



The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution Roundtable Meeting, Urfa, Turkey

1st March 2014

Democratic
Progress
Institute

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Foreword

This report details the discussion that took place during the Democratic Progress Institute's roundtable meeting in Urfa, Turkey on 1st March 2014, regarding the role of civil society in conflict resolution. Civil society has become widely recognised as a crucial actor in peace building and democratic reform at local, national and international levels. This roundtable meeting, the second of its kind to be organised by DPI on the subject of civil society, examined issues of civil society's engagement with conflict resolution, the challenges of mobilising civil society, and the importance of civil society in democratic processes. We hope that this record of the discussions that took place in Urfa will encourage further dialogue on the role civil society can play in different conflict resolution processes.

DPI aims to create and 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. Our 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.

This report was prepared with the kind assistance of Caitlin Collis.



Kerim Yildiz

Director, Democratic Progress Institute

Roundtable Meeting: The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution

Urfa, Turkey

1st March 2014



Participants from the roundtable meeting in front of the Hotel El-Ruha, Urfa Nebahat Akkoç, Hale Akay, İdris Akdin, Murat Akıncılar, Hayriye Aşçıoğlu, Nurcan Baysal, Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu, Ali Bucak, Cem Genççoğlu, Didier Chassot, Tahir Elçi, Esra Elmas, Mehmet Ali Eminoğlu, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem, Hacı Firat, Serhat Gerger, Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, İrfan Guven, Maureen Hetherington, Ahmet İnsel, Eleanor Johnson, Gülseren Kaplan, His Excellency Ambassador Janis Björn Kanavin, Talha Köse, Hüseyin Mutlu, Koray Özdil, Zozan Özgökçe, Mehmet Paydaş, Kadri Salaz, Feray Salman, Nesrin Semiz, Peter Spoor, Feridun Taş, Zeynep Taşkın, His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson, Nesrin Uçarlar, Şehmus Ülek, Catriona Vine, Martin Wasp

Welcome Address by Professor Dr. Ahmet İnel¹

Professor Dr. Ahmet İnel: I would like to thank you in advance for your contributions and for being kind enough to come all the way to Urfa from Istanbul, Ankara and numerous other towns. Thank you ladies and gentleman. It is wonderful to have you here today. The activities of the Democratic Progress Institute are really important to us and these meetings make up a very important part of the work of this organisation. This is the sixth roundtable meeting of its kind. For the first time, in 2011 in Istanbul, DPI facilitated a meeting on the role of women in the peace building process and on the problems women face here in Turkey. That meeting was followed by another in Istanbul on the role of the media in the peace building process. There have since been similar meetings elaborating on the role of women, that of the local and national media, and of civil society. This is the sixth meeting, the theme of which is similar to a roundtable held at this time last year, on the role of civil society in conflict resolution.

¹ Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnel is the Head of the Department of Economics at Galatasaray University in Istanbul. He is the Managing Editor of İletişim Publishing House and is a member of the publishing board of Birikim. He has written several books on the political situation in Turkey.



Professor Dr. Ahmet Insel

At the same time as conducting these roundtable meetings, the Institute has been finding ways for people in countries experiencing conflict to observe and learn from the experiences of other post conflict societies. One of these comparative study visits took members from the three main political parties in Turkey to Ireland to meet with various political representatives and civil society members in both the North and South of Ireland. Representatives from Turkey were also taken to South Africa for a six-day comparative study visit. Additionally, visits have been paid to Great Britain to learn about the devolution process in Wales and Scotland. These visits have raised the issues of the mother tongue and education, which continue to be explored by the Institute.

With the mutual participation of different actors, a common action platform is what we are now working on. We are holding this meeting in Urfa because a civil society structure cannot be composed of big cities alone. Urfa is also gradually becoming a big city. It might seem quite limited now, but it has the potential to grow very quickly. Conflict resolution is a process which has to benefit from the ideas of different actors. Ladies and gentlemen, there are some people who we thank especially for attending this meeting here today, mainly ambassadors and other diplomatic actors. We have His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson, the Ireland Ambassador to Turkey, who will now discuss the Irish experience with us. Many thanks.

Introduction by His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson²

His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson: Thank you very much for the warm welcome. Ireland has been supporting the Democratic Progress Institute in organising events in Ireland and Turkey for a number of years and I am delighted to be here today. I will briefly outline the role civil society played in the Northern Ireland peace process. I believe that Maureen Hetherington will speak later on civil society from the perspective of civil society itself. Just before beginning, we very much welcome the progress that has been made in talks towards a resolution of the conflict here

2 His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson has been serving as the Ireland Ambassador to Turkey since April 2012. He previously served as the Ireland Ambassador to India and Argentina.

in Turkey. Just 18 months ago, Turkey was in the throes of some of the worst violence that had been seen in decades. The ceasefire announced in March 2013 has now held for nearly a year. While it is not clear to me as an outsider where the talks are going, the spirit of goodwill which they have generated has been replicated at other levels and has gained the support of much of civil society. We wish the process well.

The situation in Turkey and the situation in which Ireland was some 15 years' ago are very different, but I hope that all participants here today, including those from civil society, can learn something from experiences in Ireland.

Northern Ireland was, and in many ways still is, a very deeply divided society. But civil society has been very active since the beginning of the conflict in the late 1960s, in trying to seek a solution to the violence, and it has taken many initiatives to span the divide. Civil society organisations have always been very important as a conduit for people to express their desire for an end to the conflict. Indeed, as long ago as 1976, the leaders of a popular movement called the Peace People³ won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Since the 1990s, both the British and Irish governments have made a concerted effort, particularly since the early 1990s, to encourage intergroup contact in order to bridge relationships, build trust, nurture the middle ground and address the systemic roots of conflict. Funding and support were provided by both Dublin and

3 The Peace People is a peace organisation in Belfast, Northern Ireland. It was founded by Máiréad Maguire, Betty Williams and Cuman McKenna in 1976 in protest against violence in Northern Ireland.

London to organisations that aim to build understanding at all levels of society.

Civil society in all its aspects has played an irreplaceable role in our process in Ireland. Intermediaries, for example, had an indispensable function. Many of the initial points of contact at the early stage of the peace process took place through intermediaries. Even at the latter stages, whenever there was a refusal by political parties in Northern Ireland to engage in direct contact, secondary lines of communication were absolutely essential. Civil society organisations provided agreed spaces in which representatives of different parties could meet and discuss issues outside the framework of formal talks. Today's meeting is a replication of that.

Of course, as everyone knows, the multiparty talks leading up to the conclusion of the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement⁴ in 1998 included representatives from all of the main political groups, but it was not just a top down exercise which was imposed on the people. The process also included consultations with smaller parties and civil society organisations. The process provided mechanisms to include militants. Some, indeed most of these groups, changed as a result of their involvement and turned towards acceptance of democratic and constitutional principles.

4 The Belfast Agreement refers to the political deal that was reached on 10 April 1998 to solidify the peace in Northern Ireland following the 1994 paramilitary ceasefires. The Agreement established an assembly in Northern Ireland with a power-sharing executive. The Irish Republic also dropped its constitutional claim to the six counties which form Northern Ireland. The full text of the Good Friday Agreement may be found here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/4079267.stm

While the Belfast process was largely directed by the two governments and the political parties, the role of civil society actors, (and I mean a very broad gamut of civil society actors, including religious groups, sporting associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), schools, businesses and local community organisations) was important in the signing and implementation of the Agreement. Women also played an active part as they have always done in the peace process in Northern Ireland. A party composed of women, the Women's Coalition⁵ (I think you know many of the members from previous DPI activities), was established to express women's views and secured its own seat at the peace talks.

There were many other ways in which civil society groups played a vital role in the Good Friday Agreement. They acted as an invaluable source of expertise for the negotiations, particularly in the areas of human rights and equality provisions, policing and justice reform and language issues. The process drew on the independent voices and range of expertise provided by domestic and international civil society groups. The inclusion of this very wide range of stakeholders subsequently gave the Agreement stability in the face of 'spoiling tactics' by groups on both sides.

5 The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) was a political party founded in 1996 to represent the views of women in an otherwise male dominated political arena. They campaigned on a platform of anti-sectarianism and ultimately succeeded in getting elected to the multiparty talks that led to the Belfast Agreement in 1998.

The process of reconciliation was itself given recognition in the Agreement. The Agreement stated that victims have a right to remember as well as to contribute to a changed society, and Victims Commissions were established in both parts of Ireland to support victims of the violence.

The Agreement was followed shortly afterwards by referenda in both parts of the island. Here again, civil society organisations (CSOs) played an important role by creating a consensus in support of the Agreement. The referenda, which were carried by a large majority in both parts of the island, gave legitimacy to the Agreement.

The Good Friday Agreement, in conclusion, was an extraordinary, historic achievement in which civil society played a fundamental role. CSOs remain crucial in Northern Ireland in order to enable people to build a new, more harmonious society out of the suffering and destruction of the past. While we are on the right track, it will still take many years of involvement by governments and civil society before we can say that the wounds have fully healed.



DPI Deputy Director and Director of Programmes Catriona Vine and His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson of the Irish Embassy in Turkey

Professor Dr. Ahmet İnsel: It is now my pleasure to introduce DPI's Deputy Director and Director of Programmes, Catriona Vine.

Introduction by **Catriona Vine**⁶

Catriona Vine: Good morning and thank you on behalf of the Democratic Progress Institute for attending today. I would like to highlight the fact that at DPI, we believe that civil society actors have a critical role to play in helping to initiate, promote and strengthen dialogue which is objective and comprehensive. When

⁶ *Catriona Vine is the Deputy Director and Director of Programmes at the Democratic Progress Institute. She has practiced criminal, public and human rights law in the UK and internationally, and has extensive experience working with governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental organisations.*

we look at peace processes from around the globe, we can see that those processes that have resulted in a lasting peace have been those which have managed to achieve a level of inclusivity.

Civil society actors are crucial to achieving inclusivity at every stage of a peace process because, as a mirror of society, they are the most effective in ensuring that peace agreements reflect the needs and desires of the whole of society, and that their implementation is universal.

Of course, no two situations are the same. And the situation in Turkey is unique to Turkey. However, by looking at comparative models from around the world we can see what has worked and what has not worked in those situations, and that those solutions can be applied when searching for solutions to any particular conflict.

I am sure in this room today there is a wide range of views. We have seen that civil society can play a variety of roles and has particular strengths when it comes to conflict resolution, including the ability to create safe spaces for individuals at all levels of society, particularly those who are marginalised and silenced, such as women and young people, victims and survivors of violence, political prisoners and their families, ex combatants and displaced communities.

We are very pleased therefore to have a number of distinguished speakers with us today who will be able to discuss with you these

models of how civil society can play a role in the resolution and transformation of conflict.

Our speakers from Turkey will present information about how civil society is operating here in Turkey and our international speakers will focus on Northern Ireland and the role of civil society in the resolution of the conflict there.

While the Good Friday Agreement was signed almost 16 years ago, there is still much work to be done to ensure that there is a lasting peace. Civil Society has played a very important role in Northern Ireland since the Agreement, trying to ensure that there is not a return to violence.

In relation to Northern Ireland and the role of civil society, if you look in your folder you will find a USB stick, which includes some further information about DPI and also a copy of the report of our previous roundtable meeting on the role of civil society in conflict resolution, which took place in Istanbul last year. The report contains a handbook written by Avila Kilmurray, a member of DPI's Council of Experts and a Founding Member of Northern Ireland's Women's Coalition, outlining a variety of initiatives taken by civil society in Northern Ireland. Full records of all of our meetings are of course available on the Institute's website. Many thanks.



