



The Relationship between State and Media and its effect on Conflict Resolution

DPI Roundtable Meeting, Mardin
29 June 2013





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Foreword

This report details the discussion that took place during the Democratic Progress Institute's roundtable meeting in Mardin, Turkey on 29th June 2013, regarding the relationship between the State and the Media, particularly in conflict resolution processes. As developments continue to move forward at a fast pace in Turkey, the media will play an important role. We hope that this record of the discussions that took place in Mardin will provide a step towards negotiating the relationships and roles of the media in conflict resolution. This roundtable discussion is one of a series of the Institute's Turkey activities on the subject of Media and Conflict Resolution. Many thanks to the speakers and everyone who participated in this spirited and thought provoking dialogue.

DPI aims to foster an environment in which different parties share information, ideas, knowledge and concerns connected to the development of democratic solutions and outcomes. Our work supports the development of a pluralistic political arena capable of generating consensus and ownership over work on key issues surrounding democratic solutions at political and local levels.

We focus on providing expertise and practical frameworks to encourage stronger public debates and involvements in promoting peace and democracy building internationally. Within this context DPI aims to contribute to the establishment of a structured public dialogue on peace and democratic advancement, as well as to create

new and widen existing platforms for discussions on peace and democracy building. In order to achieve this we seek to encourage an environment of inclusive, frank, structured discussions whereby different parties are in the position to openly share knowledge, concerns and suggestions for democracy building and strengthening across multiple levels. DPI's objective throughout this process is to identify common priorities and develop innovative approaches to participate in and influence the process of finding democratic solutions. DPI also aims to support and strengthen collaboration between academics, civil society and policy-makers through its projects and output. Comparative studies of relevant situations are seen as an effective tool for ensuring that the mistakes of others are not repeated or perpetuated. Therefore we see comparative analysis of models of peace and democracy building to be central to the achievement of our aims and objectives.

This report was prepared with the kind assistance of Judith Sijstermans.

Kerim Yildiz

Director

Democratic Progress Institute

September 2013



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Welcome and Introduction

Opening Remarks – Bejan Matur¹

The Democratic Progress Institute asked me to give the opening speech for this meeting. I also see myself as a host here today. It is easier for me to be a host here in Mardin, than in other places. This historical atmosphere here in Mardin will provide a good setting for me to discuss conflict resolution.

Today we will continue discussions which began during previous DPI roundtables surrounding media and will specifically look at the role of the media in conflict resolution, here in Turkey and elsewhere. There are some newcomers with us today so I would like to give some information on DPI. DPI stands for the Democratic Progress Institute. It is an organisation based in London that works on conflict resolution, and as one of its programmes focuses on Turkey, and the Kurdish conflict. We have politicians, writers and journalists with us. We have a special structuring specific to the domain. We have conducted a number of comparative study visits, firstly to the UK to examine the British experience (in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland then Wales) and we have also visited the Republic of Ireland and South Africa recently. In all of those places we have tried to understand and to share with people who

¹ Bejan Matur is a renowned Turkey based Author and Poet. She was previously a columnist for Zaman newspaper, focusing mainly on Kurdish politics, the Armenian issue, daily politics, minority problems, prison literature, and women's issues. Bejan Matur has won several literary prizes and her work has been translated into 17 languages. She is the Former Director of the Diyarbakır Cultural Art Foundation (DKSV).

are living in Turkey. Many of us, including me, have written articles to share the South African experience with the public. The older the conflict is, the harder it is to resolve it so it will not be an overnight solution. We already know that it is not something easy. Conflict in Turkey will not be solved with a magic formula. Each and every institution should feel responsible for creating a positive public opinion.

The role of media is very important here. Turkish media is especially, has a great responsibility on its shoulders. Some of us admit this conflict out loud and some of us feel guilty for not reflecting on truths. Those who know about the issue were made silent, and did not reflect truthfully. They cooperated with the organisations that run this conflict. Yavuz Baydar, Mahmut Mutman and Doğan Akin will speak on this subject and our colleagues from local media will be able to address this as well. It would not be correct to make negative comments. We are on our path, but we are at the beginning of that path. Jonathan Powell told us a striking anecdote; he gave us a metaphor about a bicycle, to describe the conflict resolution process. He said that one should try to uninterruptedly cycle or peddle so that one does not fall down. In the first session from the United Kingdom we have a colleague, Tom Kelly, who used to be the spokesperson for Tony Blair and was a spokesperson for the Northern Ireland Office during the peace process. Owen Bowcott is a journalist from the Guardian who covered the Northern Irish peace process. But first I would like to start with Professor Kadri Yıldırım, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mardin Artuklu

University and Director of the Institute of Living Languages. He has a good understanding on the philosophical depth of the Kurdish language. He is an expert on the Kurdish epic *Mem u Zin*, which is generally compared to Romeo and Juliet, but it is an epic not a dramatic work. Kadri would like to say ‘welcome’ and to share some very good news with you.

Introduction – Kadri Yıldırım²

Thank you. First of all welcome, our President of the university very much hoped to be here, but because of a prescheduled event he could not be. He sends his warmest regards. We spoke with him last night and he would like to pass his regards and affections and respects. We are here today, to work towards a very valuable goal. We are passing through such a process, that everybody should be careful about his or her language and should develop a new language or discourse. We want to initiate this the language of the media.

Before telling you my comments on this, I would like to draw your attention to the good news that Bejan Matur mentioned. Tomorrow afternoon 500 Kurdish teachers will graduate for the first time. We will have a graduation ceremony and you are all invited. The students have completed their masters’ education in one year. Our government made a decision last year and decided to teach Kurdish language in grades five to eight as an elective course

2 Kadri Yıldırım is the Vice Chancellor of Mardin Artuklu University and Director of the Institute of Living Languages. He has a PhD in Arabic language and literature and is also an expert in Kurdology and Persian language and literature.

for secondary school. Elective courses are not very great news and it is not something to hail with great ceremony but still, perhaps some legal and constitutional change will happen in the future; I believe or hope so. Until then this elective Kurdish course can be accepted as a step towards this aim.

We need to make certain infrastructures ready; firstly the textbooks and the materials, and secondly, the teachers who have the necessary skills for teaching from these textbooks. There was previously a lack of teachers and materials so we attached great importance to this. It is not enough by itself but it is still important while taking other steps. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Minister of National Education; according to that memorandum since last year at Mardin Artuklu University's Kurdish unit, we have been preparing fifth grade textbooks and materials. Now, we will focus on sixth grade textbooks, which will be prepared during July and August.



Vice Chancellor of Mardin Artuklu University Kadri Yildirim

In order to teach these textbooks we need teachers. We discussed it with a delegation from the Department of Training and Education and we were assigned to teach as many teachers as possible. We were able to choose 500 candidate teachers from 3,000 applications. We taught and trained those 500 people and we wanted to carry out a ceremony which will be held tomorrow afternoon. I knew that you would be here so I brought invitations for you. I will distribute them one by one. We would be very happy to see you on this celebrated day. There you will learn what we are doing in the Mardin University Kurdology Department, and you will be able to understand it. It is a step which has been taken very recently in Turkish history. It is the first time that many Kurdish teachers will graduate from a university and that each teacher has had his or her name recorded in national newspapers. More detailed information will be given tomorrow; I hope to see you again then. Welcome again to Mardin and thank you very much for being here.

Session One

Moderator – Bejan Matur

We have with us today Kerim Yildiz from London, the Director of DPI, and also I would like to tell you that Prof. Penny Green from King's College London, David Gorman from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Dr. Edel Hughes from the University of East London and Dr. Kathleen Cavanaugh from Galway University are also here as experts in the field. Firstly, I'd like to leave the floor to Tom Kelly, to tell us about his thoughts and experiences.



Moderator Bejan Matur

Speaker – Tom Kelly³

Thank you very much for that introduction and thank you very much for the invitation to come here today. Congratulations to the university, for the progress you are making. I am truly astonished by how much progress you are making and I wish you well for tomorrow. I am very glad to hear that Jonathan Powell is still using the bicycle analogy! Jonathan and I have a little personal rivalry as to which of us first thought up the analogy. I think we both claim credit. The important thing about the bicycle analogy is this: sometimes on a bicycle you go very fast and it all feels downhill and it is easy. Sometimes it is all uphill and it is very slow. The

³ Tom Kelly is Director of Communications for Network Rail UK, a position he has previously held for the Financial Services Authority and Heathrow Airport Holdings, the owners of Heathrow. Previously he worked in Government, firstly as Director of Communications at the Northern Ireland Office, and then for six years as the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman in Downing Street where he briefed the media on national and international affairs, including the Northern Ireland peace process.

important thing is that you keep the wheels turning just enough to stop yourself from falling over. That's peace processes. This morning I worked out that I am 5,300 km from my home in Northern Ireland, 3,000 odd miles. The difference between each of those miles and the different political landscapes and the different contexts makes me very humble in saying what I am going to say. Hopefully in my remarks there is some perspective that you can find analogous to your situation.

My thoughts on where we are, are this: 'peace' is such a simple word. It sounds easy, like 'agreement'. Nobody I have ever met has said that they are against either 'peace' or 'agreement' until you ask what price they are going to pay for 'peace' and you remind them that 'agreement' takes two sides. Therefore each side has to give up something if a deal is going to be reached because that is what peace is in my view. It is a deal, not that we will agree on everything, but that we will work together despite the fact that we do not agree on everything and that we will do so without resorting to violence. But reaching a deal is not easy because it depends on political leaders who have to bring their supporters with them. What appears in the media can make that job easier or harder. A leader can find their position suddenly very vulnerable if their supporters find out through the media that they have made a compromise without having talked to them first and explained what they are getting in return.

So what responsibility, if any, do the media have in the effort to

make peace? How much control should the government or parties have over what the media say? Should the media not report things if it is going to make things more difficult or is it the media's job to report what it knows, irrespective of the impact on the deal? I suspect each of us in the room have a view on each of those questions. My view has been shaped by my personal experience as someone who was born in, worked as a journalist in and still lives in Northern Ireland with my family. Also, I speak as someone who was privileged to be involved in the peace process in Northern Ireland, ending up as the Prime Minister's (Toni Blair's) official spokesman. Given that experience I do have very clear views on each of those questions and I will give you those at the end. But first I thought it might help if I give you some of the background to my experience, the reasons for which I have ended up with the views I have.

The easiest way to do that is if I describe my perspective as Northern Ireland went from peace to war back to peace (or less) again. When I was five I lived in a small town called Omagh. Life was pretty much like life in every other small town. There was an army barracks but the security around it was virtually non-existent. When occasionally you saw a little armoured car coming in and out soldiers were wearing soft hats. There was no sense of danger. That was in 1960. 28 years later in my job at Downing Street, I went back to Omagh and walked up the main street on the afternoon of the last and worst atrocity of what we refer to as 'the Troubles': a no warning bomb that killed 29 people and injured a further

220 people. Devastation. What had happened in Northern Ireland from that period between when I lived in Omagh, and the Omagh bomb? Over 3,000 people had been killed, countless acts of violence. Families on all sides were torn apart by grief and tragedy, avoidable tragedy. And alongside the violence, a litany of failed political initiatives, most of which I reported on in one guise or another. 30 years of political failure had led to a kind of fatalism, a view that as one very senior journalist said to me, 'Maybe Tom, there are some problems that cannot be solved and Northern Ireland is one of those'. And yet as we now know, not only was the problem capable of being resolved but it could have been resolved a lot sooner and many of those 3,000 deaths could have been avoided.

There is one version of 'the Troubles' that says it started with the arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland in 470 AD. Personally I do not blame St. Patrick. Most people place the start of the Troubles around 1969 when Northern Ireland's version of the international civil rights movement spilled over into our more sectarian conflict between unionist and nationalists, Protestants and Catholics. Four years later in 1973 began the first serious attempt to solve the problem. There are many detailed reasons and differences between the agreement which was attempted then and the Good Friday Agreement which we negotiated in 1998, a quarter of a century later. But, in broad outline, they contain exactly the same elements: Northern Ireland staying within the United Kingdom so long as a majority wanted that to be the case, power sharing between the two communities, the Irish government given a guaranteed right

to be consulted on policy. The same elements were there in 1974 and in 1998. So, given those similarities, why did we fail in 1974 and succeed in 1998?

The prime reason I believe, was one of political will and focus—the lack of it in 1974 and, its presence a quarter of a century later. In 1974 a new British government failed to stand up to a strike called by extreme unionists, exacerbated by a continuing campaign of violence by the Irish Republican Army⁴. One manifestation of government failure was the failure to control the media agenda. The opposition to the deal in 1974 was loud, visual and omnipresent. The media lapped it up, often in an uncritical way. In contrast, the government which should have been promoting the deal was slow, bureaucratic, divided, and lacking all conviction. It turned into an unequal contest, and a deal which had been endorsed at elections was allowed to collapse. At the time, looking on as an 18 year old who had just done my final exams at school, it felt like might had triumphed over right and that the media had allowed itself to be used as part of the extinction of democracy. The opponents of democracy had used their right to be heard to overturn the will of the ballot box. And so began a pattern. Every other year or so there would be a new political initiative. It would quietly make progress, then get exposed to the wider public, be turned on by extremes on either side and collapse, all played out in the local, national and international media. It all made for compelling viewing and listening but terrible politics. At a selfish level it was a great place

⁴ The Irish Republican Army (IRA) was an Irish republican revolutionary military organisation.

to learn my trade as a journalist, so long as you did not mind living in a failed society.

Yes we in the media provided a platform for democratic debate, but most of the time there was more heat than light. In reality we helped exacerbate difference, not resolve it. We made the situation worse, not better. So what had changed by 1998? Firstly, violence came to be seen as less and less acceptable, especially after Sinn Féin⁵ entered the political process in 1982. And the media did play its part in that. Elected Sinn Féin representatives found themselves questioned more and more about the contradictions between using both the ballot box and the Armalite⁶, the IRA's favourite weapon. Political success and violence became increasingly incompatible and the media played a big part in making that happen. Events such as the Enniskillen bomb in November 1987 which killed 11 and injured 63 became unacceptable to those who supported or might consider supporting Sinn Féin.

5 The Irish Republican Party, led by Gerry Adams, seeking to end British rule. Considered to be the political arm of the IRA.

6 Armalite refers to the AR-18 assault rifle, which became a symbol of the Republican armed struggle. The Armalite and ballot box strategy was pursued by the Irish republican movement, where elections in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were contested by Sinn Féin, while the IRA continued to pursue an armed struggle.



Speaker Tom Kelly

I was working in London at the time but was sent back by the BBC to cover the bomb and I remember walking the streets of Enniskillen trying to smell the community mood. Something had changed. After Enniskillen, the IRA knew that there was a political price to pay if they killed civilians and that was partly as a result of the way the media humanised the victims. They were seen not just as collateral damage but people with families, people with friends, people who lived in local communities who had a view about what happened to them. Gradually, and it *was* gradually, the British government realised that scrutiny meant that it was better to have Sinn Féin questioned on television and radio than not. Initially they tried to have Sinn Féin banned from broadcasting. You could carry pictures of Sinn Féin representatives but not broadcast their voices. The intention of the government was to stop Sinn

Féin benefiting from what was called ‘the oxygen of publicity’. The reality was that it allowed Sinn Féin to portray themselves as victims, democratically elected representatives who were not allowed to use the means of democracy, which in turn then blunted the British Government’s criticism of Sinn Féin for using violent, non-democratic methods. Eventually the policy was dropped. Sinn Féin once again had access to the media and once again the media were able to keep probing the contradiction between the ballot box and the Armalite. Gradually those contradictions became too much and Sinn Féin were forced or allowed themselves to be forced to give up the armed campaign and adopt exclusively peaceful means.

The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was a decisive event in that process. Six weeks before the Good Friday Agreement, I made the transition from being a journalist to being a government spokesperson. Inevitably I am afraid my view of the media changed. On the one hand the media were not only a way for us to set out what we were trying to do and why, but also a way to put pressure on the local politicians to make the concessions we felt were necessary towards achieving peace. Quite consciously we tried to create an unstoppable momentum towards agreement by projecting a very simple message: either you were *for* or you were *against* peace. On the other side of that argument were opponents who had 30 years’ experience of wrecking such initiatives by repeating a very simple message: ‘Ulster says No’.

The media became the battle ground; the media camp outside the talks became an alternative negotiating table. Progress would seem to be made inside the talks only to be undermined, deliberately or not, by some remark to the media outside. In an atmosphere where trust was brittle, people negotiated with one eye on what their opponents were saying on television outside to the wider electorate, and that was opponents inside their own parties, as much as outside their own parties. Everyone knew that we were all playing for a lasting legacy but also for short term political gain. The difference was that this time, unlike a quarter of a century before, the lasting legacy won. We made it more difficult for the politicians to say 'no' than to say 'yes'. The media was what we call the 'piggy in the middle'. But just because we had won one battle for peace did not mean that we had won the war. The Good Friday Agreement was the *theory* of how to produce a lasting settlement. It took another nine years to turn that theory into *reality*, the reality of a permanent power sharing government, 33 years after that first effort failed. At first the battle between *theory* and *reality* took place on the streets with hard-line unionists who were trying to destroy it by repeating their protest tactics of a quarter of a century beforehand, and then hard-line republicans trying to blow it up by planting that bomb in Omagh. Having survived both of those onslaughts, the battle then became the media. The media kept asking awkward questions. How do you know peace is permanent? If it is, when are the paramilitary groups on both sides going to give up their weapons? When are they going to give up criminal activity? When is there going to be agreement on a new police

force, which will allow everyone to support the rule of law? All the questions which if we had tried to answer in the original Good Friday Agreement, meant we would have never agreed to it, but which now needed answering. So, so, so many questions, pressed by a media which thought that we had oversold how much had actually been agreed in 1998, and thought we were fair game as a result.

