Lebanon, Qatar, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, and Mozambique. His research includes a UNESCO study on urban planning in Tripoli and Al-Mina and efforts to preserve the Qadisha Valley archaeological site. He also advises on reconstruction initiatives following the Beirut Blast of August 4, 2020.

As Minister of Information, Makary has advanced significant projects, including the preservation and digitization of archives for national media, drafting a new media law, and integrating Tele Liban's archives into UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. His initiatives also encompass combating misinformation and promoting Beirut as the Capital of Arab Media, along with establishing.

- We have had to confront the media landscape that was shaped before, during, and after the war, especially with the spread of misinformation and disinformation. For over a year, we faced two major challenges. Our priority in Lebanon, as the Ministry of Information, has been to protect freedom of speech. So, during the war, we were confronted with the dual challenge of safeguarding this freedom while also combating misinformation and disinformation, which came not only from Israel but also from Lebanese sources.
- Misinformation creates polarisation and further divisions in society, which in turn fuels hate speech. This has been very dangerous, having a significant impact on political life, social life, and the citizens of Lebanon. We have seen a profound division, and the misinformation and hate speech in Lebanon have caused significant damage. Unfortunately, we are paying the price for this, and it will take time to reach a positive place, a good starting point for rebuilding our media outlets. One key aspect of this rebuilding process is to imple-



ment a culture of fact-checking once again, which, as I have repeatedly emphasised, is our main target.

- During the war, you have disorder and chaos and a lot of Lebanese journalists or influencers used to interact with Israelis indirectly and this was giving more danger to the people and also to journalists. A lot of influencers also started to interact with the Israeli army, and that was giving us more problems to solve. So it was something we asked for everybody to stop this interaction because it was go us a lot of problems. During a war and especially with all this new technology and platforms, things are more unpredictable. Every citizen is now a television, a radio, a newspaper, a journalist and you have to monitor everything and it was not easy. But i guess at certain point we succeeded in having much more safe environment in this new landscape.

Session 7

The Test of International Law: Addressing Gross Violations of Human Rights in Conflicts



Moderator

Ghida Fakhry, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Carmel Agius, Judge, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals; Former President of the ICTY

Cüneyt Yüksel, Professor; Chairman, The Justice Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Mohamed Badar, Professor; Comparative and International Criminal Law, Northumbria University

Omar Suleiman, PhD; Civil Right Activist

S. Michael Lynk, Professor; Former Human Rights Special Rapporteur

Key Takeaways

- The ICC and ICJ face procedural and enforcement challenges, delaying justice and undermining their effectiveness in crises like Gaza and Ukraine.
- The disparity in responses to violations in the Global North versus the Global South reflects a bias that erodes the credibility of international law.
- The reliance on the UN Security Council, particularly the US veto power, limits the enforcement of international legal rulings and contributes to systemic injustice.
- While symbolic victories provide hope and global awareness, they must translate into tangible outcomes to achieve meaningful justice.
- Strengthening domestic legal systems and leveraging diplomatic channels are essential to addressing systemic violations and advancing accountability.
- Historical examples of justice being served, such as the cases of Milosevic and Karadzic, offer hope that perseverance in legal and political efforts can lead to meaningful change.
- The session highlighted the idea that crises, while devastating, can create opportunities to challenge existing power structures and advocate for reform in international law.

Summary of the Session

The session “The Test of International Law: Addressing Gross Violations of Human Rights in Conflicts” explored the systemic challenges and double standards that undermine international legal frameworks, particularly in addressing human rights violations in Gaza and Ukraine. Speakers emphasised the urgency of addressing these issues, criticizing the inefficiency of the ICC and ICJ in enforcing accountability. The discussion highlighted the selective application of international law, particularly in the Global North’s response to violations, contrasting the treatment of Gaza with other crises like Ukraine. The panel also underscored the limitations of international institutions, which often rely on political bodies like the UN Security Council, whose veto power can obstruct justice. Despite these challenges, the session stressed the importance of symbolic victories in maintaining

hope and progress while pushing for substantive justice through strengthened domestic laws and diplomatic opportunities.

The session called attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, framing it as not just a regional issue but a broader crisis of humanity, marked by alarming civilian casualties. It questioned the legitimacy of Israel’s actions and its adherence to international norms, drawing comparisons to past atrocities like those of Nazi Germany. Speakers highlighted the historical persistence of international law in addressing gross violations, citing examples where justice, though delayed, was eventually served. Finally, the discussion underlined the growing global awareness and solidarity for Palestinian rights, emphasising that this collective momentum must be harnessed to push for systemic reforms and accountability.

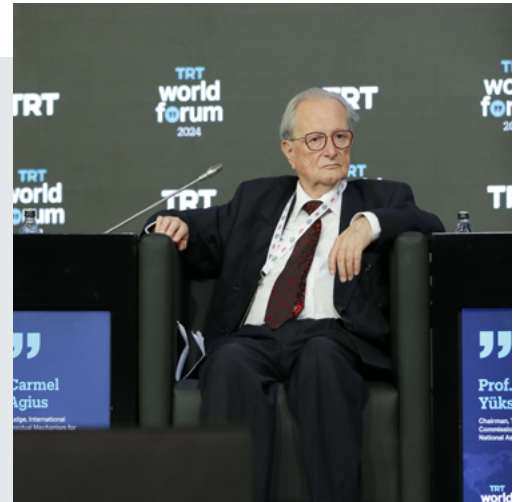
Highlights

Carmel Agius

Judge, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Former President of the ICTY

Judge Carmel Agius, from Malta, served as President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) from 2015 to 2017 and as President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) from 2019 to 2022. He was first elected as a judge of the ICTY in 2001 and of the IRMCT in 2010. Before joining these tribunals, he held senior positions in Malta's Court of Appeal and Constitutional Court and served as Acting Chief Justice multiple times. He continues to serve as a judge of the IRMCT.

- The system at the ICC is not conducive to having these procedures concluded within a very short time, and this creates multiple problems, as you can see in the current moment. The situations in Gaza and Ukraine are very critical, and when faced with a critical situation, the confirmation of an indictment or the issuing of an arrest warrant becomes a matter of urgency. There are people who have arrest warrants but have not been arrested, which is a sad situation. However, I still have faith in the ICC. It is not symbolic.
- The situation, as it stands today, looks very bleak and discouraging. However, I worked in the courts where we had little hope of catching Milosevic, Karadzic and Mladic. And in the end, we caught all three.
- Even within the EU there are suddenly some cracks appearing. The statements made by France after the agreement on a ceasefire in Lebanon shocked many people, including me. There was immediate condemnation and criticism from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. If you look in detail at what is going on in the EU, it is very difficult today to have the conviction that there is complete uniformity internally and that the EU is determined about what is going to happen.
- International politics can be very tricky. Things can happen in one's own country that can completely change the situation. Milosevic, for example, was not captured by the Americans or anyone else, he was handed over by his political rivals when he least expected it. So we don't know what will happen in Israel, and Netanyahu doesn't have the full support of his country.



Cüneyt Yüksel

Professor; Chairman, The Justice Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Professor Cüneyt Yüksel is the Chairman of the Justice Commission in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) and a Member of Parliament representing Istanbul for the Justice and Development Party (AK Party). He leads GNAT's Legal Team in international courts, focusing on legal issues related to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in Palestine.

Previously, Professor Yüksel held academic positions at Istanbul University Faculty of Law and Boğaziçi University and has lectured at leading universities in Türkiye and abroad. In his earlier political career, he served in the 23rd term of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, contributing to the Türkiye-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee, the EU Harmonisation Committee, and the Justice Commission, among others.

Yüksel holds an LL.M. from Harvard Law School and a second master's and J.S.D. from Stanford Law School. His scholarly contributions on law, global governance, justice, and democracy have been widely recognised, and he has published extensively in both English and Turkish. In addition to his academic and legal work, he has served as President of the Harvard Alumni Association for Türkiye and Europe, receiving the "Harvard Special Award" for his contributions.

- We are at a critical turning point in the field of international law, especially international humanitarian law. Since the events of October 7, 2023, I believe we must reflect deeply on the effectiveness, fairness, legitimacy, and future of both international law and international humanitarian law. What distinguishes the double standards applied in the case of Gaza from many other instances is the selective application of international law. The case of genocide at the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a pivotal moment in the evolution of international humanitarian law.
- The situation in Gaza is more than a humanitarian crisis at this stage; it is a crisis of humanity. With over 45,000 civilians dead, including more than 17,000 children and over 12,000 women, it is clear that Israel is openly committing acts of genocide, war crimes, and violations of human dignity—much like Nazi Germany did in the past.
- When South Africa filed a lawsuit against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), seeking provisional measures for violations of the Genocide Convention, it highlighted a critical issue. While the ICJ is independent, it relies on the UN Security Council for enforcement, which has significantly hindered the impact of the ICJ's rulings.