*Catriona Vine, Deputy Director and Director of Programmes,
Democratic Progress Institute with Didier Chassot,
Deputy Head of Mission, Swiss Embassy*

SESSION ONE: How to Mobilise Civil Society

Speaker: **Maureen Hetherington**⁷

Maureen Hetherington: Good morning and many thanks to DPI for inviting me here to be with you in Urfa today. I am the Director of The Junction, a community relations and peacebuilding initiative

⁷ Maureen Hetherington is a Board member of the Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland and a civil society worker with over 16 years of experience working with those affected by conflict in Northern Ireland. She is the Founder and Coordinator of The Junction in Derry/Londonderry, and has established several community projects, including Seeing Sense: Prejudice Challenge Resource, The Right to Hope Project, and Towards Understanding and Healing, a project housed at The Junction (<http://www.thejunction-ni.org/>).

established in March 2000 to address issues of ongoing concern in Northern Ireland and the border counties.

I am not sure how familiar you are with our political or religious landscape in Northern Ireland so I will give a brief overview, which I hope will bring clarity and context and give relevance to the work I do.

Northern Ireland was created in the north-east of Ireland when the island of Ireland was partitioned in 1921. Northern Ireland remained with the United Kingdom, with the rest of Ireland becoming an independent state. The majority of the Northern Ireland population, then and now, are Unionists and identify mainly with the Protestant Churches of the Christian Faith. Unionists wish to remain in the United Kingdom. The minority were and are Nationalists and are mainly Roman Catholic Christians; their aspiration is for a united Ireland, independent from the United Kingdom. The constitutional question is contested and remains unresolved to this day. Deep community divisions, separation and segregation remain; they are social, political, religious, and cultural. There are social and economic inequalities which are shared by the working classes in both sections of the community. The conflict is complex, the historical roots going back centuries, with deep hurts and wounds that have never been addressed, or healed. Peace building therefore, remains a challenge that is generational.

The last phase of violent conflict in the North of Ireland began in 1969. After a series of attempts to move away from violence, a

settlement was reached in 1998, supported by over 71 per cent of the population in Northern Ireland; it was called the Good Friday Agreement.

My colleague Johnston McMaster has said the following of the settlement. The Good Friday Agreement was not a peace settlement. It was a framework for a peace process. It contained conscious ambiguity and some critics have said that it institutionalised sectarianism. On the other hand it provided space to do something about the centuries old religious and political sectarianism. Essentially the Good Friday Agreement was a careful piece of word-crafting that enabled one side to claim that it guarantees the union and the other that it provided a road map to Irish unity. It had: no agreement about the future, no agreement about dealing with the past and no strategy for dealing with sectarianism.⁸

Politicians have struggled ever since to agree on a document that would underpin a government strategy to deliver a shared future. Two documents; A Shared Future (2005) and Cohesion, Sharing and Integration (2010) have both failed as strategic policy documents, the first being rejected by politicians and the second being considered seriously inadequate when put out to public consultation.

Together Building a United Community (TBUC), announced last year, is the latest document to come out of the Offices of the First

8 Johnston McMaster, *Ethical and Shared Remembering: A Decade of Change and Violence 1912-1922*

and Deputy First Minister.⁹ The TBUC document would seem to reinforce a political mind-set that favours continued separation rather than promotes sharing. It is based on a simplistic analysis of the problem of communal division, namely that inequality of opportunity is the greatest obstacle to good community relations. This is a flawed analysis. It leaves sectarianism, a fractured society and the historic roots of this untouched. Additionally, the document signals a determination to centrally control the management of community relations and peace building activity by politicians who are themselves part of the institutionalised sectarian system. This is the context in which we, as peace builders, have to work. A leading peace theorist, Johan Galtung,¹⁰ refers to situations such as ours as a 'negative peace'; when violence is ended or is deemed to be under control but the originating problems remain unaddressed.

For our work to be effective it must have the following components:

- **Dialogue:** The creation of safe and mutually respecting spaces for civic thinking and dialogue to happen, intra and inter-community engagement involving all sectors of society. Dialogue is essential to hear other views and

9 *The First and deputy First Minister are the joint heads of the Northern Ireland Executive. They have equal power and make all decisions jointly. The positions were created under the terms of the Belfast Agreement of 1998.*

10 *Johan Galtung is widely considered the 'founding father' of peace research in Europe. He founded the Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1959 and the Journal of Peace Research in 1964. In 1969, he was appointed to the world's first chair in peace and conflict studies at the University of Oslo. He outlines his theory of 'negative peace' in his 1967 article, 'Theories of Peace: A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking,' which may be found here: http://www.transcend.org/files/Galtung_Book_unpub_Theories_of_Peace_-_A_Synthetic_Approach_to_Peace_Thinking_1967.pdf*

perspectives. Dialogue is essential to better understand where we are coming from and where we want to go as a society.

- **Healing:** Healing of individuals and healing of communities is necessary in any post-conflict, post-violent society, to re-integrate those impacted directly and indirectly by the conflict. Individuals who have been devastated by violence but who are now calling for peace and non-violence, can be, and often are, the symbols and agents of hope and change.
- **Training:** To make an impact at the wider level, developing training resources and offering support is important at the strategic level.
- **Partnership and collaborative working:** Where possible and practicable, partnerships and collaborative working consolidates and strengthens peace building work on the ground and maximises the potential for outreach.
- **Policy:** It is important to try to influence decision-making and policy formation and offer new and alternative approaches and policies to address age-old problems.

In order to engage in the above practices, we are mindful that, at all times, the following principles must be present:

- Building trust through the building of relationships, working ethically and always for the ‘common or greater good’.
- Having a sound knowledge and skills base appropriate to the project work being undertaken. If we want to be taken seriously, we must take ourselves seriously, developing our own capacity, skills and knowledge base.
- Employing and including inter-disciplinary approaches, accepting that complex matters and issues may require a range of input, methodologies and solutions.

At a practical level, peace building practitioners must work within the limitations of the political framework provided. However, peace is too important to be left to politicians. There are important conversations to be had with academia, churches, the private sector, key stakeholders and the community and voluntary sector, to take responsibility for building an inclusive, shared society. Alternative voices and views must be given a platform, in the absence of an effective democracy, to challenge the status quo. There is a need to develop creative spaces for civic thinking and civic conversations across society, towards developing a public discourse around fundamental issues such as dealing effectively with the past, challenging sectarianism and creating an inclusive and rights-respecting society.

I would like to give three examples of current work that incorporate the essential elements to peace building, as mentioned above:

Project 1: Towards Understanding and Healing

Towards Understanding and Healing is a project set up to deal with the past through storytelling and dialogue. The project seeks to address the suffering and the bereavement of individuals and communities arising from our recent violent conflict. Specifically, we help to create a safe space for people to begin to tell their personal stories and also to listen to the stories, or ‘truths’ of others. Because of Northern Ireland’s diverse history and culture, no one person can tell the story of the past 35 years. This project emphasises the need to bring together all of the disparate narratives that comprise the story of Northern Ireland in order to better understand the legacy of the past and the potential of the future.

Over the years, Towards Understanding and Healing has developed a two-pronged approach to facilitating important encounters. Storytelling allows participants to tell and hear personal stories in a fully supportive atmosphere. Dialogue provides participants with the opportunity to have more challenging exchanges relating to critical issues pertaining to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Two of the distinguishing factors of Towards Understanding and Healing’s work are that it involves highly diverse groups such as victims of State and paramilitary violence, and former combatants of all stripes such as police, army, paramilitaries and people from outside

of Northern Ireland who have been impacted by the conflict and violence (that is, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland). Safety is a key aspect of every encounter facilitated by the organisation

While storytelling and dialogue are not unique, the model of Towards Understanding and Healing in the context of Northern Ireland is unique in that it is totally inclusive and allows a safe space for people to hear perspectives that would otherwise not be possible. Influenced by international models of practice, the model has been designed to provide people who have experienced the trauma of conflict to receive acknowledgement of their experiences and to begin to understand the experiences of ‘the other’. Storytelling and dialogue works at achieving a shared post-conflict society person-by-person by allowing people to understand each other’s history, culture, politics and humanity. These are delicate processes, requiring much care and preparation. Most importantly, storytelling and dialogue are extremely effective processes, allowing people to access each other in a deep-reaching manner that is not usual in our society. The impact on individuals can be both immediate and long-ranging, achieving a degree of healing and comfort, as well as openness to other people and cultures. The implications for storytelling and dialogue’s impact on society is immense: once people have re-humanised each other after long-term, protracted conflict, it is more difficult to return to violence in the future and much easier to work towards a shared society. Towards Understanding and Healing has found storytelling and dialogue encounters to be a powerful tool in allowing people from various communities throughout Northern Ireland to hear and

understand each other's perspective regarding the past and how best to address the hurts and the legacy of the past in order to create a shared future in a peaceful society.

Towards Understanding and Healing is currently working on a proposal to take the work to another stage. In the absence of any political agreement on how to deal with the past, and while recognising the legal and judicial dimensions of the overall task, there is an imperative on the community and voluntary sector to create spaces for truth recovery, based on a restorative justice model, to enable people to have their lived experience acknowledged publically. To date, the project has shared stories through personal encounter, recorded and documented stories, through drama, and the production of DVDs. This proposal offers a public arena for individuals to give 'testimony', which will be carried out in a very controlled and supportive environment. Based on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission's endeavours to gather stories from around the country, this model will travel across the country, and have representatives of high credibility to acknowledge and receive each story. The format will be semi-formal in nature and will make use of ritual to both respect and honour all those participating and those they may be remembering.

The South African model acknowledged diverse truths that go beyond factual or forensic truth and these 'diverse truths' will be employed to give recognition and meaning to the process in the absence of a formal mechanism.

- **Factual or forensic truth** – often referred to as objective truth.
- **Social or Dialogical truth** – the truth of experience established through dialogue.
- **Personal or Narrative truth** – individuals (victims and perpetrators) telling their own stories and having these communicated to the public in order to break the silence relating to individual subjective experiences.
- **Healing and Restorative truth** – towards repairing the damage and preventing its recurrence.

The Project is committed to honouring all of these truths, which are very much part of what is needing to be told or recovered and put into the public domain as part of our understanding of and coming to terms with the past.

But it may be helpful in this regard to distinguish between retributive and restorative justice. The focus of Western society on punitive/retributive justice (which veers close to revenge) is far from helpful in the business of moving on from past violence (quite apart from the fact that it does not work!). As indicated above, the Project seeks to promote the sharing of ‘restorative truths’, inviting participants to explore, for example, what truths (resources) do we have between us that that can enable the ‘damage’ of The Troubles, at individual, community and societal levels, to be undone.

Towards Understanding and Healing¹	Testimony/ Restorative Justice²	Legal Processes
Informal	Semi-formal	Formal and legal
Individual	Individual, community, societal	Lawyers, solicitors, legal processes
Processing	Processing	Justice? Punitive justice?
Understanding	Acknowledgement	Traumatising or re-traumatising is possible
Healing	Healing and recognition	Outcomes unknown or uncertain?

Project 2: Ethical and Shared Remembering: Commemoration in a New Context -Remembering a Decade of Change and Violence in Ireland 1912-1922¹¹

A recent programme of The Junction is called Ethical and Shared Remembering 1912-1922. This is an educational programme, which critically explores events that took place 100 years ago in Ireland. 1912-1922 was a decade of dramatic change in Ireland and a decade of militarised politics and brutal violence. The events of the decade shaped Ireland for the rest of the 20th century and cast long shadows on our relationships in Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. Beginning in 2012, we have entered a decade of centenaries, the centennial commemorations of the important events of 100 years ago. The legacy of the early decade is huge. As I mentioned earlier, Ireland was partitioned in 1921 and the constitutional question still haunts community relations. The decade left us a culture of violence and violence erupted again in 1969 and lasted for over three decades. Some would say the most recent phase of violent conflict was the unfinished business of 1912-1922. Sectarianism, which existed in Ireland centuries before partition in 1921 is still with us and continues to divide Northern Ireland society. In its extreme form it is expressed in hate, bigotry and violence.