“Do these people not want peace?” was the question I was increasingly asked by an impatient Prime Minister when he came back to Northern Ireland, for yet another round of talks and media interviews. Talks which may or may not have moved things forward, but not in a way that was easy to explain either to the media or to the public. Part of the problem was that every time we tried to move forward someone would leak elements of the deal before they were finally agreed and then be denounced by their hard-line supporters. I am not sure that reality television had been invented at that stage but it was ‘negotiation by reality television’. We removed the media facilities outside of the talks, to lessen the temptation for politicians to go out to them. We took away the room in which the journalists operated. We then took away the coffee and finally we took away the toilets! It only partially worked because mobile phones intervened. We tried!

The real problem was not actually the media, the real issue was whether the parties that had signed up for the Good Friday Agreement were serious about delivering, and serious not just that

their supporters would understand and support, but that their opponent's supporters would as well. Were they up for a deal? For the IRA, decommissioning their arsenal of weapons was hugely difficult. This was an organisation whose *raison d'être* was that Britain had to be forced to leave Northern Ireland and we were asking them to destroy their weapons. That was a huge step. Equally for the rest of the community, the concept of a political party with a private army was unacceptable. How to square the circle? We made many many attempts at it. One which was both funny and not funny involved sending a very senior Canadian former general off into the countryside to witness the decommissioning of a significant amount of weapons. He came back 24 hours late because there was a mix up in signals. When he came back he said he was only allowed by the IRA to describe in general terms such as "heavy ordnates." The media smelled a rat. What we thought was a triumph melted like snow off a ditch. The press conference became a slow death. The Prime Minister, who I was now working for, had that '*do people not want peace*' look on his face again. It was not a happy day. Afterwards I said to a deeply frustrated Gerry Adams that the problem was that the IRA had to learn how to speak a language that ordinary people would understand. He was deeply offended. "Tom, republicans are ordinary people too," he said.

"Ordinary people do not understand what *heavy ordnates* are," I said. Eventually we got there. One by one, we answered the questions and we answered the questions in a language people

could understand. In 2007, we turned the *theory* of the agreement into the *reality* of today. A power sharing government involving both communities with a guaranteed say for the Irish government, which despite many imperfections, is presiding over a country in which my children can go to a concert in Belfast without me having to worry about them being blown up. I worry about many other things concerning my children going to concerts in Belfast but not about them being blown up.

We will never be ‘normal,’ but we are not totally abnormal. So, my view of the media’s role in getting there: In 1986, the year before the Enniskillen bomb, the BBC sent me to Cambridge for three months on what was called a ‘press fellowship.’ I spent the first month doing what any journalist would do. I enjoyed just being in Cambridge, not having to write a story every day. I had fun. The second month I thought ‘oh I said before I came here I was going to write something, I better go and see some people.’ So I used it as an excuse to meet British and Irish politicians, British and Irish journalists, basically anyone I wanted to talk to. The third month I went back to being at work. I sat at a typewriter hammering out a thesis with the rather unoriginal title: *Politics, Terrorism and the Media in Northern Ireland*. In it, I examined the history of the relationship between the media and politics and terrorism in Northern Ireland. I came to the not very original conclusion that it was not just those who were called terrorists who tried to use and manipulate the media to achieve their ends. It was everyone, political parties and governments-the British government, and the

Irish government. The key for the media was to be aware of that and for the media not to allow itself to be used as gullible accomplices in the process, to be taken in as I thought they had been in 1974 when the first attempt at peace failed.

Do those who want peace have a right to ask the media to not just repeat easy headlines given to them by the opponents of peace? 'Sell out' 'Betrayal' '*The end of the world*'? Yes, I do think we do have the right to say that, but that also means that those who want peace cannot complain when the media ask them hard questions too. And that is what forms my answer to the question I asked right at the start. Is it the media's responsibility to help achieve peace? My answer is that that is actually the responsibility of those who represent the people-government and the parties-it is their responsibility to do the deal, not the media. It is the media's responsibility to report those efforts but to do so fairly, objectively and without allowing itself to be used to distort that process by one side or the other. It is not the job of the media to suppress that debate by hiding information from the public but it is the job of the media to give the full story. In 1974 in Northern Ireland, in my view, the media did not do that. They did not ask the critical questions of the opposition. Instead they got caught up in the adrenaline rush of the protests and whether or not they would bring the country to a halt.

Events took over from logic and the media was swept along. A quarter of a century later, in 1998, the media and the opponents

of the deal were right to ask the hard questions. Were weapons going to be decommissioned? When was the criminal activity going to stop? When would the police represent all of the community? It was inconvenient, it was difficult, and it nearly brought the peace process to an end on many many occasions. But it was right. The fact that we had to answer those questions eventually made the deal that much stronger. So my conclusion is this: the key in any peace process is not the media. It can make life more difficult, either being manipulated by the opposition into running all sorts of scare stories or by asking legitimate but difficult questions. The key is not that. It is how much governments, and the parties allow themselves to be diverted by that background noise, from facing up to the difficult questions that are inevitable if you are going to achieve peace. In Northern Ireland, the real scandal is that we knew the answer in 1974. It took a quarter of a century, and a lot of blood being spilled before we finally got it right in 1998 and a further nine years to turn the theory into reality. Why? Because was not the political will and focus to deliver was not there. And that is what really makes me angry. If you know essentially what the answer is, what the deal is, then get on and do it. However long it takes, however many hills you have to climb, however slowly the wheels on the bicycle turn over, get on and do it. The job of the media is to keep asking, why are you not doing the deal? Why are you not doing the final settlement? Because in the end, that is the prize.

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Many thanks indeed Mr Kelly for sharing so frankly with us today, hearing your first hand experiences has been invaluable. Of course when you are an active part of the experience those experiences become more valuable. One thing we can learn from what Tom Kelly said is that it is much harder than it seems. He said, in his presentation that somebody told him that maybe it is an ‘unsolvable problem’. This attitude can be seen in our conflict as well. As far as I see, the hardest conflict has passed, and media was not the key. But Turkey’s media now has a chance in this regard. Tom Kelly said that political will is very important in order to have a focus on peace. Media can support or encourage politicians to seek peace. Now I would like to leave the floor to Mr Owen Bowcott, legal correspondent for *The Guardian* newspaper and a journalist in Northern Ireland during the time of the peace process. He will give us more information from the field, as a member of the media itself.

Speaker – Owen Bowcott⁷

Thank you first of all for inviting me and congratulations on your graduation ceremony here in Mardin. I hope it goes well tomorrow. My perspective is from the point of view of journalists who were on the outside of the process that Tom was controlling and ably directing towards success on the inside. Unlike Tom, I was brought

⁷ Owen Bowcott was *The Guardian’s* Ireland correspondent from 1991 - 1994 and again from 2006 - 2007. He has been a news editor on the paper’s foreign desk and is currently *The Guardian’s* legal affairs correspondent. He previously worked for the *Birmingham Post and Mail*, *BBC Panorama* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

up in England not Ireland, far away from the Troubles. My first direct experience was on a Saturday afternoon in Spring 1972. I was 14. I had gone for a walk with my parents on the hills in Wiltshire, England, hundreds of miles from Northern Ireland, leaving our car in a quiet space on a quiet country road. Two hours later we returned to find an army patrol attaching wires to the boot of the car, unwinding a long cable, attached to a detonator. Unbeknown to us we had parked our car on the edge of a military camp, right next to an ammunition store. My father ran up to try to plead with the soldiers saying, 'Do not blow it up.'

He was detained, frisked, searched and we were all driven off to the army barracks. The soldiers, after searching the vehicle, released us. Luckily they did not blow up the boot of the car. The officer admitted that the previous night they had nearly destroyed another vehicle which had been parked in the same spot. There had been a couple inside! The lights were off. They crept up again and were about to blow it up but luckily they did not. It was a week after the IRA had attacked another army barracks in Aldershot near London, killing six paratroopers, which was itself a revenge attack for Bloody Sunday in London-Derry a year before.

Throughout my youth and into my thirties, violence in Northern Ireland was the constant 'background noise' to British lives. It seemed normal, accepted. I became a journalist, joined *The Guardian* and from 1988 found myself being regularly sent to report on bombings and shootings, on allegations of collusion between security forces

and loyalists, so called because they were supposedly 'loyal' to the British crown. After 20 years, the pattern of violence was becoming increasingly predictable. The repetition of attacks that apparently had no political effect meant some newspapers began to lose interest. Reporters were withdrawn; the media began thirsting for a new story. I became the Northern Ireland correspondent in 1991. It coincided with a fresh attempt by the new government and then Prime Minister John Major to begin talks between the parties. Overtures were made to the republican movement. The Northern Ireland Secretary at the time, Peter Brook, announced that Britain had 'no selfish strategic interests' in holding onto the province if the majority voted to leave the UK. For journalists it began a period of minutely analysing the meaning of official statements, trying to decipher ambiguous phrases and work out whether signals were being sent to rival political and paramilitary factions. It was not always easy. Sometimes we misunderstood what was being said. Sometimes we got overexcited and over-interpreted what was being said. The 'talks about talks' process in 1991 and 1992 was an effort to bring together the main political parties not involved in violence in the hope that Sinn Féin and loyalists would feel so isolated that they would want to join in. The people who were left feeling isolated were the journalists standing outside Stormont, the then empty home of the Irish assembly. We waited in the rain for political breakthroughs that never came and felt deprived of information. The conflict carried on: the IRA killed police officers, the British army ambushed and shot dead IRA gunmen, and loyalists killed Catholics.



Speaker Owen Bowcott

To begin with the peace process was extremely confusing. It started slowly and did not make progress and was mocked. 1993 was chaotic. I recall two conversations with the Irish republican movement; I set up a meeting through contacts with an IRA commander. Some arrangements were made during phone calls from public phone boxes. Nobody had mobiles then. They thought my home phone was tapped, being listened to by the government. I went down to Dublin on instructions and sat in a café waiting. I noticed several people watching me. One of them came over after an hour and told me it was a dummy run to check I was not being followed. He said I would be contacted again. Two weeks later I was back in Dublin. This time it was even more of a cold war espionage experience. We switched from taxis to buses; we doubled back on ourselves to make sure we were not being followed, and finally came to a small terraced house. I was taken inside. A man

wearing a balaclava came downstairs. He stood in the front room with only thin net curtains and I thought somebody would see us. He explained that the IRA would continue bombing English cities until the British government left Northern Ireland and the six counties were reunited with the Irish Republic.

It was a period when the government banned advocates of violence from speaking on radio or television but my story appeared in print. The IRA's bombing continued but killing civilians became increasingly difficult for republicans to explain. Two young boys died in early 1993, causing outrage. Four months later I had a conversation with Sinn Féin, the political wing of the IRA. I was asked to meet in a shopping centre in West Belfast. It was a September afternoon. Sinn Féin's main spokesman was there; again I was aware of people watching us. They believed their office was bugged too. 'There have been contacts between the republican movement and the British government', they told me. 'We will not go "on the record" to confirm it but if you write it we will not deny it'. There were no documents, no proof. The newspaper wanted two sources for the story. We hesitated, were we being used? The contradiction between the IRA's determination to carry on bombing and the apparent new republican position was astounding.

Peace processes for journalists locked out of the inside track can be frustrating, while also intriguing and compelling. When confirmation that there had been secret talks came, the chief spokesman at the Northern Ireland Office apologised that his

previous denials had been quite so dismissive. He also, I suspect, had not been on the inside track. He may not have known what was going on in the back channel contacts. Because of negotiation's need for secrecy, not every official knows what is happening or speaks with a unified voice from the establishment. It raises the question of whether the media needs to be deceived. Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief of staff in the peace process, says it is necessary because politicians will not do deals in public. If so, then the sooner secret contacts are revealed the better.

It helps the media bring pressure on politicians to support movements of peace and transparency creates the trust needed to complete the peace process. In 1993, news that negotiations had been going on triggered political uncertainty. Both hopes and fears were aroused. A fresh brand of sectarian killings began. That added to the confusion. Journalists like simple narratives or a stable framework to explain stories to their readers. The increased violence made it difficult to know whether the story was running backwards or forwards. Any escalation is a reminder to reporters that their responsibility is to be accurate and not to over speculate on ill-founded suspicions or fears. Looking back it is the voices of mothers and fathers on local radio, pleading for their child's death to at least have political significance, ought to mark a turning point that is the haunting soundtrack to my memories. The voices of victims' relatives brought home to everyone the cost and futility of the violence.

The language used is also important. Terrorist is a loaded emotive word. If politicians use it then you are reporting their opinions. Anti-terrorist legislation may be a useful description of legal restrictions. Terrorist is an insult, it mixes comment and reporting. Can you describe all killings as murder? The problem comes if you use it for one side but not the other. Killing is a more neutral term if less emotive. Other words carry layers of meanings. The IRA hated being referred to as paramilitary. In their eyes their military organisation was a proper army. Should journalists ever hold anything back they can prove to be true? I admit I did it once.

It was shortly after news of talks emerged and a wide series of killings by loyalists erupted. Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Féin, gave me an interview about his hopes for ending the troubles. He was elated, at one point he almost climbed onto his desk at Sinn Féin offices and started reciting poetry. It was a poem about a ship being brought safely home to harbour. I did not understand the significance and felt his jubilant mood was at odds with the carnage on Belfast's streets. It was close to deadline, I had to file my story and I left the poem out. I looked up the poem later and it was about a ship arriving successfully although the captain is dead. I realised that this foreboding at the time probably reflected Adams' fear that the leaders who delivered peace might not survive it. I wrote it up later and used it when I understood what I was talking about. I left Belfast as permanent correspondent at the Guardian in 1994. The IRA's first ceasefire came later that year. I returned many times in the following year to report on shootings, political upsets

and the glacial process of the peace agreement. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was watershed but there were more holdups, more waiting outside stalemated conferences in English stately homes and Northern Ireland. Ian Paisley, leader of the largest unionist party the DUP, held up the deal on decommissioning weapons by insisting that photographic evidence be provided to prove that the IRA had handed over its weapons. Such a picture might have suggested it was an IRA surrender. No photograph was taken. Until the end it was not clear the peace process would come into a final power sharing deal between the DUP and Sinn Féin.



Moderator Cengiz Çandar, Cengiz Aydın, and Speaker Owen Bowcott

I returned as a full time Guardian correspondent in 2006. The following year I was out reporting on the electoral campaign of the Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness for the 2007 Northern Ireland Assembly elections. ‘Could you deal with Ian Paisley his

lifelong political enemy?’ I asked. McGuinness laughed, ‘I have never talked to Ian Paisley,’ he said ‘but the other day I walked into an office in the basement of Stormont. There was Ian Paisley alone. We smiled at each other.’ On the campaign trail at the same time was Ian Paisley, DUP leader. He was evasive too and refused to say whether he’d do the deal with Sinn Féin. Six weeks later they were in power together and became known as the chuckle brothers because they laughed so often together. The final deal in the assembly was extraordinary to watch. The conflict ended when according to the logic of the opposing politicians it shouldn’t have. Should we be angry at political leaders for misrepresenting their positions as inflexible or grateful that they had the humility and common sense to change their minds?

One afterthought: I often go down to the national archives in west London where government records are made available after to the public after 30 years. Examining the Prime Ministerial and Northern Ireland Office files from the 1970s and 1980s, you discover that there were many contacts across the political divide. People of goodwill were repeatedly trying to stop the violence and reach agreement behind the scenes. Even Mrs Thatcher who said she would never talk to terrorists authorised contact with the IRA at the time of the hunger strikes in 1991. Perhaps more openness about negotiations would have allowed peace talks to start earlier and save more lives.

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Media maybe is not a principal element but it is very important. It has a great responsibility in reflecting the stories of the conflict resolution. Therefore, Mr Bowcott's experiences were very valuable for us. Now to reflect the international domain we have David Gorman with us. I would like to leave the floor to him. He will make a very short presentation after which we will make time for questions.

Speaker – David Gorman

Thank you very much. My name is David Gorman and I am with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, it is a Geneva based NGO which works on peace processes around the world. I was invited here today because it was seen as helpful to have the perspective on the media from an organisation that works on peace processes. What I thought would be useful is to make some general reflection, share an anecdote about the peace process we oversaw in Aceh, Indonesia with some of our lessons learned with the media. My general feeling is that the media are an absolutely essential pillar of the peace process and increasingly so today. I can say just as important as the facilitator, the two parties and the communities affected by the conflict. Nowadays peace processes need democratic validation and the media is a critical part of that process. We have found over the last ten years in our work, public engagement in a peace process has grown enormously through more active engagement of civil society, the rise and risks of social media and this drive towards democratic accountability by the parties to a conflict.