Mohamed Badar

Professor; Comparative and International Criminal Law,
Northumbria University

Prof. Mohamed Elewa Badar holds the Chair in Comparative and International Criminal Law & Islamic Law at Northumbria Law School, Newcastle, UK. From 1997 to 2006, he served as a Senior Prosecutor and Judge in Egypt. He also played key roles as an investigator for the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry and in judicial reform efforts in Afghanistan.

Prof. Badar is the author of *The Concept of Mens Rea in International Criminal Law* (Oxford: Hart, 2015) and has published over 60 articles in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters. His work has been widely cited by international criminal tribunals and leading scholars in the field.

In December 2021, he was appointed as Legal Consultant for Mr. Al Hassan's Defense Team before the International Criminal Court. In July 2023, he was named an expert on Daesh/IS ideology for UNITAD.



- The ICJ and ICC are two parallel courts. Israel did not respond to provisional measures, but this posed a threat to Israel. The ICC looks at individual criminal responsibility, while state and organisational crimes fall under the ICJ. If you can prove that a certain state is responsible, it will take time—just as it did in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it took years. But it happened. The ICJ writes history, and while it may take time, we should keep hope.
- When asked, “Where is the Arab world?” the answer is simple: what is missing is us. We, the lawyers, are not in this frame; we are looking at them from the perspective of national criminal and cultural justice. Imagine if there were no International Criminal Court—would we stay silent? We are missing in action.
- We are failing to activate our domestic law. We should leave international justice to continue, but we also have something to do, something we are not doing right now. However, thanks to Türkiye, there was a statement from the president of Türkiye yesterday, which said, “Crisis creates opportunities.” We have opportunities with this crisis, and we must use them. And besides, international relations and diplomacy must be utilised to the fullest.

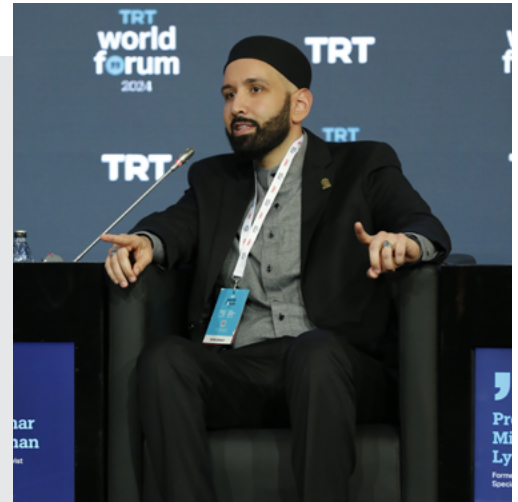


Omar Suleiman

PhD; Civil Right Activist

Imam Dr. Omar Suleiman is a globally recognised scholar and an activist committed to human rights. He is the Founder and President of the Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research and serves as an adjunct professor of Islamic Studies in the Graduate Liberal Studies program at Southern Methodist University, where he is also a member of the Ethics Center Advisory Board.

In his local Dallas community, Dr. Suleiman is the resident scholar at the Valley Ranch Islamic Center and the former Co-Chair Emeritus of Faith Forward Dallas at Thanks-Giving Square. Nationally, he founded MUHSEN (Muslims Understanding and Helping Special Education Needs), a non-profit organisation dedicated to fostering inclusivity for people with disabilities in the Muslim community. He is also working on launching a new initiative, Dignity in Displacement, focused on advocating for refugees and survivors of genocide.



- I love optimism, but the Palestinian people have zero hope in anything outside of God and themselves. Symbolic victories are important, but what really matters is substantive victory. The problem is not Netanyahu alone; the problem is Israel. The international system, and the UN, are held hostage by the US.
- Gaza has put every single international principle on trial. There's a difference between a symbolic victory and a substantial victory. A symbolic victory should be taken at face value for what it is, but until these warrants are enforced, until Israel is actually brought to justice, we can only see this as political theatre. Until we're proven wrong, we will regard it as another symbolic victory and factor it into the overall progress of the global Palestinian movement and the awareness movement for the rights of Palestinians. We should continue to show gratitude to our brethren in South Africa and to those who have tried to enforce justice.
- There has never been a moment in our lifetimes when there have been more people saying "Free Palestine" than right now. This is a cause for hope. But when you talk about genocide and the crimes of the state of Israel, you cannot exclude the United States. I will start believing in these systems when Joe Biden is prosecuted for his role in this war crime, for his role in this atrocity. When Antony Blinken is treated like Gallant, then I will believe in these systems.

S. Michael Lynk

Professor, Former Human Rights Special Rapporteur

Michael Lynk is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Law, Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, where he taught from 1999 to 2022. He specialised in labour law, human rights, disability law, constitutional law, and administrative law, and served as Associate Dean from 2008 to 2011. His scholarship has been cited by both the Supreme Court of Canada and the International Court of Justice.

In May 2016, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously appointed Professor Lynk as the 7th Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. During his six-year term, he delivered regular reports to the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council on human rights trends in the occupied territories, completing his term in April 2022.

He has shared insights from his UN experiences in the book *Protecting Human Rights in Occupied Palestine: Working Through the United Nations*, co-authored with Richard Falk and John Dugard, both of whom are his predecessors as UN special rapporteurs (Clarity Press, 2022).



- How the Global North reacted to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the situation in Gaza shows a huge gap. This disparity raises important questions about accountability and the application of international law. Let me say something provocative: does Israel deserve to maintain its membership in the United Nations? Article 25 of the UN Charter states that every member should obey the resolutions of the organisation. However, the United States has consistently backed Israel with its veto power.
- At the heart of the international legal system is the issue of accountability, or the lack thereof. Between 2016 and 2022, I devoted three of the twelve reports I issued to the topic of accountability, specifically in relation to Israel. Why hasn't accountability been imposed by those in the Global North? The answer is simple: they can live with it. These powers have become accustomed to ignoring their own laws. There are plenty of provisions in international humanitarian and human rights law that hold parties accountable. It is right there in Common Article 1 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, in the 2001 Articles on State Responsibility, and in Articles 25 and 6 of the United Nations Charter.
- Let me ask again, in a provocative way: does Israel deserve to maintain its membership in the United Nations? The United States has vetoed approximately 50 resolutions over the last 50 years that were critical of Israel. No other permanent member of the United Nations Security Council has vetoed a single resolution without a similar intervention during that period. When the United States allows resolutions to pass with respect to the annexation of East Jerusalem, the application of the Geneva Convention, or the illegal Israeli settlements, it uses its authority to ensure these resolutions are not put into effect.

Session 8

Addressing Global Economic Uncertainty: Strategies for Resilience



Keynote Speaker

Mehmet Şimşek, Minister of Treasury and Finance, Republic of Türkiye

Moderator

Auskar Surbakti, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Adam Yousef, PhD; Head of Economics, Greater London Authority

Andrew Caruana-Galizia, Head of Europe and Eurasia, World Economic Forum

Dalia Grybauskaitė, PhD; Former President, Republic of Lithuania

Vicky Pryce, Chief Economic Adviser, The Centre for Economics and Business Research

Key Takeaways

- Trade fragmentation, rising protectionism, and geopolitical tensions create substantial barriers to global economic growth, with significant risks for both developed and emerging markets.
- Türkiye's approach to global economic uncertainties combines free trade agreements, regional integration, renewable energy investments, and long-term strategies like structural reforms and reducing income inequality to ensure resilience and sustainable growth.
- The potential for renewed tariffs under a second Trump administration poses a threat to global trade stability. Tariffs on goods and services, particularly from the US, could slow global growth and amplify inflationary pressures.
- Insufficient action on climate change, coupled with a substantial funding gap for disaster-related costs, underscores the urgency of coordinated global responses and increased private sector engagement in sustainability efforts.
- International cooperation, rule-based systems, and multilateral frameworks are critical in addressing global economic challenges effectively. A shift toward inward-looking policies among major economies highlights the need for renewed global dialogue.

Summary of the Session

The session “Addressing Global Economic Uncertainty: Strategies for Resilience” explored the multifaceted challenges posed by trade fragmentation, protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and climate change. Speakers highlighted the risks of prolonged trade wars, global economic slowdowns, and inflationary pressures, particularly for emerging markets. Türkiye's proactive strategies, including free trade agreements, regional integration projects, and investments in renewable energy, were presented as key examples of building resilience. The importance of structural reforms to boost productivity and reduce inequality was also emphasised as part of Türkiye's approach to long-term growth and stability.

The discussion underscored the critical role of international cooperation and rules-based systems in mitigating global economic risks. Rising protectionism and tariffs, particularly in the US-China trade rivalry, were identified as significant threats to global stability. Climate change emerged as a pressing issue, with insufficient global action and a significant funding gap in disaster recovery. Speakers called for increased private sector engagement and innovative financing solutions to bridge this gap and drive sustainability efforts forward.

