At the 10th Session of the *Inter-Parliamentary Commission on National Solidarity, Fraternity and Democracy*, nine academics specialising in conflict resolution and peacebuilding delivered presentations to senior politicians and state officials. Among them were three members of DPI's Council of Experts: Prof. Dr Sevtap Yokuş, Assoc. Prof. Dr Esra Çuhadar, and Assoc. Prof. Dr Vahap Coşkun.

Below you can find the English translations of the speeches:

PROF. DR. SEVTAP YOKUŞ VEZNEDAROČLU –

Mr Chairman, esteemed members of the Commission, I would first like to express my sincere gratitude for this invitation and for taking the time to listen to us. We are well aware that we are undertaking a truly important task. That is why we are so excited; we have lectured and given conferences for years, but the excitement here is somewhat different. Mr Chairman, members of the Commission, I congratulate you. You have taken on a historic task and your burden is heavy; we are aware of this. Perhaps I can put it this way: the bad news is that your job is very difficult. The good news is that Turkey actually has a lot of accumulated experience in this area.

The previous resolution process was an important experience and provided a good foundation in that sense. Another source of experience: Turkey has made great strides towards a new democratic constitution. That will also significantly support this process and your work. The good news: if you succeed, you will go down in history. My area of expertise is primarily constitutional law and human rights, but I have also had the opportunity to study conflict resolution experiences. Through a series of comparative studies conducted with the Democratic Progress Institute, I had the opportunity to examine successful conflict resolution experiences on the ground and over a long period of time. Those efforts were, in part, conducted to support the previous peace process. Several members of parliament present here also took part in those initiatives and are therefore well familiar with them. I will now attempt to share these examples with you.

Of course, I will try to share the main points, cornerstones, fundamental pillars, and core dynamics, but even for that, time is extremely limited. These experiences show us that no two examples are alike; Turkey will have it's own experience. However, as Turkey builds its own experience, it is important not to overlook a common feature of global examples: they have converged around a set of principles, even repeating similar mistakes. Therefore, it is crucial to examine these experiences carefully and in depth. Moreover, the literature that has emerged in academia around these processes has not been limited to a political perspective, but has also acquired a strong technical dimension. I would like to emphasise this point in particular.

I have visited Northern Ireland many times. In my view, Northern Ireland has a very special quality that makes it truly unique. The peace building process was carried out with extreme care and was well nourished. In this context, the Good Friday Agreement represents a critical threshold in the process and contains important provisions regarding the status, administrative structure and human rights of Northern Ireland, which has experienced intense prolonged conflict and suffered extremely high death tolls relative to its population. The Agreement also contains provisions concerning the release of members of armed groups and the surrender of weapons. In this context, the peace and reconstruction process gained considerable momentum after the Good Friday Agreement. The agreement essentially determined the devolution of powers. Let me state immediately that, in fact, in all successful examples, there is an indispensable condition for moving from the transfer of power to the development of local democracies. Human rights laws are also important from this perspective. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has worked very seriously and The Commission has been granted immunity and

inviolability, and has been vested with broad powers, including the authority to accept individual applications.

I would like to briefly mention the South African experience. South Africa is a country that was governed for decades by discrimination and racist laws, and after years of conflict, between two different races, it entered a peace process. Again, the main dynamic here is democratisation through constitution building. The South African experience bears significant similarities to Turkey. As you will recall, in the previous resolution process, we also worked on a new and democratic constitution in parallel with the resolution process. South Africa has successfully implemented this method. If we had succeeded, perhaps there would be no need for this work today. Equally, in South Africa, significant steps were taken towards facing the path. Here, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was entrusted with the very important task of and served as a much better stepping stone in advancing the process and moving towards lasting peace. The inclusiveness of the constitution was very important, and South African constitutionalism has become a kind of celebration of democracy with its provisions on human rights. For example, collective rights have not been included, but individual rights and freedoms have been included. Decentralisation is also very important. A three-tier system of government was envisaged: national, provincial and local. In addition, equal representation, cultural and linguistic rights and the pluralisation of the official language are fundamental pillars of South Africa with 10 official languages being designated.

Another successful example is the Philippines. It is an example we want to examine closely, but with very different from the conditions in Turkey. The (MNLF) Moro National Liberation Front set out with the aim of seceding from Mindanao and establishing an independent state. Ultimately an autonomous region was established, but the conflicts continued nonetheless. What makes the Philippines case different was the existence of third parties and facilitators, who had been very decisive. When I asked President Al Haj Murad, "You went from one crisis to another, repeatedly starting over but failing each time. When did things finally get back on track?" he explained, "It was when we brought in the 'third eye'—the facilitators—that things began to improve." Contact groups were formed, including Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and even Turkey, and a humanitarian dialogue centre was established. In this context, it is clear that the facilitators made a significant contribution to the process. The Turkish representative played an active role and the first symbolic laying down of arms took place under his supervision.