Increasingly not only does there need to be public engagement and involvement in the dissemination and implementation of the agreement but also just as much in the consultation process leading up to the agreement. The public needs to be consulted as we march towards an agreement. You cannot just forge in an agreement in a smoky backroom and come out with an agreement anymore. There is obviously a need for confidential negotiations and negotiations cannot be conducted in the public eye. However, the parties to a conflict do need to go back and consult with the public not just inform them. I do think particularly the insurgent groups that we work with in Southeast Asia and Africa recognise this: that they cannot just work alone without engagement and consultation and inclusion of the civic communities. Any process needs to pass some type of public referendum or plebiscite, maybe not a formal referendum or plebiscite but some form of mechanism that says 'yes we support this agreement.' Any agreement needs to be held to this democratic litmus test.



Speaker David Gorman

Why is this important?

First, every agreement needs to be publicly viable and people demand more of a say. Through civil society and the media, communities have more of a voice, as there are more mediums out there to get information and to convey information.

Secondly agreements need to be legally viable, which means they need to go through some type of legal process in order to be agreed upon and be implemented. Any rebellion that challenges existing laws often requires an agreement which changes the existing legal code. This means amending an existing law or introducing a new one which will require some type of legally proper procedure whether it be approval through the Executive, Legislative, Judicial branches and possibly public support such as through a referendum or a plebiscite. For this to happen successfully, the public needs to be aware of the procedures, aware of the law and aware of what is being asked of them. The parties through an independent media need to inform the public about the agreement and what it means to them.

Third, any agreement needs political viability. Most peace processes today need to have the support of political leaders at several levels, not just from the Executive branch. In increasingly democratic states, an agreement will now require support from elected members of the legislative branch and even locally elected politicians from the conflict area. Although the ruling party in the executive or legislative branch may support an agreement one

might find there are serious divisions among locally elected officials who feel pressure from their constituents. Throughout all of this increasingly public process, the media plays an essential role. I think most of us including the facilitators do not quite realise this as much as we should. While the media can certainly distort stories, especially if it is not independent and has an agenda, the media, in its broadest sense is all we really have to get the messages out there. So it is important that we as party's to the talks develop at least a relationship with them and not hide behind the doors.

I want to talk a little bit about our efforts in Aceh, Indonesia which is a case in fact where we did have a very serious public information campaign but where the process still failed to win over critical constituents. In Aceh Indonesia in 2001 I was part of the team that facilitated an agreement between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian Government. In December 2002 we oversaw the implementation of the first significant agreement between the parties. In the implementation of the agreement we had military from several international countries work with the armed forces of the two parties to implement the security elements of the agreement, we had several international figures with influence on the parties to provide credibility to the process and most importantly and I thought successfully we had a joint public information unit (PIU) for the peace process. The PIU was a semi-autonomous body which reported to the office of the peace process which means that it would get messages from both parties and the facilitator to disseminate to the public but it would be seen as somewhat distant from the two parties and connected

to the office of the facilitator. They established six offices which included four or five people coming from the communities, those who had been pro-government and those who had been pro-GAM. It included media individuals from those communities. They would work together to disseminate information on the agreement and on the implementation of the agreement and also try to build up support for the agreement. We had weekly press conferences where we would put the two parties on the stage and we would talk to the press. We had messages disseminated through mosques every Friday on what was the result of the press conference. We conducted weekly radio shows and public events. Before every press conference I would take the media aside and speak to them privately, off the record, informally. I would give them some background on what was happening and give them some comments off the record. This all worked to some great effect.

The peace process got off to a surprisingly good start despite many sceptics and many odds and the lack of support from the President of Indonesia. We went from 20 to 30 incidents a week to practically none in a few months. We thought we had the media in our pocket. They loved us and they loved the process and the public in the conflict area was very much in support of this. However, after the first serious incident the press began to ask harder questions. The harder lines started to speak up. The two parties started to speak out of sync, started playing to their harder line constituents and soon we found we had fewer and fewer friends in the media. While I was on friendly terms with many in the media and they would still work to get our story out, I found

that it was a tidal wave we could not block any more. I remember doing interviews in Jakarta on national television and it would be a very good interview, it would go according to script. I came out of the studio feeling very pleased that we had got the message out. But then in the studio I remember watching the following programs which would basically undermine everything I had said. I realised our control of the media was limited and we were fighting a losing battle. Oppositionists took advantage of the change in a way that started to provoke incidents and it soon became a self-fulfilling prophecy. From zero incidents in January, February and March in 2003 we started to have a flood of incidents that were provoked by local militias. The press was all over it. By May five of our six offices of the PIU were surrounded and burned down, and the president declared martial law. Ten years later we are still trying to figure out how we lost the battle in the public domain. I think one of the key failures is that we tend to look too much inward. We tend to have a peace process and if it fails, we tend to reflect on what we did wrong internally and then we move onto the next process and frankly we often repeat the same mistakes as before. As I listened to today's speakers I think there are a few things that we did wrong when it came to engaging publicly. I think first of all we oversold it. We probably went too hard and heavy. We thought as the facilitator it was our job to sell the process. In fact the government told us 'you go out there, you sell the process, they trust you and want to hear from you not us'. Instead, we may have gone too far and oversold it risky our credibility when it started to obviously go sour. We probably should have better engaged other proponents to speak out on behalf of the process, besides us.

Secondly, I do not think we ever did lay out properly where the process was going. We did not frame it well. The agreement was a ceasefire, which was meant to lay out a process for local government, civic groups and the Free Aceh Movement to work out a deal for autonomy. But the issue of the end state was not addressed; it was left opaque because the two parties could not agree on that. It was the only way we could get to an agreement at all. Instead of addressing the issue of independence for GAM or territorial integrity for the government, instead we had something fuzzy which said that GAM accepts autonomy in Indonesia. Instead of dealing with the issue more properly and laying out more clearly what was this process, we just hid from it. When the cracks started to show in the process, people started to seize on that more and more. We should have been a little bit clearer in framing the agreement and about how we saw this process ending up. Instead, hardliners on either side defined it for us.

Third, we did not understand the national audience at all. We focused more on the local audience in Aceh and we did not understand the mood nationally. I thought by going to the national media I could somehow influence the national constituents but I do not think I understood that I was only hitting a certain constituency. Much of our press was done through the English language press. We were able to get the national Indonesian press and the national English press but we never did hit the local press throughout the country which also had a voice. A local parliamentarian in some other part of Indonesia is responding more to the local press in that area.

Fourth, we never put together a real strategy for combating the opposition message. We just couldn't believe that people would believe these messages that were being spun out there. We thought people would see through it. So instead of trying to understand it or to try to reach out to those communities or those who were spinning this message, we tended to ignore it and assume that others would not take it seriously.

Fifth, we did not understand how we, as international, were being understood or would be portrayed in the country. We assumed quite stupidly that everyone would just like us. We were doing good things. My friends in the media tended to congratulate me. Everybody patted us on our back when the agreement was signed. Big public events, everywhere we would go everyone would celebrate us. However, some saw us as foreign liberators and not in a good way. I recall being told that a signing ceremony between our Executive Director and the Minister was perceived as the Government handing over Aceh to us in some sort of receivership! I couldn't understand as a foreigner how someone could think that.

Clearly, we as facilitators need to do a much better job of looking more outwards, understanding how the press works, staying on top of social media, understanding how we and our mission is being perceived and framed and not taking public perceptions for granted.



DPI Council of Experts member Edel Hughes, Speaker Owen Bowcott, Moderators Kadri Yıldırım and Bejan Matur, Speaker Tom Kelly, and DPI Director Kerim Yildiz

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Thank you very much. It was very frank of you. Of course in executing negotiation, choreography is very important. The roles of parties, constituents, mediators and media should be coordinated very correctly and mathematically. In the afternoon Doğan Akın and Mahmut Mutman will be speaking. We have some newcomers, Cengiz Çandar and Cansu Çamlıbel you are welcome.

Media can be considered a partner to civil society. It has a very important role. As a civil society organisation, whatever you do might only be heard when it is broadcast by the media. There might be some pressure to change the constitution, but the media should be the media of peace. You should call on the emotions and rationality of the people. Now we are having a short coffee break for ten minutes and then have a short discussion about what we've heard.

Discussion

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Hello again, we have a limited time for questions, half an hour. So please tell your name and give comments and questions very shortly. Those who cannot take the floor can discuss in the afternoon session.

Participant – Yavuz Baydar

I have a question for Owen Bowcott. Could you clarify a little more clearly for us how you at the Guardian at some stage or several stages needed to revise editorial policy? Were there any interventions at the upper echelons about ‘please do this, please do not do this’ in terms of coverage? Also, did you have any official pressure by phone or by anything else about what you are doing? Also about the legal matters, did the anti-terror act play any role in your coverage?

Speaker – Owen Bowcott

I cannot speak for the whole of the Troubles and do not know down decades how many representations may have been made by government to us. Essentially, no. Our coverage was unaffected. The government may have at various times made representations the same way that political parties may have done through correspondence. I am sure there may have been phone calls to editors pleading for the coverage to be different but that’s the same for any politicians who may have sought to influence media coverage. We’ve always tried to carry on and maintain our independence. The

media probably operates in the UK under an easier climate. One of my predecessors claimed to have been tapped and she turned up to a party in Stormont and claimed that details of what she had said were repeated back to her. The Chief Constable declined to talk to me on my telephone in Belfast because he thought they might be listening. As we know the NSA (National Security Administration) and GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) are capable of listening to anything these days. I hope the Guardian has always managed to take various contradictory views and maintain editorial independence. There was never any question of editorial threats or anything like that.

Participant – Oral Çalışlar

My question is to Tom Kelly. You said political will and focusing is the main issue. How can you elaborate on these lessons so we can also review our experiences?

Speaker – Tom Kelly

The first thing is you've got to realise there is no magic bullet. This is a process where you have to make progress day after day after day. I did the Good Friday Agreement in the Northern Ireland Office in Belfast and then moved to Downing Street in 2001. By that stage, the glow around the Good Friday Agreement had more or less gone because we did not have a final deal. I saw it as my job working very closely with Jonathon Powell to every once in a while gently prompt the Prime Minister to say, 'It has been a wee while since we've made some progress in the Northern Ireland

peace process. We need to do something again. We need to make a speech, we need to visit another big country house and get all the parties together and try to make progress; we need to keep this thing moving.' That's really what Jonathan and I tried to do was keep this thing moving. If I felt that things weren't moving then I would walk down to the Prime Minister's office and sort of hang around. He used to say I had a particular look on my face whenever I wanted to talk about Northern Ireland, which was impatient. That's what it needs, a sort of constant desire to keep things moving forward. What really struck me listening to David's excellent account of his experiences was you have to keep winning the argument and just because you have won the argument whenever you announce a deal doesn't mean that you have won the argument forever. You have to win it day after day after day. I used to talk about a zig-zag and I actually do the same now I am in business. You have a big picture argument which makes sense to you. You have to test that against reality, that reality can be reality at national level, at local level, on one side of the fence or the other side of the fence. And then you go back and look at the big picture argument and say do I need to change the argument? You do that on a constant basis.

We have a phrase in Northern Ireland which is called *thrang*—it means being very stubborn. You have to be very stubborn. You have to be very determined. Achieving peace is the most important thing any of us are likely to do in our lives. If it is the most important thing we are going to do in our lives it is worth keeping after day after day after day.

Participant – Kerim Yildiz⁸

How do you manage the press? Do you put pressure on them?

Speaker – Tom Kelly

There is a very thin line because if you oversell, you lose your credibility. My view was always that you lost your credibility once and you never got it back so if you were openly, consciously, deliberately deceiving the press then you never get that back. Does that mean that you told the press everything? Of course not but you have to set out why you are not telling the press everything. I referred earlier to the decommissioning issue and the Canadian general comes back and not being able to sell what we had achieved. The next day I was facing 100 journalists in the lobby in Westminster, all of whom wanted to write the headline ‘Northern Ireland peace process over.’ The only way I could think of to stop them doing that is to set out very carefully why we thought what had been done was a significant amount of weapons destroyed but we understood that it hadn’t been seen as that. By being honest, that briefing session started off with them all very angry and they thought I had deceived them by saying this was significant when they thought it was not. It ended up at the end, after an hour and a half—it took an hour and half of them being very quiet. They

⁸ Kerim Yildiz is Kerim Yildiz is Director of DPI. He is an expert in conflict resolution, peace building, International Human Rights law and minority rights, and has written extensively on international Human Rights mechanisms and International Humanitarian Law. Kerim is the recipient of a number of awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996, the Sigrid Rausing Trust’s Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005, and the Gruber Prize for Justice in 2011.

understood our dilemma but we had to explain it rather than assert that we were right. It is that explanation that counts.

Speaker – Mahmut Mutman⁹

At any moment of this process, I know that it is been described journalistically in terms of terror, the general framework was terror. That's a very specific kind of framework. What I am wondering is, was there a specific figure of terrorist as heavy duty as a moral or an anti-moral kind of figure? This is not the same thing as describing the situation as terror, it is going a little beyond, and for instance George Bush did this. What would you say about this? Specifically I would be interested in the representation of the figure of the terrorist as a transcendent evil.

Speaker – Tom Kelly

Let me answer in general, I was in Downing Street whenever President Bush was talking about war on terror. If I am totally honest, I was never comfortable with that generalisation. I do not think that it helps to work in those vague, abstract terms. You've got to work in the terms of accepting that people come from different perspectives. How they arrive at those perspectives and whether they were right or wrong was in my view not helpful. That said I always work under the premise that killing people was the wrong

⁹ Mahmut Mutman is a professor in the Department of Cinema and Television and coordinator of the M.A. Program in Cultural Studies at Istanbul Şehir University, Turkey. He received his PhD in Sociology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. After giving lectures at Tufts and San Jose State University, he became one of the founders of Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture at Bilkent University. As a result of his sociology background and interdisciplinary academic perspective, Mutman publishes widely on media, culture, hegemony and orientalism.

thing to do and beyond that I try not to make judgements. Let me tell two stories.

In Britain in November each year we commemorate those who died in the two World Wars. The symbol that we use for those commemorations is the poppy because the poppy was the flower that grew in the fields in Belgium during the First World War. In Northern Ireland if you wear the poppy you are generally seen as unionist and if you do not wear the poppy you are generally seen as nationalist. When I worked for the BBC as political editor, I interviewed both unionists and nationalists. It just so happened that whenever I went to interview unionists at the time of the commemoration I wore my poppy. Whenever I interviewed nationalists somehow or other I forgot to wear it. At one stage my bosses spotted this and said, 'Tom you've got to wear your poppy.' I said, 'Fine yeah I'll wear my poppy.' It just so happened that the next time I had to interview a nationalist I was rushing out of the office and I forgot my poppy again. You cannot have absolute answers to problems but you've got to respect perspectives.

The second example is more personal. There was one day when I was when I was political editor, when I started the day interviewing the British Government minister in Northern Ireland who at that stage was Peter Brook who was a very good Secretary of State in Northern Ireland. The 2nd interview I had to do that day was Ian Paisley. Ian at that stage was still in his, 'Ulster Says No' phase. Peter Brook, wanting to be moderate and conciliatory, tried to

reach out to both communities. Ian Paisley: No. I then went up to the Falls Road and interviewed Martin McGuinness who at that stage was still in the ‘no’ phase. So he said no. I had interviewed the government, the DUP and Sinn Féin. I then went to my cousin’s funeral who was an 18 year old boy who joined the police and was shot by the IRA. That’s the nature of living in a society in conflict, different perspectives. None of them are right or wrong, you just have to recognise that they are different. Whenever the Troubles started I was growing up and I thought, ‘Why cannot everyone be nice? Why cannot everyone recognise that violence is wrong? Why cannot everyone agree?’ Because we are different. Learn to live with it and do not kill people. That’s where I ended up.



*Moderators Kadri Yıldırım and Bejan Matur, Speaker Tom Kelly
and DPI Director Kerim Yildiz*

Speaker – Owen Bowcott

I think there is a danger when people use terrorist which is often stigmatised to reduce people to devils, to dehumanise them. As a political discourse, it is not one we want to adopt in our general coverage. If politicians use those words it is useful, and you should

report those words because obviously it gives an insight into their beliefs. So often, describing people as terrorists is a way to undermine them and dismiss whatever arguments they have and therefore we do not like using. But obviously some of the violence was intended to send a message of terror. It is how we learn to use the language carefully.

Participant – Hüseyin Aykol

Hello I am Hüseyin Aykol. My question goes to Tom Kelly. As executive editor of Özgür Gündem, about peace processes we try to learn from other situations but maybe we cannot obtain some experiences from other experiences. There is a problem when leaders are imprisoned during peace processes. Mandela was in prison and then he was set free. Also in East Timor, the Xanana Guzman was under house arrest and was then set free. Also with the IRA, the prisoners were being set free. But in our situation, Öcalan is still in prison and he has such a small cell that he can barely breathe. Do you think he will be released or it is still too early?



Participant Hüseyin Aykol

Speaker – Tom Kelly

It is not for me to say what should happen in particular circumstances but what I would say is this: for me the most important thing is that people talk. Initially in Northern Ireland we held talks about talks because constitutional politicians who did not have private armies or who did not have those who committed acts of violence supporting them refused to talk to those who did. Looking back I think that was a fundamental mistake. For me, talking to someone is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength. What matters is what you agree, not who you talk to. My overall approach is that governments and parties should talk to whomever no matter what but they should be clear that they will only agree if violence stops, that they will not be bullied or intimidated to make

an agreement under the threat of violence. How you get there will differ from country to country, from peace process to peace process, but the important thing is that you understand where each other are coming from. As Owen has said, if you put someone in a stereotype, and if you put someone in a box, do not be surprised if they behave like that. If you can show to them that they can come out of that box, that they can go from being a paramilitary group to a political group and that their political mandate will be recognised, then a conversation can be started. If you say, I will not talk to you until you stop violence then they are likely to stay in their box and no progress will be made.