Keynote Speech by Mehmet Şimşek

Minister of Treasury and Finance, Republic of Türkiye

Mehmet Şimşek, currently serving as the Minister of Treasury and Finance served as Türkiye's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs from 2015 to 2018. Representing the AK Party, he was elected to the Parliament for three terms (2007, 2011, 2015). During his tenure as Minister of Finance (2009-15) and Minister of Economy (2007-09), Şimşek championed structural reforms and prudent macroeconomic policies, contributing to Türkiye's resilient position amid various domestic and external shocks.

His leadership in enhancing a credit guarantee scheme played a crucial role in steering Türkiye away from recession following the 2016 failed coup attempt. His earlier roles included positions at Merrill Lynch in London, Deutsche-Bender Securities in Istanbul, UBS Securities on Wall Street, and as a senior economist at the US Embassy in Ankara.

Şimşek holds a B.S. in Economics from Ankara University, where he also worked as a research assistant. He earned an M.Phil in Finance and Investments from Exeter University. Acknowledged for his influence, Foreign Policy listed him among the 500 most powerful individuals globally in 2013. Emerging Markets magazine honoured Şimşek as the "Finance Minister of the Year for Emerging Europe 2013."

I am delighted to be with you in this last session of the TRT World Forum. I hope we will make it as exciting as possible.

The title reminds me of a quote from Antonio Gramsci, who while in prison, said that "The old world is dying, the new world is struggling to be born, now, it is a time of monsters". The rule-based world order is under stress if we put it mildly, in fact, there are big cracks appearing. So, at my keynote presentation, I will have a few slides, I would like to cover structural global challenges. And Türkiye's response to this in terms of building resilience.

Building local resilience to global challenges has become increasingly crucial. Trade fragmentation, driven by the geostrategic competition between the United States and the emerging superpower China, has led to increasing trade restrictions. Protectionism has surged dramatically, and if this trend continues, global GDP could reduce by as much as the combined economies of Germany and France.

Türkiye, however, has been proactive in mitigating these



risks. With 54 free trade agreements, which cover 62% of our exports, Türkiye is positioned well to benefit from both near-shoring and friend-shoring. Türkiye's relatively low total indebtedness also contributes to its resilience, providing a strong foundation in the face of global economic uncertainties. Furthermore, Türkiye still holds a significant demographic advantage compared to many of its peers, as the world faces an ageing population.

Trade fragmentation, which was once a theoretical risk, is now a reality. Protectionism has become the new normal, and with high global indebtedness and rising long-term interest rates, growth is being slowed, particularly in developing nations. The ongoing trade tensions between the United States and China, coupled with restrictive trade interventions, have exacerbated these challenges.

The current global landscape is fraught with challenges. The world is ageing, conflicts are widespread, and geostrategic risks are high. During such times, countries must be strong, which is why Türkiye has heavily invested in its defence industry. While conflicts are undesirable, nations must be prepared. However, Türkiye's strength is not limited to hard power; it also holds significant soft power through its world-wide diplomatic missions.

Trade fragmentation, which was once a theoretical risk, is now a reality. Protectionism has become the new normal, and with high global indebtedness and rising long-term interest rates, growth is being slowed, particularly in developing nations. The ongoing trade tensions between the United States and China, coupled with restrictive trade interventions, have exacerbated these challenges. The risk is that, in the event of increased tariffs, not only would inflation rise in the USA, but global growth would also slow, which would have a detrimental effect on emerging markets.

China's massive manufacturing capacity is a crucial factor. If China faces tariffs, it is unlikely that the country will dismantle its capacity; instead, it will reroute exports, putting our markets at great risk. This, in turn, would contribute to slower Chinese growth and, ultimately, slower global growth. Slow growth means a lower risk appetite for emerging markets, and with higher inflation and US yields, the cost of funding globally will rise, which is bad news for everyone.

Despite these global challenges, Türkiye is actively pursuing opportunities. Türkiye has 54 free trade agreements, including a customs union with the European Union, which covers 62% of its exports. Türkiye is also negotiating comprehensive free trade agreements with GCC countries and several nations in Central Asia. In the coming years, Türkiye aims to ensure that approximately three-quarters of its exports will be covered by rule-based free trade agreements. This would enhance Türkiye's resilience relative to other open economies.

In addition to trade, Türkiye is focusing on regional integration and connectivity. One notable project is the development of rail and road connectivity extending from Basra to London and China, aimed at deepening and broadening regional trade ties. This project is seen as the best way to counter the rise of global protectionist measures.

Global warming is an undeniable reality, and though there is

Türkiye's approach also includes a comprehensive structural reform agenda aimed at boosting productivity and competitiveness.

These reforms are essential to creating sustained prosperity, but Türkiye is also focused on reducing income inequality and improving income distribution.

Structural reforms remain a continuous effort and a critical aspect of Türkiye's long-term vision for resilience and growth.

broad agreement on the issue, action has been insufficient. If business continues as usual, the risk of a 3.2°C increase in global average temperature is real, with potential economic losses of up to 18% of global GDP. Türkiye, however, is actively pursuing the green transition, a top priority alongside digital transformation. The share of renewables in Türkiye's electricity generation has increased from 25% to 42% over the past 25 years, a significant achievement in terms of sustainability.

Türkiye's approach also includes a comprehensive structural reform agenda aimed at boosting productivity and competitiveness. These reforms are essential to creating sustained prosperity, but Türkiye is also focused on reducing income inequality and improving income distribution. Structural reforms remain a continuous effort and a critical aspect of Türkiye's long-term vision for resilience and growth.

I hope you enjoyed my presentation. I think if humanity were to wake up these challenges and start collaborating then maybe we have a good chance of addressing these challenges, without sacrificing growth. If we are unable to talk to each other and get our act together and cooperate, basically go back to a new rule-based, fair, global system. Today's system is not fair. Then I think we could address all of these.

Thank you very much.

Highlights

Adam Yousef

PhD; Head of Economics, Greater London Authority

Adam Yousef is Head of Economics at the Greater London Authority, the governing authority for the Greater London region in the UK. He leads the delivery of evidence-based policies to shape London's economic priorities. Previously, he headed the quantitative modelling team at the Government of Ontario, Canada, where he supported COVID-19 recovery programmes and fiscal policy development. During his PhD, he advised the European Commission on fostering growth and prosperity in the EU's neighbouring regions.

Adam is also a Policy Fellow at the University of Cambridge and a member of the Strategy Board of Chief Economists and Heads of Profession at the UK's Government Economic Service. He holds a PhD in Political Economy from the University of Cambridge, a Master's in Economics from the University of Oxford, and a Bachelor's in Economics from the London School of Economics



- It is a very pressing concern that we could end up with a second Trump administration, one that could levy tariffs across the board. This would not just involve tariffs imposed by China, but also by other countries around the world. This is especially worrying when you consider that our economy is 90% services. The UK, as a whole, is an open economy, with trade accounting for about 64% of GDP, according to World Bank data. This is significantly higher than many other developed countries. Therefore, the idea of tariffs, which could affect our ability to export both goods and services, is a tremendous concern.
- As a second strategy, the idea is to try to overcome obstacles to growth by addressing the issue of fiscal centralisation. It is interesting that in the UK, 95% of total government revenue is generated by the central government. That is a lot higher than the OECD average of 89%. To try to find a way to generate consensus to try to delegate more fiscal revenue generating powers to London would help us then wield more potential instruments that could help us grow and in a sustainable manner in order to withstand any of the effects of the Trump tariffs.
- If we try to address those spatial inequalities within the limited fiscal levers that we have, we are able to at least build a more inclusive society at the social level to try to at least use whatever is possible within our means, to be able to withstand any kind of pressure emanating from the slower growth that potential tariffs are going to impose.

Andrew Caruana-Galizia

Head of Europe and Eurasia, World Economic Forum

Andrew Caruana-Galizia is the Head of Europe and Eurasia at the World Economic Forum. He joined the Forum in 2018 as a Global Leadership Fellow, leading work on geopolitics, South Asia, and the Asia Pacific, before joining the Europe team as its Deputy Head in 2021. He previously served as a career diplomat from 2012 to 2017, with postings as Deputy Head of Mission in Berlin and Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi, and as an advisor at the European Parliament. He is a co-founder of the Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation and, along with his brothers, a recipient of a Magnitsky Human Rights Award and an Anderson-Lucas-Norman Award. He holds an MA with distinction from the College of Europe in Bruges.