11 *The progenitor of the Project, Ethical and Shared Remembering is Reverend Dr Johnston McMaster (Adjunct Professor, Trinity College, Dublin) Research Writer and Community Educator with the Junction.*

The issue around centennial commemorations is how they will be commemorated. Will they become events that will take another generation of young people back into violence? The risks are there. So Ethical and Shared Remembering is suggesting an approach to remembering the past that pays attention to present needs, anxieties and fears and to the future, more than to the past. Commemoration has more to do with psychology than history. And there are critical and ethical questions to be raised about violence and the use of violence to resolve political and cultural differences. At the heart of this ethical and shared approach to the past is willingness, openness and generosity to hear each other's stories and to be open to diverse stories and to new information and insights concerning the past that change the perspective and challenge the accepted norm. There is need also to accept that there is not one Irish history but many Irish histories and diverse perspectives and interpretations. And all of this is something we need to do together, a shared exploration of the past.

The response to date is impressive. We have worked with local political bodies, politicians, community relations and development groups, cultural groups and faith groups. Since its inception, we have engaged with more than 7,000 people. Attitudes and policies have been influenced and the demand for seminars, workshops and courses is huge. A resource manual has been published as have several books, with more planned.

We have found that people readily acknowledge that they know

little or nothing about this decade and its events, and that what they learned about Irish history in schools was seriously deficient. Perhaps surprisingly, as people have explored a distant past, they have found permission or freedom to critically look at the more recent past, which is often felt to be so close and raw that dealing with it normally does not happen. By stepping behind the recent past, to a more distant, and perhaps safer past, windows are opening up into the violence of 1969 and the decades following. Another positive outcome of this engagement with the past is that it offers a lens onto the future, and there is no discussion or dialogue that does not begin to address the kind of future we want to build: a different, better and shared future.

This is a civil society project that is having a transformative impact on large numbers of people and with trained and skilled facilitators the impact will be multiplied and increased, ultimately reaching into all levels of society.

As a spin-off to this project, we are now developing training resources focusing on Patriarchy: Violence and Gender Based Justice. There is a strong link between armed violence and gender based violence. Within this training programme we will unpack the roots of patriarchy, contextualise patriarchy in the 21st century and explore ongoing violence of women within conflict and violence.

Project 3: Developing a City of Sanctuary¹²

Historically, in Europe, in times of conflict there were places that were recognised by all parties as places of protection or refuge. These places were often Church premises. If people who were fleeing their enemies could reach one of these places of sanctuary they would not be harmed while they stayed there. There is deep resonance with our own city, which has one of the oldest monastic sites, going back to the 5th century, which was known as a place of sanctuary.

The Guiding Principles for our City of Sanctuary today have to do with living, learning, socialising and working together in a safe and inclusive society. This current project involves partnership working, collaboration and building on the consultation already carried out to develop a code of ethics for how we might live together and relate to each other.

There is increasing global acknowledgement of the need to develop an ethic or set of core values and principles to underpin how leadership is exercised in the world, how the earth's resources are managed, and how people relate to one another. It is both a local and a global need. Our concern here is local and it must be stressed that there is no simple universal set of principles, and indeed that the complexity of every local situation requires extensive work and

12 Seamus Farrell (Board Member, The Junction) and Maureen Hetherington have been developing the concept of 'City of Sanctuary' in the context of a rights-respecting and shared society in the 21st century.

dialogue to produce a set of principles that are customised and appropriate for that context. For ourselves, that involves taking account of the legacy of our most recent past, the pluralism of culture, ethnicity and belief that now characterise our streets and workplaces, and an economic context that poses the risk of real poverty for increasing numbers. Identifying and reaching consensus on the values, priorities and principles that are needed to ensure the common good in these circumstances is a major task.

Alongside this is the development of a code of ethics for politicians to be presented to individual politicians and their parties, particularly in the context of their campaigning for election, locally or nationally. Such a code would consist of those principles that, through the process of extensive civic conversations, have been identified by participants as non-negotiable requirements for anyone aspiring to governance at any level in Northern Ireland.

The City of Sanctuary's code of ethics is directed at all individuals as well as statutory, education, political, faith, community and voluntary sectors in Derry/Londonderry. It will list the basic requirements from each of the above as regards genuine, honest and uncompromising commitment to building a shared and respecting society.

The proposed political code of ethics, on the other hand, is specifically directed at the political establishment. It is a call to attuned and ethical leadership. It is seen as civic society's exercise of

its rights and responsibilities to hold the political establishment to account. It is considered all the more important given the absence of any formal structures for doing so, such as a civic forum. If the fundamental needs of our society are not addressed, concerning the past, truth recovery, sectarianism, these same issues will return to haunt succeeding generations.

City of Sanctuary, in this context, is the inclusive approach of addressing local needs of anyone who is vulnerable, marginalised or isolated and who need sanctuary, a place where they feel safe, accepted and cared for. The City of Sanctuary framework is concerned with developing an inclusive, welcoming and rights respecting society for all.

I appreciate that the project work I have outlined is within a context that is very different to the context here in Turkey. However, the work outlined above has been driven by a civic society, which took responsibility for the shaping of its own future, acknowledging that peace building is a work in progress that may take decades to embed and that positive peace is a long process of changing mind-sets and attitudes across society. If we do not look after, and speak up for all our communities and citizens, we can never bring about the peaceful future we all desire.



Speaker Maureen Hetherington addressing participants in Urfa

Speaker: **Professor Dr. Talha Köse**¹³

Professor Dr. Talha Köse: Many thanks to DPI for inviting me here today, and thank you to the previous speakers. My name is Talha Köse and I work in the field of conflict analysis. The Turkey peace process and Alevi identity are my areas of concern, as well as the cultural components influencing these things. I will talk about civil society and what has happened in the last 50 or 60 years in this area in Turkey. Conflict analysis and peace process activities began to be

¹³ Professor Dr. Talha Köse is an Assistant Professor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi. The author of several books, he has written extensively on ethnic and sectarian conflicts in Turkey and on conflict resolution methods in foreign policy.

dealt with in the 1950s and 1960s for the first time. The question was whether peace could have a scientific basis or not. And then in the 1960s, people dealing with the more practical side of the process began to get involved. The concepts and resources that we are using in meetings of this kind are actually concepts that were created by the more 'scientific' thinkers of this period. And many peace agreements have actually come into being thanks to these academics.

The secondary diplomacy area has subsequently gained more ground. Peace formation and even government formation in places with non-functioning governments have become more important subjects on the new agenda. So starting from the middle of the 1960s, civil service organisations have gained impetus in their contributions to the peace building process. Today, rather than States and large scale organisations, we see local NGOs that are acting as major actors and stakeholders, especially when it comes to building stability in the aftermath of conflict. Important experience has been gathered, and important academic work produced.

Now I am going to talk about some principles that have been shared. The first fact to consider is that conflict is not that bad at all as a concept. Conflict stems from a desire to change. And if we can guide and channel that desire directly, and manage it properly, the potential for transformation can be realised in an advantageous manner. The second issue is that when it comes to fundamental human rights and human needs and meeting certain economic

requirements, we can say that as long as those requirements are not met, even if there is a peace process in place, the process will not be sustainable. The other thing is that violence is a multi-layered phenomenon. The absence of physical violence may hide violent structural practices that in fact contribute to a state of negative peace. If all those different layers of violence are not dealt with, you cannot have peace directly. Structural violence can penetrate different segments of society, and that is what we have to overcome for peace to be achieved. Political conflict can turn into societal conflict. Certain actions must thus be taken, particularly in the Western part of Turkey where we see tensions rising between the Western Turkish people and Kurdish people.

If conflict has happened, there is no way to reverse it. What has to be done is construct a new societal status. That new societal status can only be built by stakeholders. South Africa, Bosnia and Northern Ireland are places where agreements have been reached. Constructing a new process is not easy. In order for peace agreements to be sustainable, the prospect of peace must be accepted wholeheartedly by the people, those who form the basis of society. If you look at the history of peace agreements, you see that a large number have unfortunately failed in the first five years. Such agreements can fail if they are not internalised by society. And peace agreements that do not succeed may actually make the situation worse.

The other thing is that long lasting conflicts create people who themselves feed on the continuation of violence, people who benefit from the condition of war. Protracted wars produce a conflict economy. As stakeholders come to view the war as vital to their economic security, it may become increasingly difficult to restore a state of peace. While these actors must be included in the process, a sustainable peace requires incorporating those at the base of society. The Wise Persons¹⁴ process in Turkey has been a successful process in my experience. But maybe at the level of schools, NGOs and the elites, we need to have more widespread inclusion.

The other thing to consider is that the support of international actors such as international organisations and international NGOs is very important for the success of a peace process. For example, the EU can provide our own conflict with a new vision and perspective, and the African Union has and is likely to continue to play a very important role mediating conflicts in Africa. In the long run, if proper order is established in countries formerly experiencing conflict, these regional or international bodies may not be seen as counterparts by some people. This should not be the case. Efforts should be made to maintain long term contact with these external actors.

14 In 2013, the Government of Turkey announced the formation of a Wise Persons commission, which consists of 63 prominent individuals, including academics, journalists, musicians, consultants and business experts. The commission is tasked with explaining and promoting the ongoing settlement process with the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) to the public.

The other thing is leadership. Peace can only be possible with strong leaders. Weak leaders who cannot appeal to their society as a whole have lower potential for risk taking. Therefore, in an environment where there are strong leaders, permanent peace agreements become more possible. Maybe when we talk from the perspective of Turkey, one of the advantages is that we have two very strong leaders. And the main responsibility of leaders is to engage their supporters in the peace process. But people think this is wrong. If the leader of one side can manage to engage the members of the other party in the peace process, it is going to be more advantageous. Peace agreements are signed by the elites at the higher level. But what is important is not simply to sign them but to put them into practice. NGOs and those at the base of society are the components needed to realise the implementation of peace agreements. Thank you very much.



Speaker Professor Dr. Talha Köse

Speaker: **Nebahat Akkoç**¹⁵

Nebahat Akkoç: Good morning. It is my pleasure to be here with you today. I would like to talk about Turkey's situation. Everyone is asking whether or not the process will fail now. In September and October, we were so excited. We believed that the process beginning in March 2013 could easily be called a 'peace process'. We as women have many ideas in our minds. However, I have to say this has never been a 'peace process'. Instead, we refer to it as a process of conflict ending. We appreciate that for the last 25 years there has been an ongoing process, and this process has been very important for women because now, when we look back, we see that women have experienced a lot. What do we see when we look back over the last 25 years as women? After a standardised, long-term, nation state tradition, do we really know who we are? What kind of process did we undergo? I believe that everyone must go through this process of reflection.

Violence against women has been taking place over the last 20-25 years. Getting rid of violence first requires confrontation. As a woman, you have to define violence, and you have to define yourself in relation to that violence. And once that process starts, you cannot stop it. The confrontation process evolves, and you start questioning your grandfathers and your genes, and so on. Women are able to see the broader picture more clearly when this happens. We believe that the first step is that you should question yourself.

¹⁵ *Nebahat Akkoç is the Executive Director of KAMER Foundation (based in Diyarbakir, Turkey), which provides social support for women facing domestic violence.*

Who are you? Who are your ancestors? In the Leftist movement of the 1970s or 1980s, this philosophy was replaced by the concept of internationalism. People who tried to articulate their identities were criticised and accused of being nationalists, of wrongly using their past to determine their present. But your past does not disappear just because you neglect it. You can become a citizen of the world only when you find your identity. For example, maybe one day you are carrying something heavy and you use the expression 'lifting the corpse of an infidel', and then the next day you realise your grandparents were infidels. In this process of self-discovery, we should never be ashamed of what we learn about ourselves. I have gone through this process. It can be a very painful process. Hundreds of women have discussed this. But having multiple identities is a major component of the peace process. Maybe we hear of the Kurdish identity or the Turkish identity, but we cannot forcibly squeeze anyone into a single identity.

Being a witness to war has a negative psychological effect on the individual. For example, women smile from the inside, they say, because it is not considered appropriate for women to laugh and smile all the time. So many things which are infused by our education system are actually negatively affecting our corporal and psychological integrity. This also indirectly defines the citizenship identity. Corporal integrity is important maybe for those who experienced war, harassment or rape. Those who have witnessed or faced violence may have an impaired corporal identity. That identity should be found.