Participant – Mustafa Akyol

Thank you so much for your presentations. While I was listening to you, I was trying to contrast to the Turkish and PKK situation. One difference was that in Northern Ireland it was a conflict between peoples. You see that in the murals in Belfast. In Turkey it is more of a conflict between the Kurdish nationalist party and the state, so there is an interesting difference there I would say. Another thing which complicates matters in Turkey and which doesn't exist as much in the UK case is that here in Turkey it is been long believed that the PKK is actually a pawn of foreign power who have evil intentions on Turkey. Perceiving it that way blocked any legitimate efforts to understand and talk because they are ultimately working for the imperialists. Was there anything like that with the IRA? If there was nothing like that, maybe that's our problem here.

Speaker – Tom Kelly

Certainly right at the start of the Troubles and probably for over ten years if not more, there was an assumption among unionists in Northern Ireland that the IRA was being backed secretly by the Irish Government. Therefore, if someone killed somebody in Northern Ireland they went south of the border to the Republic of Ireland and extraditing them to face the courts in Northern Ireland was very difficult. It then moved to the position where there was a thing called the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985 and you began to see the two governments push in the same direction, still very different perspectives but pushing in the same direction. That began the process of understanding that this is not just about foreign control of the IRA but actually a group of people who have active political support in Northern Ireland and have a mandate. The really important thing in the whole process was the decision of Sinn Féin to stand for election because that demonstrated that they weren't just a foreign problem. Actually they were a part of the community in Northern Ireland and that meant that you had to deal with them. It took a long time for people to come to that realisation but that was the start of the process.

Speaker – Owen Bowcott

Just to add that the IRA obtained some of its weapons from Libya. Whilst I do not think anyone ever suggested that Colonel Gaddafi was directing the IRA, that foreign intervention was used to denounce the IRA. If you go back to the early papers, there are interesting tensions between the UK and the US. The US, with its

large Catholic population had different agendas, and there were tensions there but less pronounced.



Yavuz Baydar, Mustafa Akyol and Riada Akyol

Participant – Neslihan Özgünes

My question is to all three speakers. In your speeches different points came up about the role that the media plays. We are talking a lot about the role of the political players but what are the roles that the media play? You mentioned some, such as humanising the other, such as bringing other perspectives to the table, such as serving as an emotional outlet for the conflict. Are there any other roles that the media can play, to be conflict sensitive? My second question is, in an era of social media and citizen journalism, how does this change negotiations?

Speaker – David Gorman

I will speak more on the last point because the others can talk more on the first one. In the last six years I have been working on the

peace process in the Philippines. It is a very public process, its one that's actually mandated by the Supreme Court, to have a public consultation process. So that was initially conducted confidentially and then when the Supreme Court stepped in and said that it needs to be more public, then the two parties were forced to engage in a more public type of process. I think every peace process goes through phases and they most always start quietly and confidentially between the two parties. Gradually they become much more open until finally, they require a democratic 'litmus test'. What I have seen in the last seven years in the Philippines process is social media has really become a unique challenge for us and the parties themselves. I was rather late to the game of social media. It was only about a year and a half ago that I got into it. We had our agreement in the Philippines in October of 2012. A year and a half ago one of my colleagues on the facilitation team said, 'You are not following the Facebook messages of these different groups. You are not plugged into these other groups.' So I did begin to follow them and I was astounded about what was going on in the social media with the civil society groups. I was reading the news. I thought I was up to speed reading the newspapers and online news. I read a couple of blogs. I had not realised this life existed! It was generational. The younger people were certainly dominating it, so it did more reflect the views of a certain constituency.

Nonetheless, it was having influence on the public perceptions of the process itself. I found that certainly, we as the facilitators needed to monitor social media much more. Not necessarily

participate; I do not have any strong recommendations one way or the other on that, although I would lean towards not participating as a facilitator. But certainly being able to monitor and also use that as our own medium. I mean participating in the blogs that go back and forth as opposed to communicating messages through that medium. Frankly the younger generation in Asia and here too, this is how they communicate. If you are not communicating through that and you are just communicating through traditional means then frankly you are missing a huge audience there and a huge area of public debate, which is very vast and very visceral. It can really go off the loose end on certain trends. You wish there would be some type of moderation for it but I am not sure how to deal with that.

What happened in our process, and I say 'our' very loosely because we had very little control over that (partly because of social media). When we started the second phase of this process we had agreed that we would only have a press statement at the end of the meeting, which the two parties would work on jointly. Then they would have their own press conferences as they returned back to their constituencies. We just could not stop the social media side of it. Now it has come to such an extent that the government negotiator was having an affair on Twitter, with a lawyer on his side, and this was all being tweeted including by the government negotiator and the lawyer on his team! The Philippines is an extreme example, but I do raise this as a point. One of the members of my team raised to my attention a blog, which was saying that David Gorman

was going to meet the two parties to resume the talks, while I was waiting for the two parties to meet with me. I thought who is sending this message out? Everybody knows this but me! And sure enough, within a couple of minutes, I had the leader of the rebel party waving me over to meet him. They had already sent over social media, these ‘minute by minute’ accounts. It is almost like a football match now with these commentators on the social media giving a blow by blow account of the game. I am not saying this is going to be the same for every peace process but from facilitator’s point of view there are opportunities in social media, huge ones, and there are great dangers too. Regardless of that, we need to be more up to speed on this whole world.

Speaker – Tom Kelly

You asked about what other roles the media can play. For me, frankly, one of the most useful roles that the media played was telling me what the opponents were saying to their communities. It was a way of finding out how the argument was going among local communities. Were we winning the argument? In those days we did not have social media so I privately commissioned focus groups and quantitative surveys on a regular basis to find out where the argument was going. In terms of social media, these days it would not matter if I closed the room at the negotiation table or took away the coffee from the journalists or closed the toilets, because people can tweet the journalists. You have got to learn to live with it. You have got to learn to accept that people will be constantly trying to manipulate people through social media, just as they

used to do through conventional media. Only, it is only faster. You equally have to keep saying to the two parties that if you are serious then there will be times when you are going to have to go silent. There will be times when you have to say, we are not going to tweet the latest development if we are serious. In fact, it is a litmus test of how serious they are. So, it is a fact of life. You have to learn to live with it but above all you have to listen to what is happening out there and try and assess are you winning the argument or not. Do you need to change your argument or adapt your argument as a result?

Speaker – Owen Bowcott

I think modern social media would have made the Northern Ireland peace process completely different. I still think there is a need for traditional media to subject whatever is happening to scrutiny, to ask those questions that the public want to know to get to the truth. If there are incidents that happen on the ground, if there are shootings or violence, people still want to know who is responsible. It is still incumbent on us to try and find out as much as we can and also to try and get all the debate out and the negotiating positions so you can subject those arguments to public scrutiny. The more people you can bring in the better. I think there is a need for the media to do those things and I said before, to give a voice to describing the horror of violence as it happens, so that people appreciate what political ideologies end up in bombs and bullets, and allowing the victims to talk and explain why they do not want this to carry on. This is an important role for the media.

Speaker – David Gorman

Can I add one last comment on that? The difference with social media is that it is anonymous and it is less accountable. With traditional media, there was a degree of accountability. You can go to the media and say, ‘You know the story. We briefed you on that. What’s going on here?’ and you can have a conversation about that. As Tom Kelly was saying you have certain carrots and sticks. If they are really going out of line you could marginalise them somehow. With social media you just cannotcannot do that. You cannotcannot control it and you do not know where it is coming from and it creates a whole new set of challenges. What would have always been helpful for us with the traditional media is for us to do a better job and for them to do a better job of ‘framing’ the whole picture. Instead of just the daily news account of the tally of the victims, reminding people what this whole thing is about, where we have come from. That is hard to do, but there can be opportunities, and we as facilitators need to do it and media need to be receptive to that.

Participant – Neslihan Özgünes

By ‘framing the full picture’, do you mean not just giving the political leaders’ perspectives but including perspectives of civil society and peace movements?

Speaker – David Gorman

As I said earlier in my presentation, absolutely, and there are a number of ways to do that. I was talking earlier about civil society

participation in peace processes. I mentioned that in this new handbook on mediation, there is a section on civil society and peace processes, and then I realised there was not so there is a lot more work to be done.

Participant – Penny Green¹⁰

Very briefly, I have two comments and a question. The first comment is in relation to Tom Kelly's comment on recognising that people are different and being able to move on. I think it is about recognising that there is an injustice and it is usually one side that experiences that injustice. That has to be recognised. Following David Gorman's point, the media has the duty to relay the nature of that injustice. That was certainly the experience for Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland. They suffered a huge array of discrimination and that has to be recognised. You cannot just simply forget that and move on. The second point I wanted to make was in relation to the previous point, that in fact Northern Ireland was indeed a conflict against the UK. There were certainly two constituencies involved on the ground but it was 'British troops out.' That was the rallying call.

The question I had was about censorship, and you talked, Owen, about how you had no pressure from *the Guardian* and that *the Guardian* is a paper of integrity and that is great. But we know

¹⁰ Penny Green is a DPI Council of Experts member. She is also the Head of Research and Director of the School of Law's Research Programme at King's College London and Director of the International State Crime Initiative (ICSI), United Kingdom (a collaborative enterprise with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the University of Hull, led by King's College London).

from studies that have been on the mass media, that there is a high degree of self-censorship which operates among journalists. I remember looking at the press during the years of the Troubles and it was all set in Ulster, based in 'London Derry'. The discourse was the discourse of loyalism. Journalists fell into those patterns very readily. They did not challenge those patterns. I wondered if you could make a comment about how one challenges the professional self-censorship which is part of the job. Getting stories out quickly means you go to particular opinion leaders and it means you have not the time to go to the civil society representatives who are working on the ground.

Speaker – Owen Bowcott

I am not sure I would, in terms of Northern Ireland, describe it as 'self-censorship' but certainly there was a willingness among people to adopt stereotypes that constricted their thinking. People all too readily inherited the prejudices of their community and of their newspaper. I am sure journalists in any publications tend to want to write stories that will get on the front page. They tend to write stories that they know that people or news organisations will publish so maybe those stereotypes become self-reinforcing because if you want to be prominent in the paper you have to play to those stereotypes. I am not conscious so much of people knowing they had good stories and not publishing. Occasionally, journalists from different newspapers would say 'my editor is not interested in this aspect of the story' or 'not this aspect of the story'. Maybe over

the years, those views become ossified and they reinforce political points but they are not necessarily ones of censorship. I think it is more a matter of people being too easy with their stereotype.



DPI Council of Experts member Professor Penny Green and Speaker Owen Bowcott

Moderator – Kadri Yıldırım

I wonder, in your experience how church or religious communities acted against opposition to peace processes?

Speaker — **Tom** **Kelly**

This is not a view which would be popular in Northern Ireland, but my experience over many years was that the churches tended to *follow* their communities rather than to *lead* their communities. They were scared to alienate their supporters; they were scared to

take a strong stance for peace. Actually at times they were not encouraged, but turned a blind eye, to extremism on both sides. I always believed that in Northern Ireland, on both sides there was an overwhelming desire for peace, but peace would not have arrived without leadership from the governments (British and Irish) and political parties across the spectrum. In the end it was the leadership that got us there and has kept us there. I am afraid I did not think that the churches provided that leadership.

Moderator – Bejan Matur

While we discuss conflict resolution, we discuss generally traditional media, but the world is changing. The role of social media is very important, which we can closely witness in the recent Gezi Park protests. Very ironically, the censorship of the AK Party and television censorship was counterproductive, because the young people who were in the middle of events were becoming organised through social media but their parents were watching television. It also took a few days for governments to become aware of it and they began a counter defence in an effective way. There are bizarre and weird phenomena such as Ankara's mayor accusing BBC journalist Selin Girit of being a spy, and attempting to start a Twitter campaign against her. This type of discourse is important to challenge. Additionally, the demonisation of armed groups is an important thing to challenge. For example, the head of the Kurdish armed forces had a Twitter account opened on behalf of him, which is giving humane and intelligent interventions. Formal negotiations are occurring and there are also informal forces at work, like these

Twitter debates. These can unmask the government, and in the Gezi protests this became very clear.

Lunch Break

Participants and speakers continued the discussion over lunch at the Artuklu Kervansarayı Hotel.



Participants Neslihan Özgünes and Aslı Tunç



Professor Penny Green, Professor Mahmut Mutman and Dr. Kathleen Cavanaugh



Kadri Yıldırım, Kadri Saliz and Speaker David Gorman



Moderator Bejan Matur and Hüseyin Aykol



*Necip Çapraz, Ahmet Ay, Hamza Aktan, Ceren Sözeri,
and Bayram Zilan at lunch*

Session Two

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar¹¹

Dear friends, welcome to the second and most vital session of today's roundtable. The morning session was also important. Really very competent people spoke about Northern Ireland's experience. Some of us have already spent time in Northern Ireland, and have already taken that lesson. It was an occasion for polishing our memories. Why I call this second session *very* vital or *key* is that it is entitled 'Media and the State.' We never thought such Gezi Park events could happen, so we did not think that the State could have the influence that it has now. Bejan told you that in Turkey it is hard to distinguish Media from State. Because of structural reasons, the media acted as an organ of state apparatus. At least recent developments brought about some interesting symbols and have opened up the possibility for State and Media concepts to be discussed. It has not been discussed so far and now, a wider section of society can discuss it. Most of us will remember the symbol of penguins. Penguins are representative of recent developments which are affecting, very strongly, the future developments of Turkey. The media did not write a word or say a word in the media and television on the Gezi Park protests. While they were silent, BBC World covered the events as headline news but CNN Turkey was broadcasting a documentary about the family life of penguins.

11 Cengiz Çandar is a senior journalist and columnist for Radikal Daily News, expert on the Middle East, former war correspondent, and a DPI Council of Experts member. He served as special adviser to then Turkish president Turgut Özal and has published numerous books and articles on Iran, Palestine and the Middle East.

It was a nice documentary, but it was not at the right time. Before the penguin documentary, they published a cooking programme on where to dine in Anatolia. During that time, the people in Gezi Park were subjected to pepper gas.

Then everything became just a scandal. I would say something but it would be seen as an insult, there are some rumours in the lobbies of the press that the Turkish press is schizophrenic. Important people came together and protected them. They changed their broadcasting policies and began to cover events with images. Then in that vital day of that crisis, the Prime Minister chose to go abroad for his North Africa visit. Since then he spoke every day, two to three or even five times per day. At different points between the airport and city he gave a speech for one hour and all channels broadcasted it live. This is acceptable as the Prime Minister, during crisis, is giving a speech in front of a large group. After he gave his speech at the airport, he gave the same speech in different locations but all television channels were still broadcasting the old speech 'live'. Then the Prime Minister went to another settlement. He spoke at five or six different locations. He stopped every five kilometres and each time he spoke for around 30 to 40 minutes. All TELEVISION channels broadcasted it live and gave him exclusive airtime.



Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

We come back to the relationship between State and Media, how it should be, how it is and how it should not be. In Turkey we have been discussing it for a while, but it has never become functional. Social media has been very important in Northern Africa. We heard that Twitter and Facebook were important social media instruments. We also used these in Turkey. For the first time, social media became an important instrument in a great social event. The state also stepped into social media. Social media is an enormous place for communication. Government circus includes many people who have a good command of media technology but social media became *very* important. It is still very important for mobilising the opposition, and became much more prominent than television shows and newspapers. To my right, I have one of the leaders of this new media, Doğan Akın from T24. When he started this website, it was one of many of these websites. Of course there were some followers but it was not that popular. In the last six

months, Doğan Akin's channel has become a very important place for free voices and now, I have to congratulate him. It is the most credible digital channel of Turkey, which is being followed with a great curiosity. It is a great opportunity that we have him with us before us. But first we also have, from Istanbul Şehir University, Professor Mahmut Mutman, who is a professor in the Department of Cinema and Television and coordinator of the Master's Program in Cultural Studies at Istanbul Şehir University, Turkey.

Speaker – Mahmut Mutman

I would like to thank DPI for allowing me to share my opinions with you. Firstly I want to discuss the general political economy of media. Of course this is very general. I also want to talk about the last 20 or 30 years from a cultural perspective. There are interesting forms, formats -I am not sure how to name them- that developed due to the post September 12 atmosphere. I will suggest they are a kind of 'feeling' or 'sentiment'. I do not mean this in an individualist psychological sense, but in a social and collective way. I will also argue that this sentiment gives rise to a very negative atmosphere. It is not a negativity that defines problems, but mostly one that is blaming the other side.

It is, I think related to and being strengthened by an identity politics which I call a 'corporatist politics'. There is an approach to the function of the media that we are all familiar with, which comes from Immanuel Kant's social space. A function of the media is surveillance. What underlies it is to be a sphere where individuals and citizens can express their views fairly.

Over two centuries it has been shown that this is not the case, and there are reasons for this. Let us emphasise this: news is a result of decision making. In some way, people are deprived of their power to speak; it has been delegated elsewhere. This is often considered to be political alienation in political theory. It is not completely wrong but what is very interesting for me is this: it also makes it possible to do this, it facilitates one to say something.