- Even though there are people around President Trump who are very critical of multilateral organisations and the idea of the international community, President Trump himself saw a lot of value in Davos. The reason is even the world superpower needs to collaborate to meet its national interest.
- In the event that the US implements tariffs under President Trump and other countries retaliate, this would be very damaging for the world economy. My sensible advice is not to retaliate, but instead, to offer something in response. Retaliation could lead to a damaging trade war that would ultimately hurt global growth and stability.
- No one really knows what President Trump will do in his first week in office, but judging by his first presidency, it is very clear that he will likely impose tariffs. The real question, however, is whether he will do this as a

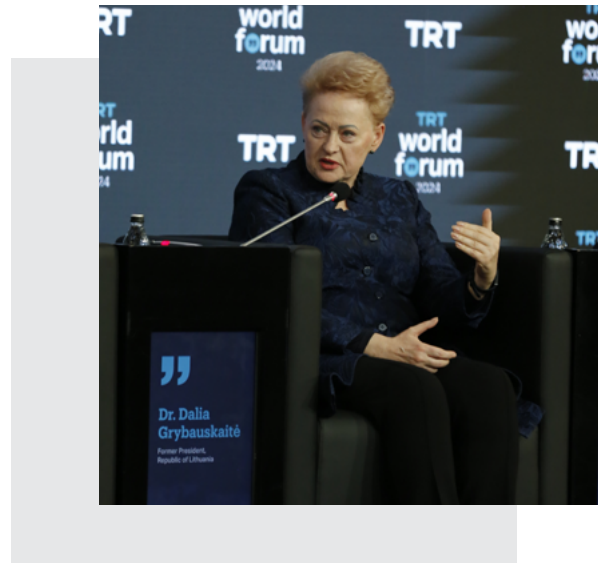
negotiating strategy or if it is part of a broader world-view, where he aims to see global trade reduced permanently to a lower level. I subscribe to the first theory. My view is that President Trump uses tariffs as a tool to exert pressure, expecting a change in position from the countries targeted by those tariffs.



Dalia Grybauskaitė

PhD; Former President, Republic of Lithuania

Dr. Dalia Grybauskaitė is the former President of the Republic of Lithuania, serving from 2009 to 2019. During her presidency, she focused on boosting the country's economy, strengthening Lithuanian security, and welcoming a NATO battle group as part of the Alliance's "enhanced forward presence." Prior to her presidency, she served as Lithuania's Finance Minister and European Union Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budgets. Widely popular even after her presidency, Grybauskaitė continues to speak on issues such as energy security, transatlantic relations, geopolitical security, women's leadership, gender equality, and sustainable development. She also serves on various advisory boards and commissions.



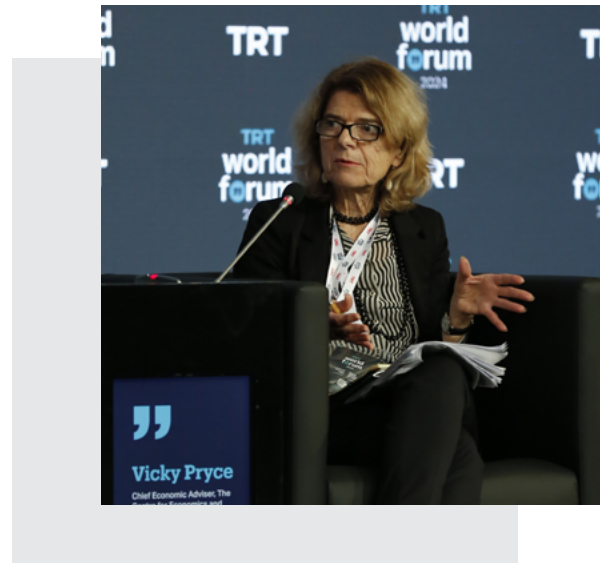
- Trump can impose decisions quickly, but he can also change his mind just as fast. He may not be particularly interested in what is happening around the world, but rather in what is occurring within the US. If inflation becomes a significant issue in the US, it could easily change his mind. During the election period, he used anti-inflation rhetoric, which reflects his focus on domestic issues.
- The Ukrainian War is not only a European war, it already has the elements of a world war. We have Iranians and North Koreans participating in the war directly on the ground. We do not have the choice to participate in the war or not, we are dragged into this conflict altogether. And the resilience of Ukraine and how much they will be able to resist with our support, is also our security. So, it is also about the European security.
- Political will and positive political leadership are crucial in this context. Trump, however, is unpredictable. Nobody really knows what he will do, and even he himself might not be certain. This time, he has surrounded himself with more loyalists, which means there are fewer professional advisors and fewer people willing to challenge him. These are mainly individuals who will simply implement his opinions. In his first term, there were delays and submissions in the implementation of his policies, but this time, I believe that will not be the case. He is changing his opinions depending on the information he receives.



Vicky Pryce

Chief Economic Adviser, The Centre for Economics and Business Research

Vicky Pryce is the Chief Economic Adviser and a board member at the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), as well as a Visiting Professor at King's College, London. She has previously held senior roles, including Director General for Economics at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Joint Head of the UK Government Economic Service. Pryce has also served as Partner and Chief Economist at KPMG, with prior experience in banking and the energy sector. A Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences and the Society of Professional Economists, she is co-founder of GoodCorporation and Chair of the Economic Advisory Council of the British Chambers of Commerce. Pryce is a regular commentator on business and economics and is actively involved in various professional organisations, including the City of London.



- Even President Biden has been quite protectionist. Irrespective of whether it is Trump or Biden, the US is moving in that direction. The country has become much more inward-looking for some time now. The 25% tariff that President Biden wants to impose on China, Mexico, and Canada is driven by political reasons. These tariffs are not purely economic measures; they are being implemented with specific political objectives in mind.
- If you get a lot fewer people coming in through the borders with Mexico, the agricultural sector in the US would collapse. Because more than half of the labour which is working on land in the US is illegal right now. So if you start getting rid of those people, who is going to do those jobs? This affects lots of countries which have issues with migration.
- In Europe, recent floods highlight the impact of climate change, compounded by human factors like construction. Beyond the costs often discussed, the push for a rapid green transition might be moving too fast and imposing significant financial burdens, leading to resistance. Climate change affects property and livelihoods, generating immense costs—yet only 14% of disas-

ter-related losses are insured. This creates a massive funding gap, prompting governments to respond with tax hikes and spending cuts. Addressing this shortfall raises questions: What role should the private sector play? Some firms are resisting green regulations, questioning how investments in sustainable practices will yield returns. Investment funds have also retreated from this area, and private sector contributions remain far below expectations. Similar challenges exist for individuals, complicating efforts to bridge the financial gap.



Expert Roundtable Sessions

Session 1

The New Actor in the Global Defense Industry: Türkiye



Moderator

Yusuf Erim, Türkiye Analyst, TRT World

Speakers

Ahmet Akyol, General Manager, ASELSAN

Murat İkinci, General Manager, ROKETSAN

Mehmet Demiroğlu, PhD; General Manager, TUSAŞ

Discussants

Azeem Ibrahim Obe, Director, Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy in Washington

Deniz İstikbal, Assistant Professor, Istanbul Medipol University

Dimitris Tsarouhas, Professor, Türkiye Program Director, Center for European Union and Transatlantic Studies

Jovan Manasijevski, Ambassador, Republic of North Macedonia to the Republic of Türkiye

Khairudin Aljunied, Associate Professor, National University of Singapore

Michelangelo Guida, Professor, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University

Murat Jane, Assistant Professor, Istanbul Aydın University

Murat Yeşiltaş, Professor, Foreign Policy Research Director, SETA Foundation

Najiba Mustafayeva, Assistant Professor, Ibn Haldun University

Nazmul Islam, Associate Professor; Head of Türkiye, Asia and Indo-Pacific Studies, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

Key Takeaways

- **Strategic Evolution for Independence:** The defense industry of Türkiye emerged out of a necessity for independence following the 1974 embargo on arms supply, to become a major player in exports to more than 90 countries. Investments in R&D, advanced technologies, and indigenous capabilities have ensured strategic autonomy and driven the industry's competitiveness in global markets.

R&D and Innovation Drive Growth: A dedicated focus on research and development catapulted the Turkish defence industry to also work on state-of-the-art fifth- and sixth-generation aircraft. R&D investments have powered innovation, hence making the industry competitive globally while responding to military and civilian needs.

- **Critical Challenges Ahead:** The industry faces key challenges in semiconductor dependency, energy security, and shortages of the skilled workforce. Localisation of semiconductor production, assurance of energy independence, and development of talent pipelines go to the core of sustaining its growth and resilience.
- **Soft Power and Diplomacy:** Türkiye leverages its defense industry to strengthen diplomatic ties by assisting allied nations in developing self-sufficient defense systems. This not only enhances Türkiye's global influence but also fosters long-term partnerships in non-military sectors.
- **Future Strategic Goals:** It is intended to bring together regional priorities within the Turkic world and the NATO commitments. The further development of international cooperation, technological independence, and the creation of global defence brands will determine leadership and influence in the world arena.