 Another important aspect for the Philippines is the Bangsamoro Transition Commission and the basic law it has drafted. The Transition Commission has played a key role in moving the process forward through the basic law. This law was drafted according to specific principles, such as ensuring it does not contradict the Bangsamoro Basic Agreement or conflict with the constitution. However, after the law was drafted, some of its provisions were annulled by the constitutional court on the grounds that they were unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the process has reached a noteworthy stage with the subsequent conclusion of a new agreement and the adoption of a revised version of the law. In addition, in the Philippines, particularly in the Mindanao region, there have been quite intensive and active efforts towards the socialisation of the process. Although Mindanao, where Muslims primarily live, is quite isolated from the rest of the country and this initially limited participation, it has nonetheless experienced a significant process of socialisation within the region itself. Since the adoption of the Bangsamoro Basic Law in Congress and Following the positive outcome of the referendum, for example, it was determined that 30 per cent of weapons would be surrendered, that a further 35 per cent would be surrendered after decisions regarding the police, and that the remaining 35 per cent would be surrendered once all stages had been completed. When we visited the autonomous region, we observed that both the security forces and the administrative officials, including the governor of the autonomous region, were doing a very good job.

The conflict that began in Colombia in the 1950s, broadly speaking, is not ethnic or religious in nature, but rather class-based. The conflict has been between the Communist Party and various organisations that emerged in its wake and the state. Facilitating actors have also been involved in this process. However, perhaps the most striking element is the much more prominent role played by secrecy. Indeed, the negotiations were conducted in Cuba, not Colombia, which was an important factor influencing the course of the process. Venezuela and Norway played important roles. Perhaps this part is important in the talks with the FARC. The main topics of negotiation were rural development, political participation, drug issues, and legal reform. Political participation was seen as possible only in this particular way, partly because of the principle of equality. The problems in the region are very complex. I observed this during my visit, where I saw a tense atmosphere marked by conflicts, criminal organisations, kidnappings, and other serious issues. Despite these challenges, people were able to find solutions and resolve problems under this very difficult environment.

During my meeting with Santos, I noticed the following: a high-ranking official who had served in defence for years had pinned dove badge, to his lapel and was very determined. As you know, a referendum was held, and the people responded with a "no" vote because they were not sufficiently involved or prepared, but despite this, the process was completed, largely completed, thanks to Santos's fortitude and determination. Now, let me outline the common principles for peace processes once again. Firstly, we need a good design for peacebuilding and developing original methods appropriate to national conditions is very important. A strong, determined political will is very crucial. Mental transformation is very important, transforming the mindset, and most importantly – let this be a message from our Commission – developing a perspective that goes beyond political calculations and current politics. So let us try to view the process, that construction, all the measures that need to be taken, on its own, free from all political calculations.

Another issue is the need not to emphasise red lines, not to create frameworks, because it can be very difficult to overcome frameworks later; this is also a principle. It is necessary to clearly identify the possibilities for a "win-win" solution. Clear communication is mutually beneficial and can prevents deadlocks from arising. Various channels like confidential discussions may be a good approach in cases of very significant deadlocks. It is vital to clearly define periods of confidentiality and transparency. A clear timetable is needed. It won't work by spreading it out over time and leaving it to chance. It is important to make the process understandable and to simplify it. Trust should not be set as a precondition; trust will develop later and over time, but confidence-building measures should be accompanied. The most important thing in the dialogue and negotiation process is to move the process forward and to seize the right momentum. Another is the adaptation of political decisions to the law. This is precisely where this Commission's place is very important. Security issues must progress in parallel with legal steps. In the Philippine experience, for example, when the process became very complex, the approach was to proceed within the framework of the basic law.