Media creates vocabulary and syntax with its image. It has a system, it has a style. Of course as results of the system we are living in, political and economic forces assume an important role in the decision making process. Hence it is necessary to evaluate the structure of media conglomerates. I will try to do this very shortly but we should not forget that there is something very different in Turkey than in Northern Ireland and other cases. Turkey is still at the periphery of the world rather than at the centre. It is undergoing a democratisation process so it is important to know that the people of Turkey are *not* seeing media as the British do and they may not be able to develop a relationship similar to that of the British.

There is an understanding in Turkey, which is dominant among the opposition, even though I do not entirely agree with it. It is an understanding, framing media from a legalisation point of view. I wish to provide a short historical summary. There are two turning points critical to understanding the current state of the Turkish media: the 1980 economic liberalisation decision, which allowed

a shift in media owners, and the 12 September 1980 *coup d'état* that followed. The military *coup* was the beginning of a period when freedoms began to be limited very seriously, however it was also more than that. The entire ruling ideology was restructured during that period. During the single party period, Kemalism was not effectual, during the 1960s it was split into two camps, whereas from 1975 to 1980 it was non-existent. However, with Kenan Evren's restructuring in the 1980s, we came face to face with an organised official ideology. Hence, the junta was more than a limitation on freedoms. It is the creation of an official ideology. And this is directly related to the media. In the 1990s after private television stations began to broadcast, rather than liberalisation, we see cartelisation. The 2000s witnessed a series of reforms, but only so long as they were demanded by the European Union (EU). A television channel broadcasting in Kurdish was also a result of this process. The willingness to join the EU is an invincible wish of official Turkish nationalism.

In Turkey, there can be democratisation from top to bottom, but not democratisation from bottom to top. The government is not sympathetic to democratisation from below.

Though this period has witnessed considerable reforms in extending the area of freedoms of speech and press, it should be noted that such steps are always undercut by the nationalist statist conservative establishment. This group puts forth conditions to exercise individual freedoms. 'Yes you are free, but on the condition that...' When these conditions are studied, one observes that the

state, the nation and the family are given prominence over the individual. It is essential to keep this framework in mind.

I mentioned how Kenan Evren restructured the official ideology. We immediately see its effect in the 1990s and 2000s. There is an issue that I find important. I also asked the morning speakers about this, in order to be clear about the differences between the UK and Turkey. In Turkey, the person who suggested to use the term ‘terrorist’ even before the 1980 coup was the chief writer for the daily newspaper *Hurriyet*, Oktay Eksi. To describe something as ‘terror’ is one framework, and to emphasise ‘terrorist’ is something else. In Turkey, both liberals and socialists argue that the state ideology is nationalist and conservative. However, since we could not do an ideology analysis we failed to recognise that the ‘terrorist’ figure became a foundational figure for statist national and conservative framework. I know the question that will come and I am well aware that I am swimming in dangerous waters. The question that will be posed is a righteous one: did not the PKK commit acts of terror? The PKK is a Stalinist organisation, and I am not a Stalinist leftist, yet, there is something I nevertheless cannot deny.

There is an important distinction in linguistics. Words do not just describe the world, they also *do* something. When a word is uttered, the word influences reality. For example, when marriage officers proclaim you as husband and wife, or when a verdict is declared calling a person ‘guilty’, the words create more than what they signify. Language does not simply describe the word but it

changes the world. In this regard, the ‘terrorist’ figure became a foundational figure that deeply influenced perceptions of both Turks and Kurds.

Therefore, when we study recent history, it can be observed that while there is serious monopolisation on the one hand, the statist nationalist conservative framework is somehow protected on the other hand. I know this point will draw much criticism, however I do not think the statist nationalist conservative framework has a political party. When I make this remark, everybody understands what I mean. Unfortunately, certain realpolitik considerations prevent us from admitting the reality.

For instance, Islamism entered the global stage as a very important actor during the past 30 years. However, its counterpart in Turkey failed to realise that Islamism is a new movement. Though it is distinct from Kemalism ideologically, I believe it to be identical sentimentally, in terms of its relationship with authority. In this sense I think it is not very different from what they are against.

Let us have a look at monopolisation. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we are in a capitalist system, hence it is not easy to alter the dynamics of the system. It will inevitably be a monopoly. Four to five large players will prevent others from entering the media market, while heroic journalists like Ahmet Altan struggle to make their way through. However, I think there is an area where we can give a stronger struggle, which is cross

monopolisation. There are five major groups in the media: Doğan, Çukurova, Ciner, Doğuş and Turkuvaz. They all have investments in other sectors like energy, telecommunications, finance, and construction. Imagine being a media owner who invests in energy and there is someone in the Black Sea protesting against your investments, will you cover it? You will not because you are a stakeholder here. This is a very big problem. As importantly, there are no regulations preventing these media owners from bidding in tenders with their other companies. Those who favour a democratic Turkey have to fight against this scandalous situation. One cannot expect any news from such a media. We will just watch penguins. The situation is not very noticeable during normal periods but in abnormal conjunctures, it hits you in the face. There are two major examples of this, the first one is February 28th or the so-called postmodern coup of 1997 and the other is the Gezi Park resistance. During these events, monopolisation, tender relations, cross monopolisation all hit us in the face. We were speaking with Yavuz Baydar the other day. He made an analogy with Stalinism, but in a different sense. He meant it in the sense that political parties are already effective within the media companies. As far as this economic structure will hold, this situation will also continue to hold, one way or another. We will forget about this and then in an abnormal conjuncture, it will hit us in the face again.

Let me tell something about culture. Economic and political forces have an important role in forming culture. The political culture of Turkey and the economic culture of liberalisation and

monopolisation have influenced our cultural life. We should accept that it has created a cultural industry. The most fundamental aspect of this is the treatment of cultural products as industrial products. Now let us look at a literary agency on the market, there is a market now. When I was young the thing we call a book was to be bought from book stores. Now we have D&R¹², which is a book store monopoly. On the one hand, this led to an incredible variety, this can be observed in the number of weekly magazines. It brought freedom of consumption. It is an opening and it is an expansion. Different categories of consumption were formed, depending on age, and so on. There are a variety of television channels and magazines now. However, it also brought about a great deal of standardisation, categories and formats. Most of the time, there are programmes adopted from their American or European originals and translated into Turkish. At other times, they come up with their own formats. However, most important is the issue of the tabloidisation of the Turkish press.

When you examine the first pages of average Turkish newspapers, there is no equivalent to the *Guardian* or the *New York Times*. You see the same thing in Mexican newspapers. There are many pictures and headlines that are exaggerated, which creates a feeling of events and excitement. Tabloidisation is a very interesting phenomenon and I believe the Prime Minister's emotional state reflects an intense picture of Turkey's general mood.

12 D&R is a music and bookstore chain in Turkey.

I draw your attention to two forms and then end my words. One is a very abstract form of the discussion so maybe it is a bit unlikeable. One is roundtable discussion on television and another is columns. Again, I am not even mentioning European or American television, but watch Brazilian or Thai television or look at their press and I do not think you will see as many roundtable discussions or columns as you do in Turkey. Turkey's case is peculiar and it is deeply related to the democratisation process. These practices simultaneously enable and hinder democracy, which is a paradox. Think of a discussion show, it is a stage, different opinions around the roundtable and all face to face. We should always remember it is an image, that there will be advertisements soon and that there is a time limitation, along with a limitation on what can be said on television. Because Turkey has high political temperaments, these programmes just magnetise us.

These shows have a role and a reality. They create a democratic discipline and understanding, but they lead to other things as well. I wish to talk about an aspect of this culture that attracts my attention. We have already been hearing that everyone is free to express his or her opinions. This is a given. Yet there is another formula that sets the framework in most of these shows: that democracy is a culture of reconciliation. You can hear this everywhere in a rightist, leftist or a conservative channel. Why should we reconcile? This is an important question to me. It immediately strikes our mind that there is another point, to get ratings, to make people fight so that you will have higher ratings.

When I am invited to a programme, I am looking at who is at the other side of the table because they are trying to make us fight and get ratings. Why is democracy a culture of reconciliation? Is fighting the only alternative to reconciliation? I might not agree with you but we can still sit together around a table. I want you to think how much this culture of reconciliation is emphasised on Turkish television. This rhetoric is actually very limiting. I think the Turkish television is imitating the dominant conservative statist nationalist understanding by overemphasising this culture of reconciliation. There is a tendency to compel the participants to agree upon conservative statist nationalists lines, despite all the democratic debates.

Another issue is newspaper columns. I stayed in the US for a year with a Fulbright research scholarship. Hence I was always invited to Fulbright events. One day, they invited me to a reception for visiting academics from the US. The former US Ambassador was also there and he delivered a speech to introduce Turkey. He particularly emphasised that there is a stereotype here which is the columnists, and that they set the entire agenda. This was a US Ambassador, not a member of a Marxist political organisation. It was a very correct point. Whenever I open a newspaper there are some 25 columnists in each one. I do not want to be misunderstood as we have many fellow columnists here today. Not everyone analyses like Cengiz Çandar and he is also paying the price of analysing, of course. This is an interesting phenomenon, because while it is related to democratisation and building a democratic culture, on the other hand, I believe 90 per cent of these columnists are

disastrous and unnecessary. In very few of their columns do we read analysis. Mostly, they vindicate or confirm already existing positions. They join in on positional politics. There is an aspect of manipulation as well, but I do not want to get into that. I do not want to pose moral criticism, but rather structural criticism.

There is another issue, which is the distinct way of writing a column. This is intriguing to me as I find culture interesting. They contain many paragraphs made of single lines. It is the same thing with Ahmet Altan and with Ertuğrul Özkök. We need to dedicate time to think about what democracy *is*. This writing method is one that cheaply and easily enables a dramatic tone and allows for accusations. All discourse is focused on accusations that appear as criticism. No one should underestimate this because it is extremely effective. We should not deny that this is part of our democratic culture, but in a very coarse and corrupt form. In the early 20th Century, non-orthodox Marxist culture and literature critic Walter Benjamin said that journalism is literature, but a bad form of it. He was right. Let me stop here, I have talked too much so I will leave time for other discussions.



Speaker Mahmut Mutman

Speaker – Doğan Akın

I will begin with a couple of questions to think about, from what Mahmut has said. I could not understand your point on relationship between accusation and single line paragraphs very well. Maybe you could elaborate on that later. It was very flattering to hear these remarks from Cengiz Çandar, who I respect very much.

I will initially try to provide a brief history of state-media relations. The first newspaper on these territories was *Takvim-i Vekayi*, for promoting Mahmud II's projects. The sultan needed this. It was an official newspaper. Then again in 1840, another newspaper was published, *Ceride-i Havadis*. They were published by officials.

When we speak of state and media relations I immediately think of them. The first private undertaking was *Tercüman-ı Ahvâl*, published by Sinasi and Agah Efendi in 1860. These were two of the intellectual figures of the New Ottomans, the first organised opposition in Turkey. In 1876 the Grand Vizir Ali Pasha declared a decree that all newspapers must be shut down, which led to a group of journalists - including Sinasi - being exiled. Later on, the First and Second Constitutional Eras took place, followed by the First World War and the National Independence War. At the time, as the organiser of the national struggle, Mustafa Kemal personally named and prepared some newspapers, the most prominent of which was *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*. There is also the renowned Anadolu Agency, established in 1920 by Mustafa Kemal.

It is necessary to give a clarification of something. While Mustafa Kemal was organising the national struggle he was different from the man we saw during the nation-building period. At this point, he was an organiser who lost ties with the Ottoman Army and who needed broad civilian support. It is possible to read about this in Bülent Tanör's book '*Genel ve Ulusal Kongre İktidarları*' which gives well-written details. From 1919 to 1921, each and every step was based upon broad civil representation. An important outcome of this is the 1921 Constitution, prepared right before the nation building era. This 1921 constitution does not once include the term 'Turk'. Two times it says 'Turkey', a geographical designation, but never the *national* designation. This 1921 constitution is discussed a lot in this territory. Of course it is not a classical constitution; a

constitution which does not emphasise the rule of the constitution, but it is an important document. When we speak of the 1924 Constitution we can finally observe a shift towards nation-state building, emphasising Turkishness and not acknowledging the existence of any other ethnic groups. This is also the establishment of the national security regime and it is very closely linked with our discussion.

We need to accept that the national security regime has deep implications for politics, education, literature, the press and the media. Examples can be provided in two areas. The first is article 35 of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) internal service code, which was the legal justification for all three *coups*. It states that the role of the Army is to protect the Republic. It was first issued in 1934 as article 34 and it was named the Army Interior Services Law. Article 34 served as the legal justification for the 1960 *coup*. After the *coup*, the article was simplified and became article 35.

The national security regime had serious legal repercussions for non-Turkish and non-Sunni citizens. You might remember a Ministry of Education-approved textbook from last year that was taught to tenth grade students, which define Assyrians as ‘groups that conspire with foreigners against Turkey’. While I was providing that historical summary, I was trying to underline that all those newspapers were related to the state-government and had a mission to transform society. The state had a mission to change society and it entrusted the media with this duty. Mustafa Kemal put this

bluntly in a meeting in Izmir on February 4-5, 1924. He stated that the press needs to be an iron castle, a castle of thought; around the Republic and that the Republic deserves to ask for this. He said this to the representatives of the press. This was 80-85 years ago. Now, recently I received a criticism on the Armenian issue and I want to share it with you. The Prime Minister asked me to clarify whose lawyer I was, he implicated me with the duty of being a lawyer. After 80-90 years, the same understanding continues.

During the single party period of the Republic, the national security regime had many negative consequences. Intellectuals, including Sabahattin Ali, Aziz Nesin, Mehmet Ali Aybar, Zekeriya Sertel, and Nazim Hikmet were tried, to be taken under control and when necessary they were either imprisoned or destroyed. In 1948, Sabahattin Ali, a very famous novelist in Turkey, was murdered when he was only 41. His murderer, Cengiz Ertekin, turned out to be a former military member and also a member of the police forces. In court, Ertekin argued that he committed the act with nationalist sentiments. He was released before completing his sentence with an amnesty.

When analysing the impact of the national security regime on the media, I think we can draw such a panorama. While the empire was collapsing Turkism began to be important. I think it coincided with the historical trend as well, as nationalism was an important movement during the 19th Century. ‘Turkists’ would have the lead on the new state that would be formed on the territories of the

dissolving empire, instead of the supporters of Ottomanism or Islamism. Turkism had significant effects as the officially supported ideology. Some 'nationalist' parties were formed as well. However, since the state dealt with that issue, as in the case of Tunceli, nationalism was mainly utilised as a tool against leftists. In the 1980s, when the state had difficulties dealing with the Kurdish issue militarily, we witnessed nationalism being used as a reactive force against the Kurds. This permeated into our language as well. For instance, our national oath is an issue of debate. In terms of law, I already mentioned article 35. And then there is the issue with the media.

This influenced the media because when the state saw something as threatening, the media saw it in the same way. As you know, the Kurdish issue existed only as the south-eastern question until the 1990s. Jelal Talabani and Massoud Barzani were only tribal leaders. Gypsies, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, Assyrians, and Armenians were all groups that were marginalised and discriminated against by the state and the media. Their rights were violated and this national security regime had important effects on building media language. This process started in the 1980s but the complete structure was formed during the 1990s. The media order that was dependent on the state started to evolve into being dependent on big businesses. Following this process it has turned into a new structure. There are big media groups which control much of Turkey's news. I will not reiterate what Mahmut has said but I will say: we see a media which is trying to shape discourse

through capitalism. For instance, the owners of the daily newspaper *Sabah* would sit around a table and discuss whether a DYP-SHP coalition or a DYP-ANAP coalition would be more beneficial to them, or whether the *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party) should win the elections. There are important memoirs written about this, for example by Emin Çölaşan, stating that the DYP-SHP coalition was formed in his house. We all know what happened by the end of this process on February 28th and what some journalists had to go through – I especially want to underline Cengiz Çandar's name at this point.

Finally, today, we are faced with a media permeated by a government that won seven consecutive elections: three general, two local, and two referendums. Of course they always had a tendency to permeate into media but such a strong government is not something we are used to. So, what is the current situation like? There are problems and there are positives, particularly with regards to seeking solutions to the Kurdish problem. The aspect of this process that gives me hope is how close all parties are to accepting that there is no strong alternative to peace, and politicians are aware of this public opinion.

At this point in the process, the official party of nationalism is unaffected...he says that ultra-nationalists are not taking to the streets as 50,000 people against PKK negotiations. Secondly, armed forces today are not hindering processes, they are helping. The government is open to negotiating with the rebel part of the

Kurdish population. Importantly, society is seeing this as legitimate. There is not a scandal or great upsurge against it. In Gezi Park, despite the allegations, there was not significant conflict between groups. I saw very nationalist supporters and BDP party supporters in Gezi Park together

The wise person's committee, which you can criticise, but still there were discussions and they informed the public of what is happening. They made these things more legitimate. I think it helped. Finally, there is the support of media. As Bejan said, it is problematic. They are ignoring Kurds/gypsies/homosexuals; that is the same media. How will they support peace with the PKK? August is coming and the Prime Minister will sit around such a table with 14 to 15 army generals, and they all have one vote. If the Prime Minister will not participate, the head of the meeting will be the chief of staff. There have been important retreats in the military across the region, and why am I emphasising it? Because the Prime Minister is still afraid of a *coup d'état* possibility. They have many problems. They have to solve this problem and the democracy problem on the other hand. During the Gezi protests, there were also discussions and negotiations. It will not be the case that everybody will simultaneously want peace in Turkey. Maybe they will be able to do it, but what is important is the result. Will it just be a *background* noise or will it be a *great* noise which we cannot stop? Bejan Matur has attracted attention to it. Since the state is going towards peace, free press is very important.