Summary

Türkiye has emerged as a prominent actor in the global defence industry through strategic investments, innovation, and a focus on self-reliance. The evolution of its defence sector, driven by historical events such as the Cyprus Crisis and ongoing regional conflicts, has transformed it into a globally competitive industry. Leading companies like ASELSAN, TUSAŞ, ROKETSAN, MKE, and ASFAT play a pivotal role, exporting advanced defence systems to over 90 countries and contributing to NATO's collective capabilities. Despite challenges like semiconductor dependency, energy security concerns, and human capital shortages, Türkiye's defence firms have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, developing indigenous solutions and fostering technological independence. The sector also enhances Türkiye's diplomatic influence by supporting allied nations in building self-reliant defence systems. Türkiye's defence exports to NATO countries and collaborations with global aviation leaders like Airbus underline its commitment to meeting international standards. Research and development efforts have been central to these advancements, with ground-

breaking projects such as fifth- and sixth-generation fighter jets.

The emphasis on creating a robust domestic supply chain has reduced foreign dependency, ensuring greater operational security and resilience against external pressures. Additionally, Türkiye's strategic use of the defence industry as a soft power tool has fostered long-term partnerships with nations across the Turkic region and beyond. Tailored solutions that cater to diverse client needs have enhanced trust and showcased the adaptability of Turkish defence technologies. The industry's response to sanctions, such as overcoming Canadian optics restrictions, highlights its ability to innovate under pressure. Looking ahead, the sector aims to balance its NATO commitments with its regional ambitions, leveraging technological excellence to become a key player in the global defence market. This comprehensive approach positions Türkiye's defence industry not only as an economic driver but also as a cornerstone of its strategic and diplomatic initiatives.

Session 2

Emerging Multipolarity in the Asia Pacific: Different Players, Different Layers



Moderator

Jaffar Hasnain, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Choi Shing Kwok, CEO, Director and Head, the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

John Kirton, Professor; Executive Director, G7 & G20 & BRICS Research Groups

Selçuk Esenbel, Emeritus Professor; Founding Director, Asian Studies Center and the Confucius Institute, Boğaziçi University

Wang Huiyao, PhD; Founder and President, Center for China and Globalization

Discussants

Achmad Rizal Purnama, Ambassador, the Republic of Indonesia to the Republic of Türkiye

Altay Atlı, Managing Director, Atlı Global

Çağatay Özden, Head of Department, Asia and Pacific Countries, General Directorate of International Agreements and EU, the Ministry of Trade

Eren Günhan Ulusoy, Honorary Consul, the Republic of Indonesia

Jagannath Panda, Head, Stockholm Center for SouthAsia & IndoPacific

Merthan Dünder, Professor, Ankara University

Miles Armitage, Ambassador, Australia to the Republic of Türkiye

Nicolas Michelin, Founder, Asia Power Watch, CEO, Asia Intelligence Advisory

Stephen Siu Kay On, Assistant Professor, Ibn Haldun University

William Choong, Senior Fellow, the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Key Takeaways

- **Transition to Multipolarity:** The rise of the Global South, exemplified by BRICS+ and ASEAN, is reshaping global and regional dynamics, signalling a shift away from the unipolar Bretton Woods system. This trend highlights the importance of inclusive structures and cooperative frameworks for maintaining stability.
- **Complex U.S.-China Rivalry:** The bipolar competition between the U.S. and China is driven by mistrust and poor communication, with significant global repercussions. While historical Cold War-era stability contrasts with today's tensions, both powers must prioritise collaboration to mitigate risks of unintended escalation.
- **Regional Cooperation and ASEAN's Role:** ASEAN has emerged as a vital platform for fostering multilateral dialogue and preventing conflicts. Its success in balancing the interests of major and smaller nations demonstrates the potential of regionalism in maintaining peace.
- **Independent Agency of States:** Countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, Indonesia, and Australia, are navigating the U.S.-China rivalry by pursuing diversified partnerships that align with their national interests. These efforts underscore the importance of avoiding rigid bloc alignments.
- **Focus on Global Peace:** The Asia-Pacific region's relative stability contrasts with active conflicts like those in Ukraine and Gaza. The emphasis must shift from rivalry to addressing shared challenges such as climate change, resource security, and conflict resolution, with major powers playing constructive roles.

Summary

The Asia-Pacific region is undergoing a profound transformation, marked by the rise of multipolarity and the growing influence of the Global South. This shift signals a departure from the unipolar Bretton Woods order and underscores the need for inclusive and cooperative frameworks to ensure stability. Organisations like BRICS+ and ASEAN are at the forefront of these changes, advocating for greater representation and securitisation in global decision-making processes.

Central to the discussion is the escalating U.S.-China rivalry, which has created a bipolar structure in the Asia-Pacific. While globalisation enabled China's economic rise, mistrust, and poor communication have exacerbated tensions, creating a precarious balance that demands careful management. Historically, U.S.-China relations were stable during the Cold War, but today's dynamics reflect a more competitive landscape. Collaboration between these two powers is essential to addressing global challenges and avoiding unintended consequences of their rivalry.

ASEAN plays a pivotal role in fostering multilateral dialogue and balancing the interests of large and small nations. Its efforts to bring the U.S. and China to the negotiating table highlight its capacity to prevent conflicts and promote peace. ASEAN's success underscores the potential of regionalism as a cornerstone of the global economy and a mechanism for conflict prevention. However, tensions persist, particularly as political pressures push states toward adversarial positions.

The Asia-Pacific region's stability contrasts with active conflicts elsewhere, such as those in Ukraine and Gaza. This relative calm reflects the importance of diplomacy and dialogue in maintaining peace. The world must prioritise resolving real conflicts over escalating rivalries, focusing on cooperative solutions to shared challenges like climate change and resource security.

Individual states in the region are navigating the complexities of the U.S.-China rivalry by pursuing diversified partnerships. Japan, for example, balances its economic ties with China and its security alliance with the U.S., while Australia seeks to maintain its autonomy through strategic alliances. These efforts demonstrate the importance of avoiding rigid bloc alignments and

highlight the potential for independent agencies in shaping the regional order.

The emerging multipolarity in the Asia-Pacific region is both a challenge and an opportunity. The interplay of economic, military, and diplomatic forces creates a complex and layered competition, where cooperation and rivalry coexist. The U.S.-China economic relationship exemplifies this paradox: while China is a key partner for the U.S., its activities in the region raise strategic concerns in Washington.

Preserving the rules-based international order remains critical as the region navigates this transition. Trust-building measures between major powers, inclusive regional structures, and collective global efforts are essential to sustaining peace and stability. By moving beyond rhetoric and taking tangible actions, the Asia-Pacific region can unlock significant opportunities for cooperation and growth.

Ultimately, the region's future hinges on its ability to balancing competition with collaboration, ensuring that emerging multipolarity contributes to a stable and prosperous regional order.



Session 3

The Russia-Ukraine War: How to Bridge the Divide?



Moderator

Tim Constantine, Advisory Board Member, Gulf International Forum

Speakers

Danielle Belle, Head of Mission, United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

Florence Bauer, Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA

Jeffrey Mankoff, Senior Associate, Russia and Eurasia Program, The Center for Strategic and International Studies

Mariana Katzarova, UN Special Rapporteur, OHCHR

Murat Yeşiltaş, Professor, Foreign Policy Research Director, SETA Foundation

Discussants

Anar Somuncuoğlu, Associate Professor, Hacettepe University

Dr. Esmira Jafarova, Board Member of the Center of Analysis of International Relations, AIR Center

Esra Hatipoğlu, Professor, Rector; Bahcesehir University

Furkan Kaya, Associate Professor, Yeditepe University

Merve Suna Özel Özcan, Assistant Professor, Kırıkkale University

Orhan Gafarlı, Assistant Professor, Ankara University

Salih Yılmaz, Professor, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

Tolga Sakman, PhD; President, DİPAM

Yücel Öztürk, Professor, Sakarya University

Key Takeaways

- **Türkiye's Mediating Role:** Türkiye's unique geopolitical position and cultural ties, particularly with the Crimean Tatars, position it as a key mediator in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Its diplomatic efforts focus on building trust and balancing relations with both Russia and NATO while advocating for Ukraine's territorial integrity.
- **Human Rights and Women's Empowerment:** Human rights, particularly issues like the release of prisoners of war and addressing sexual violence, should form the cornerstone of peacebuilding efforts. Women, vital to sustaining families during the war, must actively participate in negotiations and post-conflict recovery to ensure inclusivity and long-term stability.
- **Military and Political Dynamics:** Military solutions dominate the immediate focus of the belligerents, but political strategies must address the root causes of the conflict for a sustainable resolution. Balancing military action with diplomatic efforts remains crucial for progress.
- **Post-War Recovery and European Security:** Post-war recovery will be a massive undertaking, requiring both infrastructure rebuilding and investments in human capital. The conflict has reshaped the European security landscape, and a proactive approach by international actors, especially the EU, is necessary for regional stability.
- **A South Korea-Style Peace Plan:** A potential resolution could mirror the South Korean model, focusing on coexistence and a strengthened, multilateral framework such as an expanded Budapest Memorandum. This approach emphasises long-term security guarantees and a structured system for peace.