Thirdly, you come to such a point, actually I did come to that point, that is the reason I can explain it. I live in Diyarbakir. One third of my identity is Kurdish. I want to provide support to the Kurdish problem. The labour capital problem is also of concern to me. Conflicts about religion are also my problem. How am I supposed to define all of these problems in parallel to one another? How am I going to melt all of these identities? Let us say I am in the Kurdish movement and I have a good friend in this movement. I might be confronted by a situation where, maybe after three months or six months, I have a conflict over capital and labour with him. We thought about all of these questions. So what do we do? An awareness study has been carried out, but now we call it a 'confrontation study' rather than an 'awareness study'. Gender issues have still not become mainstream, despite our efforts in these different areas. But if gender mainstreaming is not there, the whole process is going to have shortcomings. We have come up with certain proposals. Many studies have been carried out and I refer to those as well.

We held a meeting for Islamified Armenians a couple of months ago. There was a woman who provides a wonderful example. She did something very brave and courageous. She told a story about the violence and then, at the end, said the story actually belongs to her family. I think the perpetrators of violence should always be made a part of the process if we want to come to a positive solution. Personal storytelling is something that we see as very important. I heard something very important and they are magical words

actually. We have to simplify our identity. Simplifying our identity is very very important. It is like opening up space for someone to come and sit next to you. Saying you are a Kurd, an Armenian, a woman wearing a headscarf. You can sit around a roundtable as women, but what is more important is to establish empathy afterwards.

Mainstreaming is what should be most important in your daily life, in your organisations. To what extent do you have women in your organisations? To what extent are they working comfortably? What was seen as a medal of appreciation in the past is now being perceived as harassment. So such stories are increasing in number because women do not want to be harassed at home or at work. Human rights and the human rights of women are important. I think NGOs should start working on these matters. No peace process without those components will be real. It will be impaired once again. So I think we should take this into account before we embark on a new process. Thank you.



Speaker Nebahat Akkoç

Moderator Professor Dr. Ahmet Insel: We have heard very general experiences this morning, but they were very much complementary to some specific experiences. We can now take questions and try to provide a collective answer.

Professor Dr. Ahmet Insel opens the floor for questions.

Participant: Maureen Hetherington, during your speech, you made a very important statement that is hurting us all: ‘peace is too important to be left to politicians’. This is very important because we have been expecting peace for many years. I would like to talk about my organisation, the Kocaeli Peace Platform, which was established after the peace process began. The Wise Men came despite the protests of the right wing. The results were very good, but it was meaningless to say that we had peace simply because the State visited our province. And we decided that the peace process has to be established by us. If the State takes one step, the community takes ten steps further in response to this one step taken by the State. The State thinks that peace can only be established by the talks between Öcalan and the State. I have complaints at this point, because this is the point where everyone else leaves the process. Everyone is watching the process. The State is watching the process. Did the State see itself as the only actor and not really attach much importance to the process in your situation (Northern Ireland)? In our case, the politicians have not respected the role of society in this process. Can you give us some recommendations?



Participant Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu

Speaker Maureen Hetherington: We did have a very similar experience in Northern Ireland. The politicians, when they brokered the peace, talked about how they had come to that point, and there was very little credence given to civil society. We were overwhelmingly saying that we needed to have a different way of being; we needed the violence to stop. And the main protagonists knew that they had to find a means by which they could achieve their goals through a political arena because violence was not working. But it was the overwhelming groundswell of public opinion that brought the politicians to the table. They did not recognise the role played by civil society enough, even though we did talk repeatedly about things that needed to be dealt with. Unfortunately, as I mentioned in my presentation, some of those things are still not being dealt with. We are facing crisis upon crisis. We have just had one recently with our First Minister¹⁶ threatening

¹⁶ *First Minister of Northern Ireland Peter Robinson threatened to resign on February 26,*

to resign over information that he said he was not given, and that is because of the failure to deal with our past that keeps bringing these crises. And as we limp along, civic society has to keep holding on to the fact that we have to keep building peace and not return to violence. But it is very similar to what you were saying. I hope that answers the question.

Participant: Impunity is an important element. What was this like in Northern Ireland? Was there a general amnesty for state actors as well as IRA militants? What were the implications of amnesty, or was nothing in place at all? My second question is about restorative justice; I understand your assembly is trying to work through storytelling and different mechanisms to transfer the hurting and the wounds from one segment of society to another segment of society. This is a very important problem in Turkey as well. Even if organisations are weak, they are trying to voice and share the hurt of some segments of society to others. They are trying to establish a dialogue. Of course, in the South African example, as far as I know, there was a Truth Commission. The perpetrators were in front of this commission and they gave testimony. Victims could learn about the aftermath of these events but at the same time, society at large could learn what was experienced. I believe there was no such

2014 to protest the collapse of the Hyde Park bomb trial. The trial collapsed after it was revealed that John Downey, on trial for his role in a 1982 bombing, had mistakenly received a letter in which he was promised amnesty by the British government, despite there being an official warrant for his arrest. The First Minister claimed that he had been kept in the dark, and was not prepared to oversee a government that has '...found itself having salient facts relevant to matters that are devolved hidden from them'. Further details may be found here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26352967>

mechanism in Northern Ireland. I wonder if a CSO such as yours could do this. Can it serve the function of a Truth Commission? Can it deal with the trauma of the hurting?

Participant: DPI organised a Comparative Study Visit to Ireland, and I was very impressed by it. Storytelling is so important to change the minds of the public, but is it enough? As well as these activities, is a Truth Commission still requested in Ireland? Is it an acceptable idea for victims?

Participant: I come from Van Women's Association. If a woman explains her suffering in any place, the listener asks, is this really the truth? A woman was murdered in Van and most people thought this was deserved. How can you manifest the internal reckoning of the people listening to this? It is also about the listeners. The peace process in Turkey is being carried out by the elites in Turkey. The exchange of information between grassroots and elites is an important issue. Is the information being transferred? Is the process acceptable to all Kurdish people? It is not to me, for example. That is something I am questioning. What is the nature of the relations between these two groups? How can it be regulated? Maybe this peace talk is going to produce a Kurdish society that thinks in a different way. The process for me in Turkey does not reflect my demands, for example.



Zozan Özgökçe poses a question while participants Nesrin Semiz, Nurcan Baysal and Kadri Salaz look on.

Speaker Maureen Hetherington: The Good Friday Agreement allowed for all the parties to sit around the table and broker a way forward. Within that there were a lot of difficulties, and as I mentioned with the Good Friday Agreement, there was a lot of conscious ambiguity in order for all parties to buy into the process. But that resulted in a lot of difficulties afterwards, which we are still trying to play out. That included the decommissioning of weapons; it included victims' issues that the women's coalition brokered despite a lot of difficult conversations. The women were the ones who put victims' issues onto the agenda. And the Good Friday Agreement also brokered a peace whereby people who had been imprisoned would get early release. And that was one of the most difficult areas in which to move forward. So there were a lot

of different concessions made so that both the Unionists and the Nationalists could buy into the Agreement. There were also things that were done behind closed doors, which now are coming to play, and again it throws our peace process into a lot of difficulties. I will not go into detail now at the moment, but there are things that are coming to light. There were concessions made to people who were in the wrong and there are a lot of difficulties stemming from that.

Regarding the issue of restorative justice, I can only speak from my experience. We do have a punitive justice system and it goes through the courts. The difficulty in Northern Ireland is that we will never get justice for 99 per cent of the people who have been hurt, regardless of how they term themselves. We have an issue even around who are the victims, who are the perpetrators. We have no defined terminology around who is a victim and a lot of people will say we are all victims. If everybody is a victim, who actually perpetrated the horrible hurt on people? What the Northern Ireland executive has done is employ a Victims Commissioner, and that has been an important role to bring all of the stories of people who have a story to tell to the Northern Ireland Executive. And I think that that is helpful.

I have just said that there will be no justice for 99 per cent of the people in Northern Ireland who have been hurt directly or indirectly. The State will not come forward simply because, for many, many reasons, they do not want to compromise their own processes. You will have difficulties from any of the paramilitaries

(in retaliation to Restorative Justice) because the Good Friday Agreement allowed people to get out of prison. They did not have to tell the truth, unlike in South Africa. So there are many people who got caught up in the violence when they were young who do not want their families to know what they have been involved in. So you have no vested interest by any party or any individual to tell the truth of what happened. Then we have the grassroots of so many areas where people kept silent. So what I am trying to say is that we will not have justice. What we are proposing to do is try to implement a restorative justice system, and to do so by civic society. It is saying very clearly, 'we cannot get justice for these people, but they deserve to be heard'.

Justice has to come in another form. People need to have their voices heard; it needs to be made public and people need to know the reality of what happened. And we feel that if we go down that route, that it is between formal and informal, it is a semi-formal process whereby people are heard and acknowledged and that they give testimony. That it is a way of actually allowing people, maybe for the first time, to have their voices heard. We just feel that we need to restore dignity to the people who have been hurt. We need to acknowledge in the public arena that people have a responsibility for those people who have been hurt. So it is just a way of us testing the waters and saying, in the absence of any truth or truth recovery, here is a way by which we can thread the human and emotional detail of what happened. And that in itself plays an important role because we then have to change the story we tell ourselves, because

in our victimhood we cannot hear how others have suffered and we have our own story. By hearing a larger story we can be made different and we can change the story we tell ourselves. So there are a lot of things that need to be in place. And we are getting a 'buy in' from many people who are interested in the overall process.

To respond to the second set of questions, we talk about a truth and reconciliation commission but we are aware that it did not really work effectively in South Africa. And every model is different. So, while there is talk about truth recovery, and we have talk by the politicians about truth recovery, we will not get it. I mean, victims are being revictimised and rehurt and retraumatised. And that is played out. I do not care who they are or what has happened to them, people have been hurt and they need to have some type of justice. But we cannot have politicians standing up looking for truth recovery if it is only by the State. Or others saying they want truth recovery but it is only by the paramilitaries. And we have our politicians. We also have the British government and the Irish government, and we are talking about a lot of tension between them. But they have also had to broker deals in order to get the peace process that we have. So we have a great fear that if we get truth recovery, and some of our politicians are exposed to violence, and the Northern Ireland executive collapses, where do we go from there? So there is something that is really fragile about peace. What do we need to do to hold the integrity of the process and hold the integrity of what we do? And sometimes it is really really difficult, but we have to try to do our best. What is it that we want for a

shared society? We are constantly thinking about what we want for the future, which shapes how we deal with our present and our past. So, some people are calling for it, but it is not going to happen.

Participant: Some talk about human, collective or other rights. Some talk about sovereignty. Because of energy, water and oil resources in Kurdistan and in this region, the Kurdish issue is becoming a global problem and involving global powers. In terms of solving this problem, people in Turkey think that we can just solve it between ourselves. Is this unrealistic? Is it realistic that we can solve this internally within Turkey? What are the advantages and disadvantages of involving international powers in this process?

Participant: I am the Head of the Federation of Businessmen in the Southern and Eastern part of Turkey. Rather than a question, I have a remark. There is a process called the ‘solution process’ or the ‘peace process’. It is not very well known about by the public at large. But the process is very important and valuable. As mentioned by our colleague beforehand, there is not an agreement anymore between Kurdish people and Turkish people because Kurdish people do not only live in Turkey. The Kurdish people in Iran have their own position, for example. So the Kurdish issue is a multi-actor issue, a multi-dimensional issue. Other dimensions include the safety of energy resources and the safety and security of Israel. The energy issue is a big one. The Kurdish situation does not really overlap with other peace processes in the world, such as that

of Northern Ireland, because there are many countries involved. Kurdish people are at the heart of a larger geopolitical situation. Turkey needs energy and gas in large amounts, and she is dependent on Iran and elsewhere for this. Therefore, it is not sustainable to not have friendly relations with surrounding countries. From this perspective, it is a multi-dimensional issue, a multi-actor issue. The USA is an actor, Iran is an actor, Turkey and Syria, and so on.