While discussing the free press, the capital problems of media are important. This is because their financial interests are deemed more important than journalism. This hinders the freedom of press, but it does not completely remove our responsibilities. There is a media problem in Turkey. There are also problems related to the language of journalism. But if we did not have a Kurdish issue in Turkey or if we did not have a military issue in Turkey could we become a very democratic state? Wouldn't they still see Turkish nationalism as superior to all other nationalisms? I think we need to point out that there is a problem of media in Turkey and we should know that Kurdish issue cannot be solved before democratic issues are solved.



Speaker Doğan Akin and Moderator Cengiz Çandar

Moderator - Cengiz Çandar

Thank you for your valuable contributions. The remainder of this session will be dedicated to a question and answer session. At that time, I will let you make your interventions, but until then

I would like to hear from one more speaker, Yavuz Baydar. Yavuz is an independent media ombudsman and his ombudsman rights have also been violated. I hope he will tell us about this. I give the floor to Yavuz

Yavuz Baydar

Many thanks. While we are holding this meeting, the media's playground is getting narrower and narrower. I would like to emphasise this in particular. For 14 years I have had the role of an independent ombudsmanship, and the media has never been as bad as it is today. This 'strangling process' even went as far as to impose censorship on an independent ombudsman, which is really very rare. In fact, this may be the first time this has happened in the world. I will share my views on media freedom and hope to ignite some discussion.

The framework UNESCO has set out for media development is relevant to this subject. It is related to the global force of media. The 'core group' is following trends in five continents they want to make a future projection in. To look at independent and strong media, we base ourselves on three main criteria: freedom, independence, and pluralism. When media privatised or specified we do not have the problem to understand the implications. Social media use is up to 75 per cent in metropolitan areas. In Turkey, on Facebook we are playing for the world championship in terms of number of users and on Twitter we are in the top five in terms of numbers of users.

We have national news and we have about 2,500 local newspapers. When we bring together all of these media forms, there is not a great problem; we have media which is wide ranging.

However, in state-media relationships we look at independence and pluralism. In the last ten years, the independence criterion is very important. I recently went to Brussels for a conference on media in the Western Balkans and Turkey, and what I said there was that we have a public calling out for more freedoms and a media that is too controlled and timid. In the past five years or so, the government strategy has been to control TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation). It is still a state, and not a public broadcaster. The government has let down the public on this issue. The government implements policies of tighter and tighter control, not less. Particularly during the country's vital democratic transition, it goes on to incorporate its main propaganda machines. The media is a very complex, shrewd, destructive system, and it is being run by money obsessive media moguls, not by journalists. This consolidation is happening nowhere else in the world, as it is in Turkey, so openly and arrogantly. The government's actions counteract the media professionals who try to do their jobs in the name of the public. On a daily basis, they impose censorship and threaten people's jobs. There are no more trade unions in those outlets, zero activity of trade unions, and very little power over owners. For example there is the recent example of a journalist was forced to leave his job by the owner who felt the threat of Prime Minister at his neck. The editor felt he had to follow his boss's

orders, so he got rid of the journalist. This is the same owner who had asked the Prime Minister who he should name as editor in chief. A quick study would show how many of those major owners had connections with the government or with politicians. There is also the threat of physical constraint. It is impossible to conduct critical journalism under such threat or intimidation. Coverage of economic corruption today is almost zero. There are very few, tiny, brave outlets which break stories which are critical of the government, but ultimately because of their lack of reach, they have zero to little effect whatsoever. Recent stories on a new intelligence bill have barely been picked up. Not a single one of those media owners is going to present alternative views. They continue to take the side of the government, which tempts them with ‘carrots’ and more ‘carrots’. We have no chance of professional dignity if this continues.



Participant Yavuz Baydar

In the relationship between state and media, the issue of independence becomes even more important than the criterion of freedom. The government is not directly taking away freedom of speech, but instead they have begun to think that if they do this more cunningly, they will inflict less harm on the government.

One way they take away freedoms is physically. There are many journalists in prison: at least 60 to 65. There is the issue about not enough awareness. If our journalist colleagues, most of whom are Kurds, will not be taken out of prison, Turkey will be in much more trouble. Media should not be controlled through these means. A penal sanction is very visible and it can be seen very easily but the press and journalists are influenced in other ways. When it comes to media independence, the patronage of media and the relationship between state and media are important indicators. It is so hard to explain this problem and it is harder to regulate or monitor, by both Turkish and international press. Because of this, the government, state and administration think that it is not an issue that is easily understandable by the West, so they are taking steps to solve it. As Mahmut addressed, Turkey has many media bosses, who are involved in different businesses. If something goes against their business interests, they try to tame it or put handcuffs on their journalists' hands.

There are four conditions at play in censorship: firstly the employment needs of our colleagues, secondly, we do not have collective rights or trade union rights, thirdly, the statist corporate

culture is very strong, vertical culture is really very strict as we can see with the Gezi protests, and finally you know, media bosses are dependent on states through tenders, direct or indirect. These four conditions are just instruments which can be used by governments. Their mechanisms work through these conditions. Penal sanctions are particular to Azerbaijan and China, which are on the margins of international human rights. The government is trying to strengthen the political oppression over the economy. A strong government or state is replacing reflection on ideas in a rational way. Media are not leading, they are just following, and they have lost their role.

Until December 2012, the mainstream media demonised the PKK, but then political Turkey changed its mind. As such, beginning from December, we have begun to hear a different opinion about the Kurdish conflict in the media. Journalism should reflect different actors and opinions but this is not the case in Turkey. This pressure system is becoming full dependence, which will make everything harder. We should always attach importance to the criterion I have set out today. Without independence, we cannot have a truly free or vibrant press. In Albania, Romania and Italy you have similar cases, but they are not as bad or as raw. If nothing is done about the infringement of Turkey's media freedom, Turkey will become a place where media is glued to political power.

Moderator - Cengiz Çandar

Thank you Yavuz, you made some very important points, I hope people took notes for our discussion later. I want to make a

comment to one of you. Bayram Zilan has been tweeting live from this meeting, claiming that I admonished him. All I did was say what I feel. I have previously criticised him in my articles and I am now receiving criticism for it. I did not admonish anyone so please correct this point.

Coffee Break

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

We will now continue with questions and discussion on what we have heard, and on the topic of media-state relations.

Participant

Hello everyone, first of all I want to thank DPI for contributing to Turkey's democratisation process and for bringing us all together here in Mardin today. As you all know, different segments of society have different expectations of democratisation. A citizen from Van, who was driving to Istanbul, violated all traffic rules around Ankara. He exceeded the speed limit, did not obey by the red lights, and so forth. And when he was asked to pay for his misconduct, he said looking surprised 'I thought we made peace!'

Participant

The Gezi Park protests awakened us all to the relationship between journalist and state. Because of it, we have understood what young people expect from us. Before, people supported TRT. Journalists supported them and they began to spend their lives in TRT's

buildings, which made me think about what journalism is, and how youngsters can believe in it. Journalists should firstly criticise themselves. Are journalists not responsible for the place we are in? Where was their solidarity with the journalists who have been dismissed? How well have we made our voices heard? I am a lecturer and I know how the young generation distrusts journalism, and they wait for the same resistance from journalists as that which occurred in Gezi. Instead of publishing penguins, if they had published the Taksim events they would have lost their jobs, but it would be in an honourable way. However, if journalists resist losing their jobs, then we will be in a place where everything becomes crystallised and parties and media become polarised. We have been discussing this for 10 to 15 years. We knew about all these problems, but for the first time, with the Gezi events, people's right to get news became a big problem. When people and information were silenced in this way, we found out where we actually are in terms of media rights.



*Participants Ahmet Akgül, Muzaffer Duru, Speaker David Gorman,
Moderators Bejan Matur and Cengiz Çandar, Necip Çapraz,
Hamza Aktan and Ceren Sözeri*

What I expect from mainstream journalists is for them to portray different stances, the absence of this is the reason why people do not trust the system, which is outdated and clumsy. Since the 1990s there is a new form of journalism, of columns and opinions in traditional and new media. There are a lot of strong attitudes but it is too controlled by the government. The Prime Minister gives out press cards and only you can go into Gezi Park if you have one – isn't that ironic? This is a state media relationship which is crumbling in all aspects; unfortunately the journalists cannot use these events to resist government power. This is because everybody is trying to protect their positions and now it is touching all of us. There will be a witch hunt, the witch hunt will continue and we are all culpable of this.

Speaker - Yavuz Baydar

I have thought on it a lot and it is not easy to give questions to these answers. The fear of losing one's job is worse than going to prison. A journalist who has lost his job cannot find a job in other places. The reasons for which he lost his job make him toxic. Other colleagues who have seen this did not act because of a lack of trade unions or journalist's rights. We are having trouble finding an answer to this question; it is a dilemma. There are two solutions to this media consolidation and journalist intimidation: either some media institutions will collapse or one, two or three media bosses will take a step forward and support media independence. There is no other way out. We can wish it but it is just a wish. Some media bosses will take a step forward and defend it.

Moderator - Cengiz Çandar

I do not want to abuse my power as a moderator but I would like to respond. The solidarity picture that is put forth by Gezi Park is the opposite to what journalists practice. Journalists do not like each other, although this is not just particular to journalists. In many professions, people in the same occupations do not like each other. Journalists especially do not like each other. The number of people who do not love me will be many. Since the early 2000s, the AK Party government has allowed journalists to use hate speech against one another. The fault lines are being broken. Emin Çölaşan, one of the symbolic names of Turkish media, said in a speech that certain elements of Turkish society are controlled by foreign powers. One journalist, Mustafa Balbay, then decided to call out a name and slander journalist Baskin Oran. He got into trouble for using hate speech but it was said because Oran was a journalist for an Armenian journal, so he could not object to this speech. Journalists are not currently practicing solidarity in the way it is happening in Gezi.

We are still not able to digest the Gezi Park events, yet we have seen something but still there are a lot of things to discuss. There are many dimensions to see. One of these is all the participants who have displayed a solidarity picture among one another. Also it has created important results within society. The Prime Minister has driven strong opinions and a great level of polarisation has happened politically. Before, the people who did not love each other were crowded in the press. But now it is over the social media,

everyone is insulting each other, denouncing each other. Yavuz's point today is another indication that we are going towards a total collapse. We should not act 'Pollyanna'; we will need to work to fix the media situation.

Participant

I have two questions to Mahmut: the capital structure of media is criticised everywhere but can we reverse it? I do not think it is possible. There is more than one group and they have a right in our system to have ownership. We cannot say that those who deal with media can only deal with media. There is a point which was criticised, which is the presence of many columnists. Yes, we have too many columnists representing different tendencies but individually they are alright. Writing is also a public challenge to stimulate discussion. I do not think it is a great problem to have too many columnists. Everybody is now writing a blog. Everybody is a columnist. I do not think too many columnists create danger to the discourse because there is a plurality of opinion. There is a diversification. Everybody will put forward their calibre and their value to the issues.

This morning, we discussed the issue of the direct relations between state and media coverage. I do not think there is such an absolute relation. There are different actors in the media and in the state that may correlate. If government is held by a classical party, they have good relationships with those media, but if the ruling party is central right, the relationship with central media will be better. Secondly it

is about whom we are speaking; if it is about military, all the media will say one thing but if it is about politics they will say different things. Media is also not a unitary actor. There are Kurdish media, there are alternative media and they are expressing their opinions as well. A very pessimistic panorama has been expressed which I do not entirely agree with. The problems with Turkish media are not very different from the problems in other parts of the world. The media is coming to terms with the PKK, but their perceptions of the PKK are problematic. To agree with the PKK will not guarantee the future of democracy but the issue needs to be dealt with. Can Turkey take steps towards democratisation when there is conflict or when there is peace? We should attach great importance to the lack of conflict between social groups. A Turkey which establishes peace cannot be a Turkey divided. One other thing is that the relationship between wise people and media is too close. In fact, many of them are journalists. I have experienced it. But when you go to small provinces there is a disconnect with the process. After two or three days, TRT is no longer focusing on the peace process or representing different points of view. One easy solution is to abolish TRT, which could work. In 1968 it could be said that we need TRT, but some public task of media could be put on the role of private media companies and the internet.

Participant

Since the state is negotiating with the PKK, it has done the opposite to the rest of Turkey who were being left in the dark about many things. In terms of Taksim, we did not even know it but he said that

we will demolish it and make an opera building, but we were not involved, nor were we about alcohol sales issues. While you support expressions of belief, which belief is that? There are some beliefs which carry out their rituals with alcohol and there are some which carry out their rituals by abstaining from it. The Prime Minister came out and said, ‘Why are you against expressions of belief?’ but this is his method, of putting forth his own belief system. Right now, we have a tolerance problem, especially the problem of being a Turk and Sunni. It is a very important problem to address and a resolution will not be reached when a Prime Minister attempts to justify a legal arrangement with Islam.



Participants Vahap Coskun and Professor Havva Kök

Participant

The main ideology came without interruption. The men of newspapers, not only the leftists but also conservative and Islamist, they were made to obey. This formatting process not only aimed at

leftists, that is why everything is a bit blunted in Turkey, including the conservatives and other political parties. Censorship not only affects leftists but also conservatives. This is why we are in such a vicious circle because no kind of media is free from influence. To address the issue of columnists I would like to talk about one very interesting columnist who wrote the following in one of his books. He said that he owes an explanation to American readers. That is: in the new world, politics is the job of men of politics and as such, they always ask us 'why do you have that many intellectuals writing columns'? This is how it works in the old continent he says. In his opinion, the 'new world' has an understanding of politics which is deprived of politics. In our part of the world, politics is something which is still being followed by society, maybe, of course, our society is going to abstract levels, but this is still our way of engaging.

If we could not protect Gezi Park, and if we cannot own and protect our commonalities, then we must act. If we go from top down we should seek the help of the constitution. Also, we should remember the distinction between central media and local issues. At local level there is less plurality. We do not have strong local information or media. There is a strong institutionalised media internationally of course, but not locally. There is a problem, because on one hand there is a blogging flood, which is very good but also creates concern. Such a media institution has very little accountability and only limited readerships I do not know if bloggers can do it. Of course somebody can ask a question on social media but still we will wait for the institutional papers. I do not know whether

social media can close this gap, finally. There are two points which have been promoted a lot but even the factual data has not been consistent. The public cannot ascertain correct information. They are reading completely different factual accounts from different sites. It is creating and recreating a lack of trust in media. Social media and Twitter are maybe creating a great fear in traditional media, but they add to the amount of falsified information.

Participant

I wonder whether we have been given such an experience because we live in a system which sees the 'other' as 'enemy'. I wonder whether this is a result of the AK Party experience or are they trying to push us towards a Mussolini type system?

Participant

I did not say we are going to a Mussolini like system, because it is currently 70 or 80 per cent. But if the percentage of consolidation goes to 90 per cent journalism becomes directly under the leadership of the government or big business. Over time, ownership control, has become even greater, not reduced.

Participant

As far as I know there is more ownership fragmentation now and less monopolisation.

Participant

Actually, recent data shows an increase.

Participant

For example Star TELEVISION has been sold to the group but the shareholders remain essentially the same.

Participant

Is the capital more concentrated for all types of media?

Participant

I have been talking about the mainstream media, for them it is around 80 per cent. Strasbourg and Brussels have recommendations about it. None of the recommendations say that state or public broadcasting should be abolished completely. On the contrary, state broadcasting should be expanded and diversified like the cases in France. There are recommendations about turning them into public broadcasters. It does not mean that it should not be abolished but the things which we need from media could be provided by TRT if it improved. The mainstream media are reluctant, they are insufficient and they are even blocking news. What does public broadcasting mean? It means acting like a lighthouse, which shows the way, which is very important in transition periods.

Participant

I would like to begin with one of the points made during a previous participant. It was said that Gezi Park was an awakening for us. Was it an awakening for Kurds? Before these incidents, CNN never disturbed Turks. During the crackdowns on Kurdish people, it was disturbing us but not them. Statist nationalists approached the

news from their own perspective and were not disturbed. Generally they were looking down on things. Everybody looks from their perspective on the media. One incident highlights this. In the 1980s at Diyarbakır prison more than 30 Kurdish prisoners had been killed and tortured. The media completely falsified the news. They said that the prisoners burned each other. Instead of ignoring each other's points of view, let us come together as journalists and let's discuss this problem. Everything had been understood to be lies, as journalists we were able to, and should discuss it.

For me the most serious problem is editorial independence. Journalists cannot practice journalism independently without trusting the integrity and independence of their editors. At *Taraf* I was the chief editor and they dismissed two people. 20 resigned but nobody discussed it. It was a very important professional ethics fight. But they were happy we were being smashed by the bosses. Most of them were happy; they said that yes it is good that they lost their jobs. We do not discuss it even now. Polarisation in Turkey has created very bad professional corruption. Corruption is in many places, everybody knows his or her community and everybody wants to protect themselves and they want to smash the others. Are all media groups included in your calculation?