Summary

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, now in its third year, continues to dominate international discourse as it reshapes geopolitical and security dynamics. The session highlighted the complexities of finding a lasting political solution amidst ongoing military tensions, emphasising Türkiye's mediating role and the importance of a strategic, multilateral approach.

Türkiye's balanced diplomacy, leveraging its ties with both Russia and Ukraine, positions it as a critical player in facilitating dialogue. It has maintained support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimea, while cautiously managing its strategic relationship with Russia. This dual approach enables Türkiye to act as a bridge between conflicting parties, creating opportunities to build trust and momentum for peace. Türkiye's advocacy for the Crimean Tatars, whose culture shares Turkic roots, underscores its cultural and diplomatic leverage in fostering stability.

Human rights emerged as a central theme in conflict resolution. The immediate release of prisoners of war and addressing sexual violence are priorities, with the UN emphasising the importance of incorporating human rights into any peace agreement. The critical role of women in peacebuilding and post-war recovery was repeatedly underscored. Women, who have sustained Ukrainian society during the war, must actively participate in negotiations to ensure inclusivity and justice. Investments in women's empowerment and human capital are pivotal for Ukraine's long-term stability.

The interplay between military and political solutions is a recurring challenge. Military assistance and strategies shape the immediate dynamics of the conflict, but achieving a sustainable resolution requires addressing deeper political and historical issues. Ukraine's need for genuine security guarantees and Russia's historical security concerns add complexity to the peace process. Both sides' escalating actions hinder progress, underscoring the necessity of balancing military efforts with robust political strategies.

Post-war recovery will be a colossal task. It demands a proactive European approach to ensure Ukraine's long-term security and stability. Reconstruction efforts must go beyond infrastructure, addressing the social and

economic needs of displaced and vulnerable populations. The EU, NATO, and the UN have critical roles in preparing Ukraine for recovery, focusing on infrastructure rebuilding and supporting vulnerable populations. Meanwhile, NATO's expanding footprint in Romania and Bulgaria has significantly reshaped Black Sea dynamics, creating new opportunities and challenges for Türkiye. As a key Black Sea power, Türkiye must carefully navigate the evolving security architecture to balance its strategic interests while maintaining regional stability.

A South Korea-style peace plan was identified as a viable framework for resolution. Drawing on the principles of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, an expanded and strengthened agreement is essential for long-term peace. Such a plan should emphasise coexistence, human rights, and practical steps to address humanitarian issues.

Ultimately, the session underscored that achieving peace requires a realist, multilateral approach, integrating military strategies, political negotiations, and human-centric solutions. Türkiye's diplomatic efforts, coupled with international collaboration, are critical to navigating the complexities of the conflict and shaping a sustainable path to peace.



Session 4

Africa at the Epicenter of Global Rivalries



Moderator

Grace Kuria, Producer, TRT World

Speakers

Jakkie Cilliers, PhD; Founder and Former Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa

Lord Paul Boateng, Former British High Commissioner to South Africa, Member of the House of Lords (UK)

Mehari Taddele Maru, Professor, Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute

Tighisti Amare, Deputy Director of Africa Programme, Chatham House

Discussants

Abdurrahim Sıradağ, Associate Professor, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University

Asma Nairi Özen, PhD, Researcher, Africa Foundation

Bilgehan Öztürk, PhD, Researcher, SETA

Hasna Jebel Abagero, Researcher, ORSAM

Isidore Agha, PhD, Researcher, Uludağ University

Kaan Devecioğlu, PhD, Expert, ORSAM

Nadir Yousif Eltayeb Babiker, Ambassador, Republic of Sudan to Republic of Türkiye

Serhat Orakçı, Assistant Professor, Haliç University

Tunç Demirtaş, PhD, Researcher, SETA

Volkan İpek, Associate Professor, Yeditepe University

Key Takeaways

- **Rich Resources and Young Population are Untapped Potential:** Despite its abundant mineral wealth, strategic trade routes and young population, Africa has not reached the expected level of economic development by failing to utilise these potentials.
- **Fragility in Global Dynamics:** Africa remains highly vulnerable to global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, which disproportionately affect its economic and social stability.
- **The Importance of Unified African Voices:** Adverse conditions have highlighted the need for African states to prioritise collective action, as seen in initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- **Avoiding Forced Alignment in Power Struggles:** Major powers often pressure African states to align in global contests. However, Africa must **prioritise its interests through balanced, mutually beneficial partnerships.**
- **Leadership and Institutional Reform as Catalysts:** African leaders must focus on implementing plans that enhance institutional effectiveness, ensure political legitimacy, and avoid dependence on external actors.

Summary

Endowed with vast mineral wealth, strategic trade routes, and a young population, Africa possesses immense economic growth potential. However, despite these critical advantages, the continent lags in achieving the anticipated levels of development.

Africa's economic growth remains below the global average, highlighting its inability to capitalise on its potential fully. While other regions benefit from global economic trends, Africa has often been excluded from these processes. This economic disparity underscores the need for in-

tegrated markets and strategic partnerships to enhance resource management and trade efficiency.

For instance, the mutually beneficial collaborations between the U.S. and China in resource-rich regions of Australia demonstrate how global powers can work together effectively. By promoting similar models, Africa can transform its image from a "conflict zone" to a "development zone" through partnerships that prioritise the continent's interests alongside those of prominent global actors.

It is worth noting that Africa's economic and social systems remain vulnerable to global crises. Recent geopolitical rivalries between powers such as the U.S., China, and Russia, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, have disproportionately affected African countries. These vulnerabilities amplify the importance of collective African initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which aims to bolster the continent's resilience and safeguard its interests. In other words, African stakeholders must prioritise their interests, forming more substantial and cohesive alliances to stand firm in global arenas.

Unity among African countries is not just a necessity but also an opportunity. By collaborating, African nations can negotiate more effectively with global powers and prevent their strategic interests from being compromised in the ongoing global power struggle.

Africa's geostrategic significance has increasingly made it a focal point in the competition between major powers. As external actors seek to expand their influence for military, economic, or political gains, African nations must resist being coerced into partisan alignments. Instead, their flexibility to pursue positions that serve their national interests should be respected and supported. Africa should embrace a "win-win" approach to prioritise its developmental needs. One lesson from the Cold War is that African nations were often pressured into aligning with competing blocs to their detriment. Global actors must respect Africa's political and economic autonomy and refrain from imposing their policies or preferences.

Africa's development process heavily depends on the competence of its leaders and institutions. Although numerous plans exist for economic and political advancement, weak leadership and institutional inefficiencies have frequently hindered their implementation.

For sustainable progress, African leaders must focus on building legitimacy that goes beyond elections by adopting genuine democracy rather than "electocracy", establishing economic and political stability to enhance public trust in gov-

ernance and strengthening institutions to ensure the effective implementation of policies.

Moreover, Africa's youthful population presents a significant opportunity for robust leadership. The continent can better leverage its demographic advantage by creating opportunities to empower and involve young leaders.

On the other hand, Africa must transition from being seen as a "conflict zone" to a "development zone." External interventions in the continent should not turn Africa into a battleground for global power struggles but, instead, foster international collaborations that prioritise the interests of Africans.

Africa's path to prosperity lies in its ability to overcome these challenges through collective action, strategic partnerships, and strong leadership. By enhancing cooperation, improving governance, and ensuring respect for its autonomy, Africa can unlock its vast potential and secure a brighter future for its people.