*Participant Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu with DPI Programme Manager
Eleanor Johnson*

Speaker Talha Köse: These are very difficult questions, because these are not matters that can only be solved by Turkey. For example, energy, transit lines, oil agreements, all of them are complementary, I think. So where would the starting point be? The PKK are sometimes in agreement in terms of policy. Likewise, some Kurdish people in other countries would like to live like a Kurdish person in Istanbul. They would like to be more integrated with Europe, and that is how they see Turkey. Therefore, having good relations with Turkey is very important. Of course there are

regional, geopolitical voices. Some other actors may support Iran and other regional powers, but at least I can say what Turkey's position is. Are resources an advantage? When we look at literature we can see references to the 'resource curse'. In those areas where there are many resources, we see a higher risk of civil war. When we look at literature on the subject we see that resources do not bring stability. As I said before, some geopolitical factors are beyond the control of Turkey.

Speaker Nebahat Akkoç: We are redefining power as women here, and Maureen Hetherington, you are talking about strong leaders managing peace processes. I wonder what does the term a 'strong leader' mean. What kind of a leader is really a strong and a good leader?

Participant: As the victims of the process, why should we accept the peace set forth by those who have not experienced pain? And my other question is about the third party status of NGOs. How can we put this into practice in actual life? How can we make sure that NGOs become a real third party? When we look at the realities in Turkey, I wonder if the mentality and logic of NGOs is really there. This is a 'so-called process' actually. To what extent do you think the NGOs are really non-governmental? When we look at the process taking place in Turkey, and when we read this process, we see that the law of war is not that easy to come to terms with. What kind of role should NGOs assume in that process? I think we should make the definition of the NGO in the first place because

the strongest NGOs in Turkey are actually collecting fees from the groups they belong to. They are ‘semi-NGOs’.

His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson: Quite clearly in the Irish case, outside parties did have a very clear involvement, principally the United States. President Clinton, during his terms of office was very closely involved in the Northern Ireland peace process. He appointed Senator George Mitchell¹⁷ as the Chairman of the negotiations and quite clearly Northern Ireland did not have any great strategic or economic importance for the United States but President Clinton, for his reasons, decided that it was very important to try and resolve this problem. There were also, at many other points, international actors, for example there were various decommissioning bodies, which had international representatives on them. At every stage during the latter years there was some kind of international point of reference, and even now, in the discussions that have been taking place on flags and parades, a representative from the United States, Richard Haass¹⁸ has been leading those discussions. So sometimes it can be very important to have people from outside who can persuade those who are completely involved

17 *Senator George Mitchell was appointed United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland by President Bill Clinton in 1995. He won the respect of all sides to the conflict for his skill and patience in brokering the landmark Good Friday Agreement in April 1998. He later served as the United States Special Envoy for Middle East Peace from 2009 to 2011 at the request of President Barack Obama.*

18 *Richard Haass succeeded George Mitchell as the United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland in 2001 until 2003. In late 2013, he returned to Northern Ireland to chair inter-party talks aimed at addressing some of the issues left unresolved in the peace process, including those flags and emblems.*

in the eccentricity of their own conflict that there is another way of seeing things and it takes a person from outside to produce that perspective. Thank you

Speaker Talha Köse: Some leaders are strong but only with the police and the military in their hands. What counts is their authority. Does what the leader says really serve the best interest of the community? If direct force is being used in the community to get certain things done, then that leader loses ground. I think Abdullah Öcalan still has authority over Kurdish people. We cannot neglect this. Can those who have not gone through pain really contribute to peace? Maybe those leaders, in time, may understand what they did wrong. But it is not very easy for them to change their minds or the route they are following. If they can, it means they are really valuable leaders. It is not very common to hear a leader say that what he did before is meaningless.



*Dougie Hetherington and His Excellency Ambassador Janis Bjørn Kanavin,
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ankara*

His Excellency Ambassador Janis Björn Kanavin (Norway Ambassador to Turkey): I stand as a representative from a donor country. I think the comment on the platform that questions how exactly NGOs play into this precipitates from me this response, and anyone who may wish to respond would be very welcome. For me, the key issue in deciding who to support in a certain context is, what do they represent and how do they represent? When we support NGOs, and we support, I understand, around 100 around the world in peace and reconciliation work, most of those are NGOs that have relevance because of their NGO activities. Whether they have fee paying members or not, is not so important. I think their relationship to the elite is more important. I like to say, I know an NGO when I see it. But when the Sabanci Foundation for example, is doing advocacy work in Konya to stop the practice of child brides, I am not sure whether I am seeing an expression of an elite actor or I am seeing an NGO. If we turn the table around with regard to international involvement, we must not forget that Turkey is becoming increasingly active in peace and reconciliation work. I do not know if it is common knowledge that the peace accord in the Philippines between the Muslim minority and the government has a monitoring body (there is an agreement between the two parts and it has a monitoring body). IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation) is one of the members of that monitoring body. As far as I know, IHH is a Turkish NGO. So there is every reason to explore this whole maturation process of the NGOs in Turkey. Thank you.

Participant: Intelligence members, politicians and undersecretaries were involved in the process in Turkey, and political will was very important in that process. We are still hearing the repercussions. One of the things discussed is the legitimacy of the bases on which discussion continues. NGOs are leading the process too and have concerns. I wonder, distinguished ambassadors, whether it be Ireland or Norway, how did you manage to diffuse such concerns when you were confronted with them?

Participant: We are talking about a process that will finish its first year in a couple of months. When we look at the past, we can see there is no official component to the process right now. I have a question for our Irish speakers: there are different parallel structures in our country. For the process to evolve into a peace process, what kind of project can be set forward that will not be affected by the influence of government? How can we turn this into a real peace process?

H.E. Ambassador Kenneth Thompson: Well I think in terms of the peace discussions in Ireland there has always been a degree of popular support because most people understand, or understood very well, that there is a clear minority-majority divide, and that ultimately, it has to reach some kind of conclusion in terms of sharing of power because one side cannot possibly shake off the other. So I think that in Northern Ireland, they had several attempts at reaching an agreement, including the famous Sunningdale Agreement¹⁹ in

19 *The Sunningdale Agreement was a formal effort to establish a power-sharing Northern*

1974, which was brought down by strikes on one side. But most people have realised that the shape of any agreement is well defined in advance or relatively well defined in advance, and that what is really necessary is to ensure that there is 'buy-in' from people on the extremes, not just support from people in the centre.



Participants during the morning session of the roundtable

Ireland Executive and a cross-border Council of Ireland. The Agreement was signed in December 1973. It collapsed shortly thereafter in May 1974 because of Unionist opposition, violence and a loyalist general strike.

SESSION TWO: Incorporating civil society into democratic processes

Moderator Yilmaz Ensaroğlu:²⁰ Welcome back to you all. I now declare the second session open. During this session we will continue our discussion. Feel free to pose any further questions to our panel. Conflict resolution, peace research and mechanisms for these processes, as well as theories and paradigms have been worked on a lot by people, but we as a Turkish community are not very experienced in discussing these issues. However, Turkey has now come to a level where she is willing to solve these problems. The parties responsible for these problems cannot solve them alone. There are third actors that might assist. So how can we increase and strengthen the participation of NGOs in this process? This discussion can be seen as a sort of brainstorming session on those matters. Academic activities in the field of conflict resolution were discussed in the morning and our international friends have provided us with examples from different countries of the world.

We also touched on the Kurdish Question this morning, but there are other conflicts, as well as other political tensions. We are just trying to open up new horizons through our discussion here today.

20 Yilmaz Ensaroğlu is the Director of Law and Human Rights Studies, SETA Politics Economic and Social Research Foundation and a member of both Prime Minister Erdoğan's Wise Persons Commission and the Democratic Progress Institute's Council of Experts.



*Participant Tahir Elçi with Moderator Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, a member of
Prime Minister Erdoğan's Wise Person Committee*

Participant: In this second session, we will discuss the inclusion of civil society in the democratic process. Right before lunch, my friend asked a question about that. She asked, ‘What is an NGO?’ An NGO is not a single thing. The organised side and the non-organised side do have a link between them. There are different layers to NGOs, as was mentioned in the previous session. But there is a differentiation to take into account here. Those looking from a Western perspective would interpret it differently. Organisations within religious entities also play an important role here. When we look at Turkish efforts, we see those religious entities playing an important role. And we know that there is some sort of a conflict going on within a single religious entity as well. Which NGOs should be included in the process and who is going to ensure their inclusion? While the human rights movement is important and those in that movement would understand what I am going to say very well, we are confronted with certain structural barriers

and we are feeling this more and more these days. The issue of participation is being talked about less. And the principles of participation are not being observed. From where we are standing, we can see what this process has to evolve into. There is a non-organised civilian area and this area can get organised from time to time. Sometimes they keep silent, sometimes they speak up in social media platforms, and there is a group of people making fun of what is going on in Turkey right now. But we do not have any idea as to the type of links between these different sectors of the community. We seem to be participating in certain processes, but actually we are not participating in the full sense. We should make sure that we analyse whether the instruments of struggle that we are using are really efficient or not. We must consider something very important because we always say that different opinions can meet together on certain platforms. Unfortunately, we fail on creating those platforms. Media and external factors are important because there is a media, which is not representing NGOs. The media is representing something completely different. I think we are squeezed in between those different layers and barriers. So if we do not recharge our minds and restart our thinking, we will really suffer a lot.

Participant: I raised my hand because my speech will be complementary to the previous speaker's. At this level, as an academic and NGO representative, I can tell you that the problem we are faced with is an approach that we can all accept. The simplification of things and objectification of things are not enough

to solve this problem. Let me give you a metaphor. A fight starts - let's assume you have to make use of a fruit basket - you go on with your fight and during that time, the fruits in your basket are going bad. When the fight is over, the fruits are rancid. I think that the fruits represent our language and our concepts. Our language and concepts have gone bad. One of the concepts we have lost is 'forgiveness'. When we talk about forgiveness, we always talk about amnesty. But NGOs require a different kind of forgiving. NGOs have a tendency sometimes to act like the government. Amnesty should be understood differently by NGOs. In conflict, feelings are really harmed. Therefore, an NGO should be able to repair that harm. Those who have caused harm should learn their lessons from what has happened. When somebody wants your forgiveness, you never want to be in that position because the states and institutions which are in conflict with one another have their own strong egoism. Those feelings cause some sort of a collapse in your brain. You do not want to be the victim of forgiveness; you do not want to victimise yourself. You start producing an imaginary enemy, and that enemy with whom you have to continue to fight stays in your mind. But suddenly you see that the discussion has not come to an end, it has continued all this time. Suddenly you see that you have lost your children, your grandchildren.

Hidden forgiveness or concealed forgiveness, people forgive each other but cannot say it out loud because of their belonging to a social group. Or the person does not sincerely forgive but hides this and pretends to have forgiven because of the conditions around

him. This narcissist tendency is one of the most important things to consider at this point. Why should NGOs focus on forgiving in a way that is different from amnesty understanding? When an individual is focused on forgiveness, his psychological or mental world is going to improve. Who are the ones that find it very difficult to forgive? People who live alone and those who do not live in a multicultural environment.

Participant: I am from Samsun Human Rights. I am going to talk about certain practices in the Samsun process. A platform, Turkey for the Future, has been established. In that platform, the Kurdish issue is being discussed and problems in Turkey are being discussed at large. All Samsun NGOs are speaking up in a more organised manner now. The Samsun human rights movement, my movement, dealt with another problem last year. This is a newly emerging problem, the problem of refugees. The UN and Turkey have signed an agreement and within the scope of the agreement, 300,000 families will be situated in our country and 250 of those have already been settled in Samsun. There are Shiites, Sunnis and Christians. These families, when they were brought to Samsun, started to live on the streets and in the gardens of the mosques. As a community, we found accommodation for all of them. We provided them with furniture, with food, with psychological support and health support. And we have facilitated communication between them and the people living in the neighbourhood. A process that could have easily turned into a conflict was eased in the first six months. The local families and these families had to be declared

as brother or sister families, and we did that. Employment was necessary for these families, so we helped them to find jobs. In this way, the problem was minimised to a certain level. 250 families came, but we hear that the number of families is going to go up to 3,000, and many families will be instated in other parts of Turkey as well. We have a magazine. I would like to show this to you. We have been issuing it for the last 14 years. Nelson Mandela's letter after the Arab Spring is in this journal. And in this letter Mandela reminds us that looking into the future and being realistic about the future is much better than being upset about the sad past.