Speaker - Yavuz Baydar

Some media are not included because they are consortiums or they have a very high per cent of income from media.

Participant

Most people can run their jobs without other sectors but I do not think this is true for media. All other political groups and capital groups are just paying for it. He said that before September 12 there was a difference between the workers and the bosses of media. When I was executive of *Milliyet*, we were braver in claiming our rights, but after the bosses began to get involved for other motivations and they began to pay from their own pocket, it became more difficult. Rather than the conglomeration of the capital there is a conglomeration of *interests*. In fact, they may be losing money on the media side of business. Then why, despite losing money do they do it? They all either have interests in the state media relationship or in improving their chances at other industries. How can we protect ourselves against this disaster? How can we get beyond all these dependencies? There are various media groups, those who are close to Erdoğan and those who are close to the opposition. There is opposition I think but maybe not enough. From a political point of view it is really problematic. This is very important for us. We saw the issues of CNN Turk. I think the penguins that were broadcast by them are a sign. But they have not done anything else for years. They have always acted in this way.



Participant Oral Çalışlar talks with Emel Kurma and Mustafa Akyol

When we look at media, we should see the different views in our society but we do not. There is a dependence between government and media and we were reminded of this after Gezi Park. Foreign journalists are telling me that Turkey has the highest number of imprisoned journalists. And they are actually mostly Kurds. Here, we are just becoming aware of it. When some Turkish journalists had been arrested after the Ergenekon operations, there was more of an outcry, and people did not use the word ‘terrorist’. But when Kurdish journalists are imprisoned, they did not even count them as a part of the journalists in t prison, because they were seen to be in prison because of the PKK.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

There are many demands to take the floor, so please speak briefly and I will try to get to everyone.

Participant

I will address two points very briefly. When DPI began its work, the threat against peace was even greater than it is now. We have the problem of interlocution. Yes, there is a negotiation; of course it is not so smooth or quick. But right now we do not have so many violent conflicts and this is an important step. We should describe the risk against peace, not only as stopping bloodshed, but also we would focus on something which would make peace more permanent. Perhaps finding methods to create permanent harmony could be the agenda of future meetings. Personally I think the main risk here is not cases such as Lice. What is much more dangerous than these kinds of isolated news stories are the steps that have *not* been taken by government towards a peace process or to mollify protesters. If we cannot take steps for democratisation, we cannot resolve our conflict. Finally I want to say that to discuss peace together, we can also see a close relationship with the process which began in Gezi. We have learned from the Irish example that a third party will have a critical part in peace. What kind of third party is needed? The first answer is, there needs to be local sensitivity. Additionally, except for the Kurds, nobody else is strongly interested in peace. We should find a style which will push other areas of societies towards peace. If Turkey's society is going to be a party to peace, all parts of Turkish society should be included. Gezi Park has an indirect contribution to this, but it detracts attention. They are not interested in what Kurds experienced. They are against Kurds because the state is against them and because the media echoes that.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

I hope that those words will have an effect on everybody.

Participant - Necip Çapraz

We are more comfortable with regards to the Kurdish issue since the peace process has started and now we are discussing a resolution process, but of course there are events which are creating trouble for us. In terms of the role of media in conflict resolution, I think our guests from abroad are very important, because the most important benefit of this meeting can be what we have learned from them. They have created hope in us to become more patient, and we will share it. We have seen how troublesome a peace process is and we have learned from the real actors. That is why it is very important. I have a question to our international speakers, how hopeful are you that this will be developed in Turkey? Do you have the necessary level of information flow from Turkey? Do you have question marks in your mind? That is my question. My colleague asked a question during the morning session. He used nationalist Kurdish, but I question this. So, Turkey is not nationalist but Kurds are nationalist? It is impossible to find any force which is as cruel as Turkey but they are accusing Kurds of 'violent nationalism'. Kurds have democratic demands, we are asking for rights. Are we 'nationalists' for claiming our rights? We have our rights, we want our rights and they are hitting us over the head and asking us not to be 'nationalists'. Even before I was a journalist I did not respect it and still I do not accept it. Without democratisation, journalists will not be saved from their problems. There are many Turkish

journalists in prison, over 60 and not all are reported. Their right to live is being confiscated. I am also standing trial because of the KCK issue. Our right to live is even under threat, without freedom, the problems of the western part of Turkey will not be solved either.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

Thank you, what you have said has caused many people wanting to intervene. Yes, Mahmut Mutman.

Speaker – Mahmut Mutman

Very briefly, there is the following problem. John Dewey, a liberal philosopher in the 1920s and 30s was shouting this: this monopolist media structure cannot create a democracy in the US. Nobody listened to John Dewey and his friends. He suggested reforms in two areas: in education and in media, because he believed in the importance of public information. We can prevent cross monopolisation, but if the liberal position cannot tolerate this, what can we do? One example of the problem is illustrated by this. One columnist said before the election that to undo memorisation or to challenge what is known, is essential, although difficult. He introduced a new term into the language of shifting paradigms. Because he used it in a column it has expanded. If we have too many of these new terms and columnists, we can corrupt the language of democracy.

There is this issue of the Islamists, who have to somehow be criticised. Let me tell you something about this, I insist that

Islamism at the core, is the thing as same Kemalism. It is the same sentiment, the government or the people who are in power have always exploited Islamists. They are exploited. They have used it against the people. The government always tried to give Islamism a legitimate image, but what they actually tried to do was to use one thing against another in order to stay in control.

Participant – Hüseyin Aykol

I just want to make a small correction and it is a small correction. I am from Özgür Gündem. No one is talking about us but we have three high selling newspapers and five other news outlets. But because eight is not enough, we are trying to get the ninth one. Why am I telling you this? Any existing unemployed journalists can apply. We will be a safe harbour for our unemployed friends.



Speaker Mahmut Mutman and Hüseyin Aykol

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

All those people who have graduated from Galatasaray University and who are looking for a journalism job: take note. Your definition of your own newspaper is actually the 20 per cent of what Yavuz said. I am saying this to underline that the audience that he targets is not the usual or ordinary people who are making decisions in Istanbul. He is targeting marginal groups. What Yavuz is talking about is the mainstream media that everyone reads; mainstream means nothing in this area. Here people do read *Özgür Gündem*. *Özgür Gündem* in that sense has more effect on Turkey's basic problems, more than mainstream media, because it holds the pulse of this region. It might be the 20 per cent that is not part of the mainstream, but its effect is that much more.

Participant – Hande Özhabbe

Yavuz has referenced data in TESEV's report. The 80 per cent we have been talking about comprises those who make their money from advertisements. This is actually not about how effective or influential media is, but about how much money they are making. Tom Kelly said, in times of conflict, journalists are not obliged to become 'peace journalists', but when we moved onto the second session, we talked about Turkey's democratisation and Turkey's peace process and we are trying to figure out media's role in it. As an academic, I want to underline this. In Turkey journalists do not perceive journalism as journalism *per se*. They want to have a say on what is happening, they are not just reporting the news, they want to become *part of* the news. I see this in local journalism as

well. This prevents them from objectivity. Most of the time, they are taking a side and thus, we are missing an important part of the role of the media in the peace process. We will see that most journalists become members of parliament, or are sent to exile. These journalists have never seen themselves as only journalists. What we are discussing is not really the role of the media and the state, but rather the problems of the media itself. Media needs to deal with these problems that are internal to media itself before we can reach a solution. What we hear from our local journalists is very important to understanding the situation and I need to know more about this.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

We have talked about this, or something similar in Istanbul. We discussed with local journalists, who told us the ways in which they perceived mainstream media. DPI has formed this good habit of discussion. For example, the daily newspaper *Vakit* criticised DPI very strongly, but DPI is one of the most transparent organisations in the world. The newspaper does not realise that DPI does not deserve this, because all the meetings in Ireland and elsewhere have actually been transcribed. In fact, whoever speaks, all questions and all answers are noted on record. There are important answers in those documents. What you are asking right now, you should find the answer in DPI's reports.

Participant – Ahmet Ay

First of all, I accept that media in Turkey has not reached the level

we want it to reach. However, media in all countries faces the same problems. In my answer to Yavuz Baydar, I want to point to CNN International's coverage of Palestine/Israel. Do media outlets in Great Britain actually publish the important news from our region? For example, when there was news that 1,500 Palestinians have been killed, this was not reflected in the British media. In fact, CNN International from the United States did not even report that Rachel Corrie was killed by Israeli Defence Forces.



Participants Nur Kırmızıdağ, Vahap Coskun and Bayram Zilan

Speaker – Yavuz Baydar

Thank you so much for your objection, however I was not defending the government. I agree that the government is authoritarian. I called the PKK a nationalist movement because if you describe an ethnic identity as a community, and you want to enhance that community's autonomy, you can be termed a 'nationalist'. Nationalism does not have to be something bad. I am not saying that the PKK is a 'terrorist organisation'.

In Turkish media it is impossible to say that we do not need business at all. If business men did not support it, the media would disappear. News channels are always financed by somebody who has a particular interest group. All media outlets are part of some interest group. This might be something to do with being a country that does not read a lot of newspapers. What would combat this would be to actually diversify, to look at different consumers of media. I want to say something else. The culture of media has something to do with not reporting facts. We do not report actualities, we have lots of columnists and columnists have more importance than reporters in society, and in our media organisations. Turkey is not interested in *facts*, Turkey is interested in *opinions*. Columnists are really popular in Turkey because people want to know *comments*, they do not want to know *facts*.

Participant – Hamza Aktan

I have a few points. Some journalist friends are actually shocked by the censorship they have been met with and the threat of being fired. This is a legitimate feeling. I do not share this fear because this has always existed in Turkish media, Kurdish media has experienced this fear forever. There is a media crisis, because when we discuss the role of media in conflict resolution we are still discussing what media *is*. We are struggling because we cannot get to the role of media in conflict resolution, because we do not know the role of the media in *society*. The traditional media is actually losing its influence. However, I do not agree with the pessimism that is being displayed here. Maybe this is something new. There is this concept

of bipartisan journalism. In the 1980s and 1990s, mainstream media had to actually support the government, but when AK Party came to power we got two types of media: one which supports the government and one which criticises it. The government has a media outlet that supports it and it has a counterpart. Traditional media has improved in the sense that it is creating a lot of different ideas about the PKK. What is happening right now is that social media is making it more difficult for traditional media because it is challenging the norm. I want to share my note about Gezi Park and the protests. In my opinion, they have actually improved the peace talks in Turkey. Turks who lived in the western parts of the country realised how mainstream media can be used against them as well. They actually realised that mainstream media could be acting against one group. However mainstream media have trouble subverting this, regardless of how they are against governments, it will not suffice. Kurdish media have great strengths, they came to a point of stronger effect. The dominance of Turkish media began to fade out, especially for Kurds. Now Kurdish media is so strong as to break the propaganda of the state when others cannot. Another point is that, it is especially important to attract the attention of media outside of Turkey. Kurdish and Turkish media will not be enough for reflecting on the conflict and the role of the Turkish government. This is clear with Gezi Park as well. When it began to be visible in international media, the government irrationally waged a war against foreign media. The Turkish press did not want this same treatment. The interest in the Gezi protests and in the Lice protests were great and important but many international

media still did not see what happened in Lice, despite it being an important issue.

I would also like to make a point about social media. The government tried to attack social media as well, by attacking opponents on Twitter and Facebook. It is very important not to allow social media not to be interfered with by government forces. It is much more important that social media should be open to reflect people's concerns and interests.

Participant – Mustafa Akyol

I think there is something structural here, in any of the analysis there has not been mention of differentiating media. Media are happy if the other side is being admonished. Liberal sides are a bit different because they are mostly remaining impartial, but it may still apply. Another element to think about is who is in the media. Are they workers or are they bourgeoisie?

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

Bejan Matur will now take the floor and we will only have a few more speakers. I know that many people want to speak. After the meeting I will bring them together privately as we are running close.

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Just a reply to what has been said so far. The relationship between media and state, as one of you also confirmed for me, continues to

be close, and to threaten the freedom of journalists. Of course we know there is a need for plurality, but the media is not free or even independent. The mainstream media is completely dependent on government information. For example, if the Prime Minister says 'war', they say 'war'. If the Prime Minister says 'peace' they say 'peace'. They echo the government.

Participant - Vahap Coskun

We cannot make such an absolute generalisation.

Moderator – Bejan Matur

Of course, people are also divided as conservatives and secular. So is the media, so it is not absolutely possible to speak of all media. Still, if journalists are in the magnetic field of government, they will begin to stutter.

Speaker – Doğan Akın

Of course, columns have been written about Gezi now, but you know that the pieces of news will get smaller. After May 30th the coverage has reduced, now maybe they publish columns on the protestors and focus mostly on the government.

Participant - Necip Çapraz

Something happens in Gezi for 20 days and all you speaking about is Gezi, what happened in the Kurdish area for 30 years continues to get too little attention.



Participants listening to Necip Çapraz

Participant – Selçuk Küpçük

I see a technical problem here. There are many valuable presenters today with much to say. But I want to get in touch more with our friends living in this region. Between Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Van I want to get together with you, so that we can produce a project all together. We have a community in this area which is dealing with the Kurdish issue through meetings and cooperation. Recently, we began to discuss these issues. There are a lot of things to tell from my side. In Islamism it is said that you do not cut from religion or from state but we want freedom from state interference in religious and secular affairs. But there was something very interesting there. An Islamist who wrote a book about self-criticism said that the Turkish intelligence service opened the way for the translation of many texts. There was a statement that said we should not burn the bridges behind us. Well, the third bridge in Istanbul has been given the name of a sultan who killed Alevis. It will be called the Yavuz

Sultan Selim Bridge. It is another way that Erdoğan is trying to put forth one type of Ottoman culture. My demand is to run the civil area, otherwise it will not be any different from Kemalism. First, society should be critical of itself, and of its leaders. For example Ahmed Arkan wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister. I am hopeful that after the peace process is over we will also gain self-criticism gradually.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

After this meeting, discussion will continue, we should not forget what has happened in Gezi and to Kurds. Of course any idea of overthrowing the Prime Minister was a conspiracy. There might be somebody who has these aims and they might interfere with these events but the Prime Minister and his supporters and publishers who act with him want to crush any kind of opposition. People living in this region will know that on May 29 and May 31 an unbelievable level of tear gas was thrown at these people. The number of the people there, their identities, and their structures, there was direct disproportion between the amount of people there and the amount of tear gas used. The Kurds are accustomed to it by now. In Istanbul there was a great mass that experienced it for the first time and all accumulated anger came together in that quarter, in that park, and now they begin to use it more and more against the government. Then, the Prime Minister called the protestors the violent ones. We all know how it happens minute by minute. Even if they had not attacked, we would know this. Our government is doing wrong things.

Participant - Yigit Aksakoğlu

The government is sending the message that they do not care about the people and even after the protests they are still giving the same message. But now some people have woken up.

Participant – Neslihan Özgünes

We talked about the role of the media and we said that the media has the ability to humanise the ‘other’. It can correct the prejudices about the other. It can serve as a communication channel between regions and people. I feel that newspapers in Turkey do not fulfil the role of ‘information provider’. A rally that the Prime Minister holds is reported repeatedly in every media outlet. But, as a citizen, if I read an article and if I have the capacity to make a conclusion about a fact, and if I am actually engaged then that is not what I want. I want them to give me the big picture to form different perspectives. We do not get this from mainstream media. Therefore we are obliged to go to the columnists, but because they take a stance, we end up reading columns by columnists who agree with us. We fail to know what the other is saying, what other perspectives are saying.



Participant Yigit Aksakoğlu discussing with Speaker David Gorman

Participant – Muzaffer Duru

I do not want to dismiss what happened here as a conflict that happened in the last 30 years but if your eraser ends before your pencil does, you are doing something wrong. Violence begets violence, yes there is violence in Gezi Park. But there has been violence here for the last 30 years. That violence was unreported, but with Gezi Park I do not know which media outlet did not report it. From what I see, every media outlet reported it. When dozens of Kurds die there is no coverage of it, at the time, or later. So, yes, people died in Gezi Park but three people died in Gezi Park and mainstream media still looks at this area differently. All the news reports we send from here are actually changed. For instance as the previous participant said, some news that should have been broadcast at 2:00 in the afternoon was in fact broadcast later. All local news journalists experience these difficulties. News gets censored, and times get changed. Journalists in Istanbul do not

really understand these difficulties we face here, where there are still journalists who are not being paid or barely able to live off their wages. We talk about peace and we talk about a process of peace but it is talks about talks right now. I hope we will get somewhere in this peace process.

We need to voice; we need to articulate these problems of local journalists. Do you think that local journalists are independent? They are not. For example, if a newspaper actually publishes a critical piece of news about the AK Party the journalist is let go or their advertisements are cut, then they do not get their press cards or they have difficulty in issuing press cards. There are a lot of problems local journalists actually face but no one is talking about that. If they need information we are the first people they call but when they go back they actually write things that the people who referenced them did not say. These are journalists. These are people who share our occupations. They blame editors. When they go back they write bad things about us, but the boss does not dictate what you need to write. They come here and use us, and then they leave and they never call, and when they come back again two years later we forget what they did to us. We first need to work on the independence and freedom of local media outlets.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

I hope you feel better now that you vented, but what you said will not happen. Mainstream media cannot be expected to reach beyond the standard now. There is already a standard, and most

Western media is of that standard of independence and plurality. Turkish media will not reach Western standards if we cannot improve mainstream media. This structure, this new structure of media is not established in Turkey in general.