Session 5

New European Security Framework and Strategic Autonomy



Moderator

Neil Harvey, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Elmar Brok, Former Member, European Parliament

Iain Begg, Professor, European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science

Luis Simón, Professor, Director, Centre for Security, Diplomacy and Strategy, The Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Thomas Hans Ossowski, Ambassador, Head, European Union Delegation to Türkiye

Discussants

Adviye Damla Ünlü Bektaş, Assistant Professor, Istanbul University

Çiğdem Nas, Associate Professor, Yıldız Technical University

Dimitris Tsarouhas, Professor, Türkiye Program Director, Center for European Union and Transatlantic Studies

Emre Gönen, CCR Executive Board, Advisor to the Rector, Istanbul Bilgi University

Enes Bayraklı, Associate Professor, Turkish-German University

Fulya Memişoğlu, Associate Professor, Yıldız Technical University

M. Erkut Ayvaz, Berlin Research Director, SETA

Özgün Erler Bayır, Professor, Istanbul University

Key Takeaways

- **The EU's Role as a Geopolitical Actor:** The war in Ukraine has highlighted the EU's evolution from an economic and internal market entity into a geopolitical actor. However, achieving strategic autonomy is hindered by financial constraints, structural issues, and differing national priorities. Strengthened NATO-EU cooperation and improved EU decision-making mechanisms are vital to enhancing Europe's security posture.
- **The Centrality of NATO in European Security:** NATO remains the cornerstone of European defence, providing an overarching security umbrella. Enhanced NATO-EU collaboration is indispensable for addressing emerging threats, particularly as divisions within the EU and transatlantic strains pose challenges to cohesive action.
- **Türkiye's Strategic Importance:** Türkiye, as a NATO ally with significant military strength, plays a critical role in European security. Closer EU-Türkiye cooperation, particularly through economic and defence partnerships, could bolster regional stability and strengthen NATO's overall position.
- **Financial and Strategic Challenges:** Many EU member states underfund defence due to competing budgetary priorities. This financial gap underscores the need for harmonised policies, shared defence initiatives, and better resource allocation to meet growing security demands effectively.
- **Unity and Cohesion as Key Challenges:** EU solidarity is under pressure from both internal divisions and external actors, such as the U.S., which could exploit differences among member states. Overcoming these challenges requires a more cohesive vision, better integration of non-EU European actors like the UK and Türkiye, and increased focus on shared strategic goals.

Summary

The ongoing war in Ukraine has catalysed a fundamental shift in Europe's security architecture, forcing the European Union (EU) to confront its vulnerabilities and reassess its role as a geopolitical actor. As the EU transitions from a reactive stance to a strategic posture, it faces significant financial, structural, and strategic challenges in bolstering its defence capabilities.

NATO continues to serve as the primary guarantor of European security, with its overarching security umbrella proving indispensable amid rising threats. While the EU has taken steps to establish its defence initiatives, such as forming a defence commission and unit, these efforts remain insufficient. Many EU member states allocate limited budgets to defence, leaving significant gaps in military spending and preparedness. As a result, greater NATO-EU cooperation is essential to address evolving challenges, particularly those posed by an assertive Russia.

Türkiye, a NATO ally with one of the alliance's largest armies, has emerged as a crucial player in the European security framework. Strengthening EU-Türkiye relations could yield mutual benefits, including enhanced security collaboration and improved economic ties through initiatives such as a more organised customs union. However, political complexities, including the unresolved Cyprus issue, continue to complicate this relationship.

The EU's internal cohesion is another critical challenge. Divergent national priorities often hinder unified decision-making, and some member states remain more aligned with NATO and the United States than with the EU itself. This lack of unity could be exacerbated by external actors like the U.S., which has the potential to exploit divisions among EU nations. Furthermore, the EU's European discourse frequently overlooks the contributions of non-EU actors like the UK and Türkiye, even though their roles are pivotal to the continent's security.

Financial constraints compound these issues, as the EU struggles to allocate sufficient resources to defence while managing other geopolitical tasks. A fully-fledged EU army remains unrealistic due to varying

national preferences, but harmonising and building a shared defence industry could significantly enhance the EU's capabilities. To achieve this, the EU must adopt better decision-making mechanisms and set clearer priorities for economic and defence spending.

Despite these challenges, the war in Ukraine has underscored the importance of European solidarity. The EU must demonstrate strong political leadership and sustain its support for Ukraine to achieve sustainable peace and security guarantees. At the same time, the EU must address its strategic deficiencies by investing in defence capabilities, fostering NATO-EU collaboration, and integrating non-EU European actors into its security framework.

Ultimately, the session highlighted that Europe's security resilience depends on a cohesive, forward-looking strategy that balances unity, strategic autonomy, and cooperation with NATO and key allies. Addressing emerging threats and fostering stronger ties with partners like Türkiye are essential steps toward safeguarding Europe's stability in an increasingly volatile geopolitical landscape.



Session 6

Geopolitical Equations in the Middle East: Gaza Beyond the Headlines



Moderator

Tarek Cherkaoui, PhD; Manager, TRT World Research Center

Speakers

Azzam Tamimi, PhD; Editor-in-Chief, Alhiwar TV Channel

Miko Peled, Founder and President, Palestine House of Freedom

Mohammad Subeh, PhD, Emergency Physician and Traumatologist

Raji Sourani, Director, Palestinian Center for Human Right

Salman Shaikh, Founder and CEO, The Shaikh Group

Discussants

Ahmet Yusuf Özdemir, Assistant Professor, Ibn Haldun University

Fawaz A. Gerges, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science

Haydar Oruç, Researcher, Middle East Institute, Sakarya University

Heba Raouf Mohamed Ezzat, Assistant Professor, Ibn Haldun University

Laila Baker, Regional Director for Arab States, UNFPA

Mehmet Çelik, Columnist, Daily Sabah

Selim Öztürk, Associate Professor, Researcher, TASAV

Key Takeaways

- **Humanitarian Crisis and Genocidal Acts in Gaza:** The ongoing Israeli actions in Gaza have been described as genocide, characterised by deliberate targeting of civilians, destruction of critical infrastructure, and deprivation of basic needs such as food, water, and medical care. The blockade and systematic targeting were compared to conditions in concentration camps, emphasising the severity of the humanitarian crisis.
- **Failure of International Legal Mechanisms:** International institutions like the ICC and ICJ have proven ineffective in addressing Israel's violations of international law. While some actions, such as arrest warrants, have been taken, their enforcement has been undermined by the lack of mechanisms and external pressures, particularly from the United States. This failure has allowed Israel to act with impunity.
- **Evolving Discourse and Shifting Public Opinion:** The atrocities in Gaza since October 7 have intensified global attention and shifted public discourse, challenging Israel's narrative. While longstanding oppression of Palestinians has often been overlooked, recent events have galvanised international opposition, with increasing calls to label the situation as genocide and colonial oppression.
- **Geopolitical Dynamics and Complicity:** The conflict in Gaza has reshaped regional and global alliances. U.S. support for Israel remains a critical enabler of its actions, while economic and political dependencies constrain Arab states' ability to respond effectively. Western governments, influenced by double standards, selectively apply principles of international law, as evidenced by stark contrasts between their reactions to Gaza and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- **The Role of Media and Language:** Media coverage of Gaza has been criticised for using misleading language, such as "evacuation" instead of "forced displacement," which obscures the severity of the situation. Terminology and framing significantly impact public perception and a more accurate representation is necessary to reflect the reality of the genocide.

Summary

The closed session addressed the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza, characterised as the first instance of genocide broadcast live to a global audience. Discussions emphasised that the atrocities, while drawing heightened attention post-October 7, have deep historical roots extending over decades. The blockade, systematic deprivation of essential resources, and deliberate targeting of civilians underscore the genocidal intent of Israeli actions. Comparisons to concentration camps were made to illustrate the magnitude of suffering faced by Gazans, including malnutrition, lack of medical care, and attacks on infrastructure such as water supplies.

The role of international legal bodies, such as the ICC and ICJ, was critically examined. Despite issuing limited arrest warrants and advisory opinions, these institutions have failed to hold Israel accountable due to the absence of enforcement mechanisms and external pressures, particularly from the United States. The ICC's focus on lesser war crimes, such as starvation as a method of warfare, while neglecting the broader crime of genocide, highlights selective justice. U.S. financial, military, and diplomatic backing of Israel was identified as a key factor enabling its impunity.

The session also explored the evolving global discourse on Palestine. While the historical oppression of Palestinians has often been sidelined, recent events in Gaza have forced the international community to confront the realities of colonialism and systemic violence. Public opinion has shifted, with increasing condemnation of Israel's actions and calls for justice and accountability. Nevertheless, Western double standards persist, as seen in the contrasting responses to the Gaza crisis and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Geopolitical dynamics were also analyzed, with the Gaza crisis intensifying tensions and reshaping alliances in the Middle East. Arab states' muted responses were attributed to their dependence on U.S. and European economic and military support. Meanwhile, the Abraham Accords have been overshadowed by the conflict, and U.S.-Iranian relations remain strained amid stalled nuclear negotiations. The session highlighted opportunities for collaboration among countries opposing Israeli oppression, emphasising the need for more inclusive and effective international institutions.

Media coverage of Gaza was heavily criticised for perpetuating misleading narratives. Terms like "evacuation" were deemed inappropriate, as they failed to capture the reality of forced displacement. The framing of the situation as a "conflict" or "war" was also challenged, with participants advocating for its recognition as genocide. The session concluded with calls for a more accurate representation of the crisis, effective enforcement of international humanitarian law, and greater global pressure to end the ongoing atrocities in Gaza.