Participant: I am from Van Women's Association. We fear very much that this solution process will go back. In our bilateral dialogues, it is almost forbidden that we question certain things. If you criticise this you are either against the PKK, or you are jealous of this process. This is such an interesting period; the negotiations, the talks, the negotiable things, the non-negotiable things, the actors, the images of the actors. Even the slightest criticism gets a very harsh response. I think it is because there are elections approaching. There is such a fear on the side of civil society because, in this process, everybody is trying to take sides, even independent CSOs. They encounter very important problems when they attempt to criticise. We are beaten up all the time. We feel very tired. Maybe we should have a common voice to do something. The big civil society organisations in Ankara and Istanbul should approach the local organisations to help us raise our voices; we have to have joint activities. We have to walk the talk. We have to translate words into action. There is such

a wall at the moment that we cannot surmount. There is a very sensitive balance at the moment.



Participants Kadri Salaz and Zozan Özgökçe

Participant: Since January, I have been involved in a study with one of my colleagues called ‘Civil Society in Kurdistan’. We are visiting all of the places in the region and talking with CSOs about the peace process and what it means to be a CSO in Kurdistan. We are also working on comparing this recent study with a study done 15 years ago. The process has been very informative for me. Before, I felt hopeless, but now that I am conducting this study, I feel hopeful. I can very well say that people are very comfortable about their ideas compared to those interviewed 15 years ago. At the same time, the CSOs have internalised democracy. That was something I was not expecting. Last Friday we talked to the association of religious leaders and religious societies. Their directors were discussing the rights of individuals with different sexual identities. I just wanted

to share this information with you because I am getting hopeful again. I think there is such a diversified structure at the moment, I do not mean in Turkey, but in the region.

Participant: Recently we had a very important meeting elsewhere in Turkey. When we arrived, we heard that two people had been killed. People could talk to one another during the meeting, but the day after the meeting, there was a very bad reaction. The organisers received a lot of criticism: from each segment we received a very bad reaction. This is a process and a thing that is required of this process is patience and tolerance. Even though people know this, each organisation questioned itself as to what went wrong. It is either a very painful process or maybe people are feeling very fearful of being criticised or blamed. CSOs have a place, but it is like walking on a tight rope.

Participant: The most visible issue at the moment is the Kurdish issue, which has very important implications as well. But I have to say, in this country there are not many people who have been in contact with the State. What we experienced as Islamists, young people, on February 28th²¹, has been suppressed by the state. Some people were tortured in the prison of the state because they were leftist and some were rightist. But if their voices were high, they

21 'February 28' is the name for the so-called military coup, which saw the former Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan removed from office in 1997. The military, unhappy with the way Erbakan was ruling the nation, did everything to foment chaos in society and create the conditions necessary for a military upheaval. After a meeting of the National Security Council on February 28, Erbakan was left with little choice but to resign.

were on the top of the agenda. Of course, I am not going to create a competition of the level of our suffering. I am not going to make a comparison. But as civil society, we have to stand somewhere in the political arena. If we are planning to be a part of the solution process, we have to shake hands as members of CSOs of different opinions. We have to be transparent; we have to be accountable and clear about what we say. What kind of CSO are we talking about? In Turkey, one of the most important areas where civil society should be present is in the organisations dominated by the congregations; I think we have done many studies and activities with them. CSOs should be accountable, should be transparent, and should describe their positions as such, so that we can become a part of the process.

Participant: When I look around the table, if someone does not have a positive opinion of a speaker, they do not listen. Yes, of course there are good relations between some CSOs, but there are bad relations as well. But there are things which make it very difficult to listen to one another. Of course we have to talk about the February 28th process. We cannot just say, 'I am not representing a Kurdish civil society organisation, I am not a Kurdish person'. What the Kurds experienced in the 1990s is different from what happened on February 28th. In Kurdistan, there is a questioning process (as compared to the Western part of Turkey). I talked to average people on the streets and not the CSOs. During the talks they were kinder than usual. During the talks, they used to distinguish themselves. There are cities like Isparta, where the

reason of existence is not known. These provinces have lost their past because they have never confronted their past. They never ask, 'Why does this church not exist anymore?' When we talk about what CSOs can do, maybe the Kurdish CSOs and Islamist CSOs are working very hard and we should not be so hard on ourselves. I do not know how we are going to reflect the implications of these discussions to the privileged people. For example, you can have an organisation called 'Turkey for the Future', but I can never have an organisation called 'Kurdistan for the Future'.

Participant: I come from Ankara, from the Capital City's Women Platform. All the matters that have been discussed have kind of merged in my mind. I would like to pick up from where the previous speaker left off. We always talk about 'women's problems' in meetings where there are only women; men never come to these meetings. I am from Isparta as well. Maybe the next meeting can be held there. Isparta people do not stay in Isparta, that is why it is important. In the morning session someone asked to what extent the rights of the people at the grassroots were being discussed by the elites. Right now we are trying to discuss the role CSOs can play in this process. At the community level, people do not have many problems with one another. If the people who started the conflict just exclude themselves from the process, we may make progress. So the people who criticise have certain ideologies, certain prejudices. Maybe the unorganised civil society are not aware of such meetings and do not know what the people at the meetings are doing.



Participants Nesrin Semiz and Nurcan Baysal

Participant: I come from Urfa. I am a lawyer. I would like to pick up on the discussion started by our friends from Isparta. Two sides are negotiating. Two conflicting sides are trying to come to terms. Where exactly does society fall within that conflict? These conflicts have had their own effects on people who are not Kurds. People are trying to make society an enemy, trying to create hostility. For example, in the past, the national anthem was not sung in football matches. But now the anthem is sung in all matches. It is being sung against the Kurdish people. The celebrations that occur when young men are sent to the military are another example. In the past there was no such celebration of the day young men were sent off. This is a war of propaganda aimed at making sure that society is hostile to Kurds. When a person working in a construction site in a small province in Western Turkey goes to a coffee shop and says

something about a Kurdish person, he is beaten up. It has an effect on the government because people are afraid of the reaction of their own society. In the Western part of Turkey we should dedicate more effort to explaining the process to everyone.

Participant: In the Northern Ireland case, there are things that appear to have been solved, but were not actually solved. This might be setting an important example for us. Secondly, the example of Isparta is a very striking and concrete example. But we could find numerous other examples because we have similar problems in the Black Sea Region and Eastern Turkey. So this is a very widespread problem. I am speaking specifically of the Kurdish problem. I say Kurds and Turks, which is a very vulgar discrimination in my experience. No matter what we do, no matter what method we use, the Kurdish problem has already exceeded the irreversible point, there is no going back. What we can discuss is how long it is going to take for that process to come to a certain level. Will the Kurds be free? Will it take three years or five years to educate people in their mother languages? The Kurdish people have been severely victimised, but at the same time, there is the satisfaction they feel for winning right now. Turkish people believe they are losing, as the Kurdish people win. What are the Kurdish people winning? Some people might say that it is peace that is an asset. Not everyone would say that. They are obsessed with the fact that they have lost something. What do Turks want? We do not ask this. Do you want Kurds to become Turks? Do you want to find a common platform? Is Islam the only common denominator? Some

years ago, the ratio of Kurds who wanted to become neighbours with Turkish people was very high. At the same time, when it came to intermarriage, that was also very high. They do not want to give their girls to Turkish people but they want to take Turkish brides. Of course there are mixed marriages, but they are not in the way we wish. When we look at this, we are confronted with a Turkish problem, with a dominant society problem. Assuming that he or she is superior to the other, this type of person defines himself or herself by what the other party is lacking.

Moderator Yılmaz Ensaroğlu: Maureen Hetherington will now discuss civic society and peace building in a short presentation. I hope that towards the end of the session, our foreign guests and Turkey speakers Talha Köse and Nebahat Akkoç will make their own analysis and additions.

Maureen Hetherington: I have heard the frustration in the room around the questions of how we engage civil society, how we interpret what civil society consists of, the NGOs, and we are fortunate in some ways in that there are some comparisons that we can also identify with the difficulties around NGOs. The part for me that resonates is, how do we actually engage, motivate and mobilise people and the difficult conversations if we do not have the spaces?

A priority is always that dialogue is an imperative, an absolute imperative. When we started out (I have been doing this work

for 20 years plus), we went out and we asked people to come to dialogue sessions, we drew up contracts with them and asked them to look at what we were about and what we were not about and if people were coming to score political points then we did not want them there. But if we wanted them as a person who had something to say that others could hear, then that was ok, so we were very clear about what our needs were. And that helped because people then knew what they were coming to. And the imperative of the dialogue at that time was not to be exclusive. And that was difficult for people. But we also gave them choices as to who they could come in the room with. And then we created small spaces.

Another big area for me was around healing. When people are hurting, they close down. They cannot open themselves to other possibilities. And so many in our society are hurt, indirectly or directly. But it does close people down and then they cannot hear other voices. They cannot open themselves up to hear other conversations. I really heard one of the earlier speakers talking about the fact that we do not listen. Listening is a skill. In order to engage in active listening, we have to learn to listen. In Northern Ireland, our idea of listening is waiting for our opportunity to dive in. So it is really important that we actually learn those skills, so we build them into training programmes.

The next thing was about training. We do knowledge-based skill training. And there are two reasons for that. People will be encouraged to come to undertake courses if it is going to give them

a qualification, or if it is going to give them a certificate. Regardless of where that certificate comes from. So we can engage a much wider community in the work if we provide training, but also that it is knowledge based, it is academic rigour, because then we can be taken seriously. I think that is a big problem, sometimes NGOs are not taken seriously. And we ensure that what we provide is of the highest quality in content.

Partnership, working in collaboration, is absolutely essential. Everywhere that we go, we develop partnerships and collaborations because rather than seeing us as a competitor for funding, we can strengthen; we can go into partnerships and make them much more effective. I also talked about policy before; the need to influence policy. The building trust, essential knowledge and skills based interdisciplinary approaches, we seek those out. We cannot just be an historian, or a philosopher or an academic. We have to be able to meet the different needs within the community. And if we cannot do that ourselves, we seek it out. The latest work we have been doing is around trauma, and we are seeking out people who know a lot about trauma. Because we are working with people who have been caught up, who have been perpetrating violence, there is a lot of trauma there as well.

I talked about the Towards Understanding and Healing programme, and the different truths that are there. This is an idea of storytelling as informal testimonies and a restorative justice model. It is in between the informal and the formal. This is something

we are doing, we are going out to seek approval from the wider community, and we will set this up as a project and start to roll it out, with or without the politicians. We will get the widest 'buy-in' as possible and we will make it happen, and it will build steam. We are always remembering that we are history makers, not history commemorators. We make history. It is not cyclical, it is linear. And as history makers, how do we remember the future? There is always a context; a context of the past and the context of now and then. To remember ethically, how do we set everything into a context? Remembering the whole, not cherry picking our side of the story, but remembering all of the different events that have impacted all of us.

The other element is remembering together. We can sit in our own victimhood, in our own areas. But it is really important that we do sit along with the people who have very different perspectives from us and remember together. Remembering ethically, and within that framework, looking at characters and motivations. What drives people to do what they do? The politics and actions of the time.

So that was a little about ethical remembering. I did touch upon patriarchy, violence and gender-based justice. And again, that is a community education programme, which is so vital to give women and men that knowledge base. Patriarchy is thousands of years old, I think three or four thousand years old. It was embedded by people like Aristotle and Cicero, the great philosophers of that time. It became embedded in our religions and theology. It was

the first difference that was ever made. Before any other difference, before racial difference, before any ethnicity, the difference was made between women and men. We have to understand that, to understand the impact universally, and then to drill it right down into our own context. And there are two phases to this part. The first one, of developing the knowledge and skills base with women and men and then of looking at how we heal. There is a lot of healing to be done with people who have gone through our recent violence, who have been sexually abused, who have been used by paramilitaries as comfort women and those stories have not come out and they have not been told yet. So it is a really big part of us.