Participant - Necip Çapraz

One other thing is the way that we single things, not just terrorism. We say ‘PKK’ but there is no letter that sounds like ‘K’ in Turkish language but when we write PKK. that becomes a problem. When we say ‘P-K-K’ or ‘Pa-Ka-Ka’ there is a difference. If you hear one party say ‘Pa-Ka-Ka’ you know which group they are coming from so the media needs to also be aware of this.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

We will soon close for dinner.

Participant – Bayram Zilan

I first want to talk about what a previous participant said. I think we need to look at the big picture, what he has said about DPI’s further meetings about democratisation and being more focused on the practical things we can do. Now about the media, it was wrong for CNN Turk to broadcast a penguin documentary during Gezi Park but ultimately CNN International broadcast Gezi Park for eight and a half hours. There are other conflicts, such as that in Syria, that are not receiving this kind of coverage, why is this?

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

Why should we question that? If CNN could enter Syria they would broadcast that.

Participant – Bayram Zilan

About the IRA experience shared by Tom and Owen, we learned important things, while they were talking about this I thought they were talking about Turkey. When one party is called ‘terrorist’ and the other one is different, not called a ‘terrorist; there is an inequality. You can see this in Northern Ireland too. For the last 30 years the mainstream media labelled one side as ‘terrorists’, and it has been difficult to get public support. I want to ask this. There is this expression, ‘until the last terrorist is neutralised there can be no peace’. We have been hearing this for the longest time and the mainstream media publishes it regularly. What we have now is that the government has set up a negotiation table with the people that they have been calling terrorists. The demonisation of Kurdish leaders has created an unequal bargaining table. What do the mainstream media need to do to reduce this demonisation?



*Participant Ferda Balancar, Esra Elmas of DPI, Participants Oral Çalışlar,
Professor Havva Kök and Kadri Salaz*

Participant - Feray Salman

I work on human rights and there are some facts, and these facts need to be brought to light. I consider these Gezi protests as getting acquainted with the government and manipulation of mainstream media for the Turkish public. These events have made it clear that it is time to go back to becoming an activist again. Let us not compare debts now. What is important for me is this; remember how bayonet was actually established? Remember when all these extrajudicial killings occur, that it was created by the *government*, not by each other. And in our conflict resolution process, it is not that only two parties are disarming or declaring a ceasefire. This is just one step. This is not the peace process. That will include many more elements.

Remember Şükran Aydın, who was tortured by a man who is actually a member of military police. He was implicated in all these tortures and he is being tried for rape right now. There are lots of

facts like this, because we have the statute of limitation, about these crimes that have not been investigated or tried. This is horrifying. It is important to hold people accountable. The man who tortured Aydın was actually found not guilty in one of the rape cases and he was promoted and sent to another city. Media needs to talk about these different parts of the issue, because I and the public need to know what is the objective of this peace process. The problem is also on the Turkish side, it is not only the problem of media or of single sidedness, but a lack of freedom. They should stand against government censorship. The mainstream media does not have the right to collapse. Its collapse will be the collapse of the local media. We cannot have it. We should decide where to begin and you are obliged to answer this responsibility.

Speaker – David Gorman

I apologise for this last minute point but I think it is instructive. In Kosovo in 2005 there was a series of articles in the local press that were inciting people to riot. This was hate speech. 19 people were killed in the violence and it nearly spread to the rest of the country. As a result of that and as a concern for what might come, the media was brought together in a roundtable. As a result of that roundtable, they came up with a rather unique model, which is being looked at in other places in the world. This was a code of conduct. It was a very simple code of conduct that was developed by editors and publishers. It was considered morally and professionally binding on them. It covered issues such as transparency in media ownership, journalists respecting the truth, identifying sources of

information while protecting the truth, correcting misinformation, not plagiarising, not hate speech and defining hate speech, the right of reply, not treating anyone as a criminal unless they are convicted in court, not photographing children under 15 and so forth.

Moderator – Cengiz Çandar

We are not yet at that point in Turkey, because it is a polarised society. Polarisation is such that media is so divided and the Prime Minister is blaming one side of the media. For propaganda purposes, he is working on forming his own circles, alleging that people trampled into a mosque and occupied the mosque. The Prime Minister is speaking about that, so all the media is supporting that and reporting on that. We cannot even get close to any code of conduct. We may reach that point but we need some more time.



DPI Director Kerim Yildiz, Feray Salman and Ahmet Akgül

Participant – Ahmet Aktun

I want to give thanks and appreciation to DPI and for everyone for coming to this meeting and for the chance to speak. Before this meeting DPI had other various meetings. I think this has been a meeting where different opinions have come together. In the previous DPI meetings I used my pen as a sword, and wrote about them afterwards. Now I am hosting this event because I am from Mardin so I am not doing this. In previous meetings we have been in Istanbul. When DPI planned to come here, they gave us a surprise. This is a city of civilisation and of language. As such, Mardin can speak openly and clearly, but also softly. We are very careful about ethnic and religious points. We like to have various dialogues with our Syrian brothers. Many Syrian people are coming to Mardin to escape the conflict and they need housing and food. In places other than Mardin this would cause conflict but not in Mardin. Syria and the resolution process just dropped on our table, but we are able to deal with this. One context in which we are discussing press here is the idea of, 'Should I take a photo or should I help the person?' We did not want just to watch injured people and not help people so we have welcomed refugees here. We have a regional resolution platform so we risked danger and went there and tried to help refugees and the injured. But it is important not to create fever and to be well reasoned. One more thing: I would like to apologise about something. We are in Mardin and we should be clearer. I think today we had a little too much academism. Our discussions were a bit limited to academia, but I hope we will continue them outside of this meeting. I would like to thank all who organised this meeting and all of you who came to participate today.

Conclusion

The roundtable meeting held by the Democratic Progress Institute in Mardin on the subject of the role of the media in conflict resolution this June drew attention to numerous issues in this area, and facilitated valuable and engaged discussion. The day brought together many participants from media industries (both regional and national) as well as civil society, including academics, activists, and journalists. There was a large and varied turn out, with participants attending from the area as well as from Istanbul and Ankara. Throughout the day, presenters and participants discussed the state of the media in Turkey; the relationship between the media and the government; and the challenges and opportunities for journalists in comparative conflict resolution situations namely Northern Ireland. Many examples were drawn upon, illustrating lessons learned in Northern Ireland, Indonesia and the Philippines with important discussion surrounding their relevance to the Turkish context. On the whole, this roundtable was very successful and we hope the discussion that was generated provided useful insight into this important issue, and that it will continue to occur. The Institute will continue to organise similar roundtable discussions, both in Turkey and abroad.

DPI thanks all participants and contributors for their much appreciated participation in this activity.

Appendix

DPI Roundtable: The Relationship between State and Media and its effect on Conflict Resolution

29 June 2013, Mardin

Participants from Turkey

- Ahmet Akgül, Head of International Strategic Analysis and Research Centre (*USTAD*), Mardin
- Doğan Akın, founder of T24, Istanbul
- Yigit Aksakoğlu, founder of Talimhane Training and Consultancy
- Hamza Aktan, Journalist, IMC TELEVISION, Istanbul
- Mustafa Akyol, Columnist, Star and Hurriyet Daily News, Istanbul
- Riada Akyol, PhD Student, Galatasaray University
- Deniz Aydeniz, Mardin Artuklu University
- Cengiz Aydın, Mardin Artuklu University
- Hüseyin Aykol, Özgür Gündem, Istanbul
- Ferda Balancar, Agos & Hrant Dink Foundation, Istanbul
- Yavuz Baydar, News Ombudsman for *Sabah* Newspaper, Istanbul
- Ali Bayramoğlu, Journalist, Columnist and Political Commentator at *Yeni Şafak* Newspaper, İstanbul
- Ayhan Bilgen, Columnist for *Özgür Gündem* and *Evrensel* newspapers, Ankara

- Oral Çalışlar, Radikal, Istanbul
- Cansu Çamlıbel, Journalist, Istanbul
- Cengiz Çandar, Journalist and Columnist, *Radikal* Newspaper
- Necip Çapraz, Yüksekova Haber, Mardin
- Vahap Çoşkun, Dicle University Faculty of Law
- Muzaffer Duru, Journalist, Mardin
- Esra Elmas, Senior Advisor, Democratic Progress Institute
- Nur Kırmızıdağ, SETA, Ankara
- Selçuk Küpçük, Freelance Journalist, Ordu
- Bejan Matur, Author and Poet, İstanbul
- Mahmut Mutman, Professor, Istanbul Şehir University
- Neslihan Özgünes, Resident Advisor, Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations, Istanbul
- Hande Özhabes, Project Coordinator, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, Istanbul
- Kadri Salaz, Former Presenter and Columnist, Chairman of VANGIAD
- Feray Salman, General Coordinator, Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP)
- Ceren Sözeri, Researcher, Galatasaray University
- Aslı Tunç, Professor and Head of Media School, Istanbul Bilgi University
- Bayram Zilan, World Democratic Movement and Jon Kurd Movement

International Participants

- Owen Bowcott, Legal Affairs Correspondent, The Guardian, London
- Ruby Byrnes, Development Officer, Democratic Progress Institute
- Dr. Kathleen Cavanaugh, Irish Centre for Human Rights (ICHR), National University of Ireland, Galway
- David Gorman, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva
- Professor Penny Green, Director, International State Crime Initiative, London
- Dr. Edel Hughes, Lecturer, University of East London
- Eleanor Johnson, Programme Manager, Democratic Progress Institute
- Tom Kelly, Director of Communications for Network Rail, London
- Judith Sijstermans, Assistant, Democratic Progress Institute

DPI Board and Council of Experts

Director:

Kerim Yildiz

Kerim Yildiz is Director of DPI. He is an expert in international human rights law and minority rights, and is the recipient of a number of awards, including from the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights for his services to protect human rights and promote the rule of law in 1996, the Sigrid Rausing Trust's Human Rights award for Leadership in Indigenous and Minority Rights in 2005, and the Gruber Prize for Justice in 2011. Kerim has written extensively on human rights and international law, and his work has been published internationally.

DPI Board Members:

Nicholas Stewart QC (Chair)

Barrister and Deputy High Court Judge (Chancery and Queen's Bench Divisions), United Kingdom . Former Chair of the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales and Former President of Union Internationale des Avocats.

Professor Penny Green (Secretary)

Head of Research and Director of the School of Law's Research Programme at King's College London and Director of the International State Crime Initiative (ICSI), United Kingdom (a collaborative enterprise with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and the University of Hull, led by King's College London).

Priscilla Hayner

Co-founder of the International Centre for Transitional Justice, global expert and author on truth commissions and transitional justice initiatives, consultant to the Ford Foundation, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and numerous other organisations.

Arild Humlen

Lawyer and Director of the Norwegian Bar Association's Legal Committee. Widely published within a number of jurisdictions, with emphasis on international civil law and human rights. Has lectured at law faculties of several universities in Norway. Awarded the Honor Prize of the Bar Association for Oslo for his work as Chairman of the Bar Association's Litigation Group for Asylum and Immigration law.

Jacki Muirhead

Practice Director, Cleveland Law Firm. Previously Barristers' Clerk at Counsels' Chambers Limited and Marketing Manager at the Faculty of Advocates. Undertook an International Secondment at New South Wales Bar Association.

Professor David Petrasek

Professor of International Political Affairs at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Expert and author on human rights, humanitarian law and conflict resolution issues, former Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, consultant to United Nations.

Antonia Potter Prentice

Expert in humanitarian, development, peacemaking and peacebuilding issues. Consultant on women, peace and security; and strategic issues to clients including the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, the Global Network of Women Peacemakers, Mediator, and Terre des Hommes.

DPI Council of Experts

Dermot Ahern

Dermot Ahern is a Former Irish Member of Parliament and Government Minister and was a key figure for more than 20 years in the Irish peace process, including in negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement. He also has extensive experience at EU Council level including being a key negotiator and signatory to the Constitutional and Lisbon Treaties. In 2005, he was appointed by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to be a Special Envoy on his behalf on the issue of UN Reform. Previous roles include that of Government Chief Whip, Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs, Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Justice and Law Reform. Dermot Ahern also served as Co-Chairman of the British Irish Inter Parliamentary Body 1993 – 1997.

Dr Mehmet Asutay

Dr Mehmet Asutay is a Reader in Middle Eastern and Islamic Political Economy and Finance at the School of Government and International Affairs (SGIA), Durham University, UK. He researches, teaches and supervises research on Middle Eastern economic development, the political economy of Middle East including Turkish and Kurdish political economies, and Islamic political economy. He is the Honorary Treasurer of BRISMES (British Society for Middle East Studies) and of the International Association for Islamic Economics. His research has been published in various journals, magazines and also in book format. He has been involved in human rights issues in various levels for many years, and has a close interest in transitional justice, conflict resolution and development issues at academic and policy levels.

Christine Bell

Legal expert based in Northern Ireland; expert on transitional justice, peace negotiations, constitutional law and human rights law advice. Trainer for diplomats, mediators and lawyers.

Cengiz Çandar

Senior Journalist and columnist specializing in areas such as The Kurdish Question, former war correspondent. Served as special adviser to Turkish president Turgut Ozal.

Yilmaz Ensaroğlu

SETA Politics Economic and Social Research Foundation. Member of the Executive Board of the Joint Platform for Human Rights, the Human Rights Agenda Association (İHGD) and Human Rights Research Association (İHAD), Chief Editor of the Journal of the Human Rights Dialogue.

Dr. Salomón Lerner Febres

Former President of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Perú; Executive President of the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights of the Pontifical Catholic University of Perú.

Professor Mervyn Frost

Head of the Department of War Studies, King's College London. Previously served as Chair of Politics and Head of Department at the University of Natal in Durban. Former President of the South African Political Studies Association; expert on human rights in international relations, humanitarian intervention, justice in world politics, democratising global governance, just war tradition in an Era of New Wars and ethics in a globalising world.

Martin Griffiths

Founding member and first Executive Director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Served in the British Diplomatic Service, and in British NGOs, Ex -Chief Executive of Action Aid. Held posts as United Nations (UN) Director of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Geneva and Deputy to the UN

Emergency Relief Coordinator, New York. Served as UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Great Lakes, UN Regional Coordinator in the Balkans and UN Assistant Secretary-General.

Dr. Edel Hughes

Senior Lecturer, University of East London. Expert on international human rights and humanitarian law, with special interest in civil liberties in Ireland, emergency/anti-terrorism law, international criminal law and human rights in Turkey and Turkey's accession to European Union. Previous lecturer with Amnesty International and a founding member of Human Rights for Change.

Avila Kilmurray

A founder member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition and was part of the Coalition's negotiating team for the Good Friday Agreement. She has written extensively on community action, the women's movement and conflict transformation. Serves on the Board of Conciliation Resources (UK); the Global Fund for Community Foundations; Conflict Resolution Services Ireland and the Institute for British Irish Studies. Avila was the first Women's Officer for the Transport & General Workers Union for Ireland (1990-1994) and became Director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland in 1994. Avila was awarded the Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy through the European Foundation Centre.

Professor Ram Manikkalingam

Visiting Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam, served as Senior Advisor on the Peace Process to President of Sri Lanka, expert and author on conflict, multiculturalism and democracy, founding board member of the Laksham Kadirgamar Institute for Strategic Studies and International Relations.

Bejan Matur

Renowned Turkey based Author and Poet. Columnist, focusing mainly on Kurdish politics, the Armenian issue, daily politics, minority problems, prison literature, and women's issues. Has won several literary prizes and her work has been translated into 17 languages. Former Director of the Diyarbakır Cultural Art Foundation (DKSV).

Professor Monica McWilliams

Professor of Women's Studies, based in the Transitional Justice Institute at the University of Ulster. Was the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission from 2005-2011 and responsible for delivering the advice on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition political party and was elected to a seat at the Multi-Party Peace Negotiations, which led to the Belfast (Good Friday) Peace Agreement in 1998. Served as a member of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly from 1998-2003 and the Northern Ireland Forum for Dialogue and Understanding from 1996-1998. Publications focus on domestic violence, human security and the role of women in peace processes.

Jonathan Powell

British diplomat, Downing Street Chief of Staff under Prime Minister Tony Blair between 1997- 2007. Chief negotiator in Northern Ireland peace talks, leading to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Currently CEO of Inter Mediate, a United Kingdom -based non-state mediation organization.

Sir Kieran Prendergast

Served in the British Foreign Office, including in Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, the Netherlands, Kenya and New York; later head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office dealing with Apartheid and Namibia; former UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Convenor of the SG's Executive Committee on Peace and Security and engaged in peacemaking efforts in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cyprus, the DRC, East Timor, Guatemala, Iraq, the Middle East, Somalia and Sudan.

Rajesh Rai

Rajesh was called to the Bar in 1993. His areas of expertise include Human Rights Law, Immigration and Asylum Law, and Public Law. Rajesh has extensive hands-on experience in humanitarian and environmental issues in his work with NGOs, cooperatives and companies based in the UK and overseas. He also lectures on a wide variety of legal issues, both for the Bar Human Rights Committee and internationally.

Professor Naomi Roht Arriaza

Professor at University of Berkeley, United States, expert and author on transitional justice, human rights violations, international criminal law and global environmental issues.

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