Session 7

Building New Frontiers: Competing Corridors in Global Connectivity



Moderator

Melinda Nucifora, Foreign Correspondent, TRT World

Speakers

Nuh Yılmaz, PhD; Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Parag Khanna, PhD; Founder and CEO, AlphaGeo

Vikram Singh Mehta, Executive Chairman, Brookings India

Discussants

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Choi Shing Kwok, CEO, Director and Head, the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Jagannath Panda, Professor, Head, Stockholm Center for SouthAsia & IndoPacific

Khairudin Aljunied, Associate Professor, The National University of Singapore

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Vural Kural, Senior Economist, Executive Secretary and Treasurer, International Association of Operative Millers-Eurasia Region

Key Takeaways

- **Türkiye's Strategic Role in Connectivity:** Türkiye's geographical position bridges key regions, making it a vital player in connectivity projects. By adopting a win-win approach, Türkiye prioritises collaboration and mutual benefits to enhance regional stability, energy security, and economic development. Initiatives like the Development Road and Zangezur Corridor exemplify its strategic involvement in reshaping global trade and energy routes.
- **Balancing Competition and Cooperation:** Global connectivity projects reflect a dual dynamic of competition and collaboration. While rivalry over strategic influence and control of routes remains intense, fostering cooperation among stakeholders, such as through multilateral initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC), provides sustainable benefits and mitigates conflicts.
- **Energy Security as a Core Driver:** Energy corridors are critical for countries with limited resources. Projects like the Middle Corridor and Development Road not only address energy security but also promote regional stability by reducing risks such as terrorism. Türkiye's efforts to integrate its projects with broader frameworks highlight its adaptability and strategic foresight.
- **Emerging Risks in Connectivity Projects:** Expanding interdependence through connectivity introduces vulnerabilities, including cybersecurity threats, environmental impacts, debt-trap diplomacy, and geopolitical competition. The success of these projects hinges on trust-building, robust financing strategies, and comprehensive risk assessments.
- **Historical and Future Significance of Connectivity:** Connectivity has always been pivotal to economic and strategic power, from the Silk Road to modern maritime and energy corridors. The evolving nature of these initiatives reflects the shifting priorities of a multipolar world, with sustainability and adaptability as critical factors for long-term success.

Summary

Global connectivity projects, spanning transportation networks, energy corridors, and digital infrastructure, have emerged as critical instruments for economic growth, geopolitical influence, and international cooperation. In a world increasingly defined by competition, nations are racing to develop these initiatives to secure strategic advantages and reshape global power dynamics.

Türkiye occupies a central role in this evolving landscape, leveraging its unique geographical position as a bridge between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Middle East. Projects like the Development Road and Zangezur Corridor highlight Türkiye's focus on fostering regional stability, enhancing energy security, and addressing economic challenges. These initiatives not only provide economic benefits such as job creation and affordable energy but also mitigate risks like terrorism along Türkiye's southern borders. Türkiye's approach to connectivity prioritises mutual benefits and aligns with its national interests, avoiding ideological biases while seeking to maximise economic and strategic returns.

Energy security is a recurring theme in connectivity discussions. For nations with limited resources, such as Türkiye, reliable energy routes are vital for meeting domestic needs and ensuring regional stability. Projects like the Middle Corridor have gained prominence due to their potential to address these concerns, especially in light of disruptions caused by conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war. The integration of Türkiye's initiatives with broader frameworks, including partnerships with Russia and Iran, further underscores the strategic importance of these efforts.

However, connectivity projects also face significant challenges. The deepening interdependence among nations introduces risks, including cybersecurity vulnerabilities, financial instability, and geopolitical tensions. Financing remains a critical issue, as the entity funding a project often assumes significant influence, as evidenced by China's Belt and Road Initiative. Additionally, concerns about environmental impacts and debt-trap diplomacy highlight the need for comprehensive risk assessments and sustainable practices.

Historically, connectivity has been a key driver of economic and political power, from the ancient Silk Road to Rome's trade networks. Today, the competitive nature of these projects mirrors their historical significance, with countries vying for control over strategic routes and resources. Yet, cooperation remains an equally important dimension. Initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor exemplify how collaborative efforts can yield sustainable benefits while addressing shared challenges.

Türkiye's strategy in connectivity projects balances competition with cooperation, emphasising win-win collaborations and trust-building among stakeholders. By participating in global initiatives that align with its interests, Türkiye contributes to a more integrated and secure world. Projects like the Istanbul airport demonstrate how connectivity can drive economic and strategic advantages while fostering alliances that promote regional and global stability.

The future of connectivity lies in adaptability and sustainability. As nations navigate the complex interplay of competition and collaboration, the success of these initiatives will depend on their ability to address emerging risks, leverage economic opportunities, and integrate diverse stakeholders into cohesive frameworks. In this context, Türkiye's role as a reliable partner and strategic hub will remain indispensable.



Session 8

Central Asia Crossroads: Enhancing Partnerships Amidst Global Currents



Moderator

Efnan Han, Presenter, TRT World

Speakers

Aijan Sharshenova, PhD; Executive Director, Crossroads Central Asia

Akhror Burkhanov, Press Secretary, Minister of Foreigns Affairs, Republic of Uzbekistan

Merey Mukazhan, Deputy Secretary General, Organization of Turkic States

Selver B. Şahin, Assistant Professor, Bilkent University, Speakers

Discussants

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Merve Özdemirkıran Embel, Associate Professor, Marmara University

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Ramazan Erdağ, Professor, Eskişehir Osman Gazi University

Shafag Mehraliyeva, Instructor, Communication and Media Studies, ADA University

Tolga Bilener, Associate Professor, Galatasaray University

Yaşar Sarı, Professor, Ibn Haldun University

Key Takeaways

- **Intra-Regional Trade Growth:** Central Asia's trade has increased, with Uzbekistan taking the lead in developing proactive relations with neighbours and enhancing connectivity. Infrastructure projects and reduced logistical barriers reflect a move toward economic integration, regional prosperity, and development.
- **Role of the OTS:** The Organization of Turkic States consolidates regional cohesion in the realms of climate change and water management. By promoting cooperation, it encourages shared infrastructure projects and sustainable energy cooperation among member states.

- **Balancing Global Partnerships:** Central Asia's location attracts global powers like China and Russia. While benefiting from initiatives like the Belt and Road, the region seeks diversified partnerships to maintain sovereignty and avoid dependency.
- **Institutional Stability Mechanisms:** Regional stability hinges on robust frameworks addressing terrorism, crime, and governance. Transparency, security initiatives, and cooperative policies foster trust and ensure long-term regional growth and resilience.
- **Opportunities for Integration:** A common economic zone, energy integration, and collaboration on climate can unlock Central Asia's potential. The improvements made in cooperation put the region in a globally increasingly dynamic place with respect to trade.

Summary

Historically a major trading hub, Central Asia's strategic location has positioned it as a key player in global geopolitics, highlighted by the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Russia's regional strategies. The region is undergoing significant changes, driven by its internal dynamics, cultural-historical linkages and external influences. These internal elements and cultural-historical linkages are becoming increasingly important in shaping the region's future and achieving its goals. The member states of the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) are using their common cultural heritage to promote new areas of cooperation and strengthen regional integration. Situated at the crossroads of trade routes linking China to Africa and Europe through the BRI, these nations have considerable economic, commercial and diplomatic potential. This session will examine how Central Asia's internal factors, including its diverse cultural and historical ties, interact with global influences to shape the region's strategic role on the world stage. It will also explore the economic and diplomatic power that Central Asia has and may have in the future due to its position as a key crossroads on global trade routes. The panel will also assess the potential for

deeper integration among Central Asian states through regional initiatives such as the OTS, and consider the implications of these developments within the broader geopolitical landscape.

In November 2024, a closed session at the TRT World Forum in Istanbul delved into Türkiye's role in Central Asia, focusing on its engagement through the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and its influence on the region's economic and diplomatic landscape. The discussion highlighted Türkiye's efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation by leveraging shared cultural heritage to strengthen ties among member states. It also examined the transformative impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Central Asia's economic and commercial dynamics, emphasising the opportunities for regional growth and development. Additionally, the session explored the involvement of key players in shaping security and stability in the region, addressing measures taken to mitigate potential conflicts and challenges.

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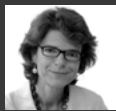
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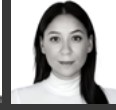
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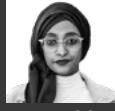
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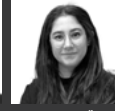
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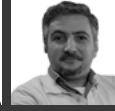
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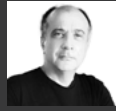
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