Finally, we are developing a project called the City of Sanctuary. And this, again questions, how do we motivate and engage and excite people to come along and engage in conversations? This idea of the City of Sanctuary came up because we have our own city that is one of the oldest monastic sites going back to the 5th century and it was known as a place of sanctuary. So we have started to ask people about looking at how we might become a City of Sanctuary or a place of sanctuary in Ireland. And the guiding principles today have to do with living, learning, socialising and working together in a safe and inclusive society. So this current project involves partnership working, collaboration, and building on our consultation, that has already been carried out to develop a code of ethics for how we might live together and be able to relate to each other.

There is a need to develop an ethic or set of core principles and values to underpin how leadership is exercised in the world. So we are making a code of ethics for society. We are making a political code of ethics for the politicians. And that is very very challenging. But we have excited and mobilised so many people who do not buy into our community relations and peace building. They are excited about the idea of the city as a place of sanctuary because there are so many areas that can be covered under this idea: women, vulnerable people, and so on. It is working towards an inclusive and shared and respectful society. We also have young people who have been exiled, often for alleged drug use, and there is a big concern around that. So this City of Sanctuary project has actually started to engage those young people, and those partnerships are working. We have brought in a whole new range of people. What I am trying to say is that we have to be really creative and engage with the widest community possible. We also do training courses on mediation and conflict resolution.

The truth is, these things should be taught in school. Young people should be taught how to resolve conflict, how to mediate conflict. How do we live with difference? It is not taught in our schools. Our deep segregation system has not allowed for that. Finally, we are also looking at the theological roots of sectarianism. Someone brought that up this morning, the issue of dealing with sectarianism. Well actually we do not. And the churches do not help. We have deep theological roots of sectarianism, it is institutionalised, but we can only do our best to try to give people the knowledge and the skills

base with which to teach it effectively in schools. We have lots of other different training programmes across Northern Ireland and the border. There are many, many different projects and we are more than happy to share. We also know that we have a lot to learn too. However, we are privileged to be able to share some of the things that we have been doing and we are always learning. Everything is always turned on its head anyway.

Participant: I come from Van's Businessmen Association. First of all, I would like to say a couple of things based on what I have heard today. There are people who are both Kurds and Muslims, which makes them more 'unlucky'. Their religious and class related values unfortunately put them under more pressure. These people have also gone through very difficult times. The leftist structure is really suffering due to what happened in the South-Eastern part of Turkey. We are people who are happy when the municipality constructs a bridge or a road. But the person to my left mentioned the word 'Kurdistan', and I thought, this is a really beautiful development. Now again I hear people referring to this region as 'Kurdistan'; Northern Kurdistan, Southern Kurdistan. It does not matter. And a former President of the Turkish Republic said he might have Kurdish blood in his veins! This is really a huge step. Although 50,000 people had to lose their lives, the point we have reached is not a negligible one. Last week in Van, we visited a hospital. A friend of mine who is a doctor came to Van and gave doctors there language training in Kurdish.

Kurdish citizens are very honest, very sincere citizens. It is true that there are some biases in marriage. For example, I am married to a Turkish woman. I think you, as 'wise people' should spend more hours thinking on these matters. If you go to the house of a Kurdish person, you are going to see how generous those people are. But if the Kurds come to Istanbul, you want them to work as waiters or wash your cars. As long as they do not say they are Kurdish, that is fine. Of course, to get rid of this bias, NGOs have a lot to do. Maybe training activities can be carried out. In 1973, I got involved in the NGO movement for the first time. For the last 40 years, I have been involved in politics and the NGO movement. I am going to share my own experience afterwards but I can tell you that there is a divided NGO structure in Turkey. Some of them are Kemalists,²² some of them are religious representatives. There is this group of people left in the middle. We get important reactions from both parties when we express certain opinions. So, it is very difficult to be a representative of an NGO in this country. I worked as the President of an NGO in Turkey. I really carried it on my shoulder. But still the point we have reached is pleasing and in terms of democratic development, we have reached a very good level.

22 *Kemalists ascribe to the ideas and principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Turkish Republic. Kemalism, as it was implemented by Atatürk, was defined by sweeping reforms intended to separate the new state of Turkey from its Ottoman tradition and orient it more towards the West.*



Participants Nurcan Baysal, Kadri Salaz and Zozan Özgökçe

Participant: The Democratic Progress Institute will have to deal with another issue in the coming days. An incident has taken place in Diyarbakir. A group of protestors were protesting in front of a mosque and the people from that religious community responded violently. I knew this would happen. I knew that a physical reaction would take place. Kocaeli is no different from Isparta, in fact. Nationalist and rightist reflexes are very common there too, but this is actually a Turkish problem. A Turkish problem has emerged and it is very easy to hold this meeting in Urfa, but I think it would be more useful in the Western provinces. We at Kocaeli have carried out activities on a local basis, and our starting point was that these activities should be carried out in other provinces. All the organisations in the area were visited by us, and then we organised a symposium on a local basis. Professional

organisations also participated in that symposium. We held fast breaking dinners and we found it very useful, and we have carried out certain panel meetings. Then we decided this was not enough, so we have organised a peace platform. After the last one year of the process, I can see the change, even in myself. We hear people saying that they can actually solve the problem. Some people may say that the problem is being solved by the governments anyway, and they do not meet this process with positive feelings. But now they understand that very good developments are now taking place. Journalist societies of 81 provinces were invited to that meeting. When we talked to the President of the Kocaeli Society, we heard him say that his perspective has dramatically changed in the last four years. I think we should continue working like this. In order to share our message of peace with the general public, maybe we can prepare some short films. We contacted the Television Broadcasters Council and proposed three public short films. We are now looking for ideas for the themes for these public films. If you have any striking ideas, you can share those with us. And finally, we are contemplating carrying out a local activity in Kocaeli on training in mother languages. We are going to organise a meeting with the participation of scientists from Canada and other countries. It is not definite yet, because when such matters were put on the agenda, many people said that we should not be dealing with such matters right now. We have to express our own ideas in the Western provinces. We are expecting to see a future meeting of DPI in Kocaeli too.

Participant: I am from the Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP). There is a question of being hopeless, but I think the organisation of CSOs have things that are present and things that are not present. Maybe we have to talk about that. We are saying that it is a problem for Turkish people. But this discourse has been going on for the past five or six years. The question of what Kurdish people want is something that we have not been able to discuss very much. If you just think what we do altogether, we can see the weaknesses and strengths of our activities. In order to have a sustainable peace, you have to tackle some sub-components. Remembering the past is something that we value but of course, while the past is important, remembering the past is difficult.

So the question of what we can contribute is now being asked by CSOs. The victims of February 28th are also present in this area. Between the congregations and the government, we are in a position at the moment where we do not know where to stand. We are not aware of the excluded segments of civil society either. I am sure they have certain products, they have certain data. When we solve the Kurdish problem, everything will not be solved. So when we are talking about mother tongue, we should not speak simply of the Kurdish language. We know that the issue of mother language is covering up other devastating issues. But at the same time, we have produced a lot of data. We know where the basic problems with this country lie. Turkey cannot live through a transitional justice period for a long period of time. There is no will to solve problems. We are trying to solve the problems under an authoritarian regime.

We have human rights training, but we do not have peace training?

When the first Human Rights Joint Platform was established, we went to some of the provinces, and there were people coming from different segments of society. So that platform was a very important platform. It was a very valuable effort. But Idris' book on language should not be forgotten, Mehmet's book should not be forgotten, Kocaeli's work should not be forgotten. Rather than a hierarchy of suffering and victimisation, we should find a common ground for producing a joint solution for all of these forms of suffering. Turkey is a very big country, very different from Northern Ireland.



Participant Feray Salman addresses the room during the roundtable discussion

Participant: We have a project wherein we research certain areas. Some of the things I have to say will be repetitive, but I have to

repeat them. We decided to work on Turkish perceptions. This was a joint decision. For development training last year, I visited many cities in Western Turkey. And surprisingly enough, in every place I visited, the matter boiled down to the Kurdish issue, and not in a positive way. In Kırklareli province, there are no Kurdish people, and the biggest fear they have is of Kurdish people coming to the province. Every time I went there, this fear was underlined. Yet, we say the grassroots is ready for peace. During this study, I saw that the grassroots is not ready for that. After the Wise Persons process was finished, I looked at comparative reports and I saw that the Turkish people do not have a definition, a vision for peace.

We should use psychological methodologies that we have not talked about very much. We have been denying these things for a while, but we have to talk about them more I think. There are many stories to be told. Maybe these stories were told in a way that could not happen otherwise. For example, in live broadcasts, people talked about how they were tortured in Diyarbakir prison. There was no reaction from people at large. So there is a Turkish population which is not interested in the matter at all. We need to accept this early on. Another observation is that the peace process itself has been creating conflict in the past year. We see the peace process as something that can be used as an indicator for siding with a certain political party on a day to day basis. So if the discourse changes suddenly, their reaction will change suddenly as well. Therefore, there is a very fragile balance and it cannot be sustainable.

The third matter: in November, a human rights conference was carried out in Istanbul and there was a session on the Kurdish people. Interestingly enough, there was a very high level of participation. I was talking about the inclusion of society in the process. I saw a very positive reaction coming from students. They said that they had never thought of applying such a perspective or methodology. We are trying to show that without being engaged with a particular party, human rights matters can be studied. These students would like to do something; however, they are having difficulty in finding the means and tools to do the research without siding with a particular ideology. There are many areas to work on. It is very important to bring them together to work on a broad area of activities.

Participant: Maybe I can make some additions to what has been said. These are my personal experiences and personal observations based on my research in this field. Maybe I cannot see it because of the research I do or because of the work areas in which I have been involved, but victims, or the people who have been directly impacted by the problems should be more greatly included in civil society activities. It is not like that currently. Another suggestion that I can make; it was said by a previous participant that there is a broad range of areas where we can make improvements in order to understand problems and produce solutions, but maybe there are things that we do not understand, which can be used for the solution of a conflict. Maybe organisations and civil society can try to surface the methodologies of these different approaches. Many

things have been said about this, but these are subjective comments of course. There are very new and recent research activities as well. Turkish society has changed its perspective towards the Kurdish issue. Everyone has their own perspective. I think that we should not only focus on factual data. We have to be able to interpret the data and understand the data. This can be used as a basis, in order to have peace.

Participant: It was mentioned a couple of times that there is a recent factor; the Armenian issue. In the past couple of weeks we have seen some examples. Language is getting harsher and harsher. We experienced very significant trauma and there are other, unfelt fears. On our way to 2015, this language is only going to get harsher. At the Hrant Dink Foundation, we are following hate discourse in the media. Some statements have been used that make us very concerned. There is more reaction in Turkey at the moment. A previous participant asked if we are going to forget what we experienced. With regard to the Armenian issue, many things have been forgotten. I am going to talk about a very concrete example that may become a model. Two years ago, we went to a village in Elazığ province, which was an Armenian province until 1915, when it became Kurdish. It is a very nationalist and conservative village. We stayed for four months with the villagers and young people there, and restored two fountains. The success story was not only about rebuilding two fountains originally built by Armenians (a matter which had not been spoken about for almost a century). We did the work together with the villagers and actually, at the

beginning, there was great hesitation from the public. But the most important thing for me was that the people were approaching us and saying, 'my grandmother was also Armenian'. They were talking about these little parts, and bits and pieces of their stories. The villagers welcomed us once again to repair the church. This was a joint production. Four months was a very short period of time, but we achieved our goal. As a civil society organisation, how can you make it sustainable and widespread? Our ultimate goal was not transforming society, but simply repairing the fountain. It is a very good example and should be made widespread, but we have to have regular visits to that village. Who is giving us resources? The government gives us nothing; we do not even see political will. Our society is not open to confrontation. That is not the political will, and we cannot get resources. For the Armenian matter, a one-to-one interaction is very important. I think this will be the only way to progress.

Participant: I participated in the morning session as well as in the last civil society roundtable meeting in Istanbul. In terms of conflict resolution, if you are going to focus on the Kurdish matter at this level, naturally and rightfully, the Kurdish issue was the most important. But my colleague was asking how you can take this issue to Isparta. You have to bring them around this table I think. We say 'Kurdistan' and think it is normal. But around this table we should also have people who frown when they hear the word Kurdistan. The Islamist CSOs are trying to find an Islamist basis for solving the problem. The Kurdish people were persecuted because

they were Islamist and they were Kurdish. But after saying this, having an Islamist foundation to solve the problem should not be very disturbing. Islam is shaping our soul and our mind. Therefore, having an Islamist foundation to solve the problem should not be disturbing. Yes, in Turkey, 50,000 people died because of this issue. There are Turkish mothers who sent their sons as soldiers to the army and took their corpses back. Maybe rather than having a meeting in Isparta, people from Isparta should gather around this table.

Participant: I visited Rwanda and the Ivory Coast a few years ago and I had the chance to travel across Rwanda for around five days. As you know, in four months, 1 million Tutsis were killed by Hutus with knives and other instruments. And I tried to ask people how this happened. But nobody talked. I asked why no one was giving an answer. They said they did not support the idea of transferring things to the next generation. They were limiting themselves. I think transfer of such traumas might cause problems in creating healthy generations.

Participant: I feel the need to say something about that. The Armenians have also gone through a process, and their families kept silent for years. But they could not establish a healthy relationship by keeping silent. It did not work for them.

Participant: You said to bring people from Isparta here, but the real problem is not to carry out a struggle, because we are talking about

a group of people who have not been a part of a struggle. We have to get people organised. This is why the previous participant said we cannot organise people anymore, because people have forgotten.

Participant: My research has overlapped with these matters, so I feel a need to speak. In my family there are people who belong to the Turkish identity (in the way the government identifies Turks). I research the Kurdish issue, so I speak about it with my family. I realised while speaking to my cousins that there is a different awareness that we have as academics. But within the scope of the Kurdish issue, the peace process should not be squeezed within a certain space. We should not create an expectation to bring people up to a certain 'ethical level'. Some people will want peace for economic reasons, some people may want it for other reasons, and some people may not even care about those who lose their lives.

Participant: We keep saying the same thing. Turks do not know what they want. Kurds know what they want. The problem is that Turkish people do not really know what the Kurdish people want. The Kurdish people do not have a consensus. They are not very clear on that. It is as simple as that. When you talk about Kurdistan, they think that part of the country is going to be a separate part of the country. It is just because they do not know what the Kurdish people want.

Participant: There is another side to this question. Kurdish people should be accepted and recognised as a separate nation. Autonomy,

federalism, independence can be utilised by this specific nation too because Kurdish people have the right to respect those rights. The average citizen may not be able to understand this. When it comes to language, I can tell you that many massacres have taken place. This is not something we should forget.

Participant: This might have its pros and cons. As a human rights defendant, I would like to share an anecdote I experienced in the field. A police officer was abducted by the PKK. A member of the Human Rights Association of Turkey led the process. The officer was supposed to be brought back. The father of the officer was with us. We left the hotel early in the morning, around 5:00am. We told everybody that the father had become ill, and that we were taking him to the hospital. I reminded the father of the police officer of something and told him that another person's son was unfortunately killed by the police in a similar incident. He was of course so sad to hear that and he could not sleep until the morning. These things have probably been discussed and such things have an effect on social mentalities.

Moderator Yilmaz Ensaroğlu: We have overrun today due to the very rich discussion that has taken place throughout the day. Let me close the session by thanking all of our speakers for their presence here today. The role of CSOs in conflict resolution was our topic of discussion. I would like to make a summary with three points. Each conflict has its unique characteristics. No conflict is the same as another. They may have similarities, but they are

unique. One may thus make use of other examples and lessons learned, completely or partially.

The second thing is that no conflict has lasted forever. Although we may discuss the Kurdish issue in Turkey these days, we may recall that we have previously discussed the Alavites, gender-based issues and the problems faced by the Armenians. Maybe in our personal lives, we are confronted with more than one conflict every day.

The role of NGOs in conflict resolution has been discussed too. NGOs who position themselves as third parties are present, but at the same time, we have some other groups of people who are directly the carriers and transmitters of particular problems. As NGO actors who are not candidates for administration, we should discuss what kinds of solutions can be found. What can the NGOs do about this and within this framework? I suppose we have to admit that we are going through a very unfamiliar process because militarism is not something specific to the government. It is a serious cultural problem in our country, it is in our genes. To solve a conflict by participatory mechanisms requires certain instruments with which we are not familiar. I feel myself willing and able to speak about that matter for hours. Whenever I receive an invitation, however, I first think of ways to turn down the invitation because I believe I am not scientifically equipped to speak on the subject. I have the energy to speak on it for hours, but I am not a specialist. I am not an expert. As the actors and stakeholders in Turkey, we should first accept that we have the responsibility to be leaders in certain

issues, such as conflict resolution. If the fear of the solution process is preventing people from doing certain things, then we should be in a position to say things.

The language and style of stakeholders is being criticised by us. But we should acknowledge that we have a language and style of our own. How can you compare February 28th with what the Kurds experienced? The pain is great for every individual. We should not forget that. We should not be in a position of creating a 'competition' of our pain.

The other thing is that relations between NGOs and society are problematic. To what extent can NGOs organise society? My personal opinion is that our NGOs and CSOs are now turning into project offices, even our organisations with members are doing so. In order to survive and exist, they want to make use of funds. This is what they are focusing on. If we have the problem of not being able to organise ourselves in certain provinces, it means we do not have good relations with the local NGOs there.

I would like to thank the organisers of this committee. I would like to thank DPI and the administrators of DPI. It is usually Eleanor Johnson and Esra Elmas who do the most part of the planning for this meeting. I wish and hope that this meeting is going to yield fruitful results. Thank you again for joining us here in Urfa today.

Appendix

DPI Roundtable: The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution

1 March 2014

Turkish Participants

- Nebahat Akkoç,, KAMER Foundation
- Hale Akay, Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Turkey
- İdris Akdin, Samsun İnsani Yardım Hareketi Başkanı, Turkey
- Murat Akıncılar, DISA, Turkey
- Hayriye Aşçıoğlu, Turkey
- Nurcan Baysal, Hüsnü Özyeğin Foundation, Turkey
- Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu, GÜNSİAD, Turkey
- Ali Bucak, Urfa Bar Association, Turkey
- Tahir Elçi, Diyarbakır Bar Association, Turkey
- Esra Elmas, DPI
- Mehmet Ali Eminoğlu, Student Union of Anatolia, Turkey
- Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, SETA, Turkey
- Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem, Dicle University, Turkey
- Hacı Firat, Turkey
- Cem Gençoğlu, Dost Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi, Turkey
- Serhat Gerger, Fikir Masası Platform, Turkey

- Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, Kocaeli Peace Platform, Turkey
- Irfan Guven, Turkey
- Ahmet İnsel, Galatasaray University, Turkey
- Gülseren Kaplan, KAMER, Turkey
- Talha Köse, Istanbul Şehir University, Turkey
- Hüseyin Mutlu, Samsun Dost Der, Turkey
- Koray Özdil, TESEV Democratization Programme, Turkey
- Zozan Özgökçe, Van Women Association, Turkey
- Mehmet Paydaş, Fikir Masası Platform, Turkey
- Kadri Salaz, Turkey
- Feray Salman, Human Rights Joint Platform, Turkey
- Nesrin Semiz, Capital City's Women Platform, Turkey
- Feridun Taş, Muş Bar Association, Turkey
- Zeynep Taşkın, Hrant Dink Foundation, Turkey
- Nesrin Uçarlar, Turkey
- Şehmus Ülek, Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People, Turkey

International Participants

- Didier Chassot, Deputy Head of Mission, Swiss Embassy in Turkey
- Caitlin Collis, DPI
- Maureen Hetherington, Northern Ireland Civil Society Groups
- Eleanor Johnson, Programme Manager, DPI

- His Excellency Ambassador Janis Bjørn Kanavin, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Turkey
- Peter Spoor, Political Counsellor, British Embassy in Turkey
- His Excellency Ambassador Kenneth Thompson, Irish Embassy in Turkey
- Catriona Vine, Deputy Director and Director of Programmes, DPI
- Martin Wasp, British Embassy in Turkey

Civil Society and Peace Building

Presented by Maureen Hetherington

DPI Roundtable: Role of Civil Society in Conflict Resolution

1 March 2014

THE JUNCTION COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND
PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVE

CIVIC SOCIETY AND PEACE BUILDING

Civil Society and Peace Building

Without civil society and NGOs the politicians may not have achieved what they did. One observer has written of Northern Ireland that:

Civil society played a more advanced role in the governance of Northern Ireland than I think would be the case in other areas. I think it really did fill, for a long time, that democratic deficit whereby Northern Ireland most of the way through direct rule has really been a technocracy – basically run by civil servants with some oversight from British Ministers.

Partition of Ireland 1921 - 2014



Unionists, majority, wish to remain part of the United Kingdom

Nationalists, minority, wish to have an independent Ireland

Good Friday Agreement (GFA) 1998

Essentially the GFA was a careful piece of word-crafting that enabled one side to claim that it guarantees the union and the other that it provided a road map to Irish unity. It had:

- *No agreement about the future*
- *No agreement about dealing with the past*
- *No strategy for dealing with sectarianism"*

(Johnston McMaster, The Junction)

Good Friday Agreement (GFA) 1998

“The GFA was not a peace settlement. It was a framework for a peace process. It contained conscious ambiguity and some critics have said that it ‘institutionalised’ sectarianism. On the other hand it provided space to do something about the centuries old religious and political sectarianism.”

Essential components for our work

- ◆ *Dialogue*
- ◆ *Healing*
- ◆ *Training*
- ◆ *Partnership working and collaboration*
- ◆ *Policy*

Essential components for our work

- ◆ *Building trust*
- ◆ *Knowledge and skills base*
- ◆ *Inter-disciplinary approaches*

Towards Understanding and Healing established 1998

- ◆ Dealing with the past through Storytelling and Dialogue - totally inclusive processes – which may require preparation to get to this point.
- ◆ An accredited training programme developed.

Towards Understanding and Healing TESTIMONY

- ◆ Public arena for individuals to give testimony
- ◆ Diverse truths important to recognise the human and emotional detail:
 - ◆ *Factual or forensic truth*
 - ◆ *Social or dialogical truth*
 - ◆ *Personal or Narrative truth*
 - ◆ *Healing and Restorative truth*

Towards Understanding and Healing (TUH)

TUH	TESTIMONY Restorative Justice Model	Legal Processes
Informal	Semi-formal	Formal and legal
Individual	Individual, community, societal	Lawyers, Solicitors, legal processes
Processing	Processing	Justice – Punitive Justice?
Understanding	Acknowledgment	Traumatising or re-traumatising?
Healing	Healing and restoring dignity	Outcomes unknown or uncertain?

Ethical and Shared Remembering Decade of Change and Violence 1912-1922

- Remembering the past by paying attention to current needs, anxieties and fears and to the future; *'remembering the future'*
- Commemoration; more psychology than history.
- Critical and ethical questions to be asked – use of violence to resolve political and cultural differences.

Ethical and Shared Remembering Decade of Change and Violence 1912-1922

- Willingness to hear each other's perspectives and be open to them and to new information and insights.
- Accept that there is more than one Irish history – diverse perspectives and interpretations.
- Do this together, a shared exploration of the past.

City of Sanctuary

- ◆ Guiding Principles of *living, learning, socializing and working together, in a safe and inclusive society.*
- ◆ Consultation, Partnership working, Collaboration.

City of Sanctuary

- ◆ *Code of Ethics* for how we might live together and relate to each other.
- ◆ Work for the *common or greater good*
- ◆ *Code of Ethics* for society
- ◆ *Political Code of Ethics* for politicians

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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