Successful peacebuilding requires good governance and the use of the right language. It is important not to demonise the other side, to use language in the most sensitive way possible. To choose words that do not hurt anyone or offend their honour. The concepts used must always be determined in accordance with the sensitivities of the other side Facilitators are important. Until now, we have said, "We will resolve this ourselves." Of course, technical support is needed at every stage; this is a natural requirement of the process. However, this does not mean that others will interfere in our process. Seeking support from knowledgeable and experienced individuals and institutions will strengthen the quality of the process. It is extremely important to be creative when reaching a final agreement and to develop different and, in particular, unique tools. In this context, not limiting ourselves to just one commission, but also forming sub-commissions to conduct more in-depth studies, will make significant

contributions to the process. For example, while some work on the legal aspects, others can work on the socialisation aspects, and yet others can work on international experiences. With such committees and specialised teams, the process will proceed more smoothly. I believe we can achieve this, but first, we must remember what needs to be done in the short, medium, and long term. The work on this issue needs to be properly safe guarded. We are discussing it here, and I am not sure whether we have any guarantees, but this needs to be ensured. The commission should work on this, including matters related to its own security. Appropriate safeguards need to be established. Legal regulations should be put in place to address security and intelligence matters, as well as the requirements of those areas.

Confidence-building measures could include legal steps that make the release of political detainees and prisoners possible; this could begin with the necessary changes to criminal law. In the medium and long term, ensuring that the Charter of Local Self-Government is implemented in its true sense. Removing inconsistencies and reservations with the Charter. Legal changes may be made in this direction. These may be proposed to the General Assembly, and excellent proposals may be sent from here to Parliament and the General Assembly. While there is room for improvement in the development of local democracy, it should be borne in mind that ensuring democracy or opportunities for representation at the local level is one of the indispensable conditions for reaching a solution. Let me remind you of an additional protocol to a treaty: Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights is a protocol on the prevention of all forms of discrimination. We have signed it but not ratified it; we can ratify it. Its ratification can be proposed, and this can be proposed from this committee. If this proposal goes ahead, as you know, in accordance with Article 90 of the Constitution, in the event of a conflict between international treaties that have entered into force in accordance with the procedure and the application of laws in Turkey, we have to give priority to the provisions of the treaties. and it is precisely at this point that Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights can be considered a way of weeding out laws in our legislation that could lead to discrimination or marginalisation. Yes, the transformation at the legal level should be thought of as a kind of clearing the way.

I will give a counterexample : When the 1982 Constitution came into effect, it is important to remember that between 1980 and 1982, until the first Presidential Council was formed in Parliament, a large number of laws were passed. All of these laws were, in fact, a form of preparation for the 1982 Constitution and ultimately culminated in it. In other words, as a result of these anti-democratic laws, we ended up with an anti-democratic constitution. Now, the exact opposite can be done, meaning that with simple, straightforward legislative changes aimed precisely at solving this problem, we can expect good constitutional amendments in the next step. I am aware that we will encounter difficulties in the process of constitutional amendments. Today, Turkey is faced with examples of constitution-making in the context of a polarised society; therefore, it may be necessary to implement the changes gradually, as was the case in South Africa. However, are there specific provisions that could directly finalise the solution or reinforce the steps needed to achieve it.

The issue of mother-tongue education in Article 42 can be addressed with an appropriate formulation; similarly, Article 66 can be reformulated, and there is no obstacle to this. Therefore, there is no impediment to the creation of a limited package of amendments comprising 3–4 articles that would reinforce the process. To begin with, a "clean slate" approach can be adopted; the starting point should not be considered an immutable boundary. Although the immutable provisions refer to the beginning, the beginning is no longer part of the immutable section because we made a number of changes at the beginning in 1995 and again in 2001. The preamble of the 1982 Constitution should be rewritten in literary language, in language oriented towards peace. This is something that can be done entirely without any changes; Article 42, Article 66. In Article 127, the provisions relating to administrative guardianship can be reformulated and the way opened for local democracy.

This Commission is capable of achieving these, We trust you, and we are ready to support you. Thank you.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. ÇERAČ ESRA ÇUHADAR –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable members of the National Solidarity, Brotherhood and Democracy Commission, esteemed colleagues and listeners; I would first like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this process as an expert researching these issues and for allowing me to witness one of the important historical milestones our country is going through.

For approximately twenty-five years, I have been studying peace processes and researching their various dimensions. My work in this field has taken me to many different regions of the world where conflicts exist. Our research project, which examined how forty separate peace processes were conducted, has gained widespread recognition in the international literature. Furthermore, over the past four to five years, I have had the opportunity to provide high-level consultancy on how to design similar peace processes in the mediation units of the United Nations and the OSCE. During these years, I had the opportunity to examine and contribute to numerous processes, from Venezuela to Cameroon, Afghanistan to Palestine, South Sudan and Colombia. Today, I would like to share with you some points that I believe could be useful from our perspective, drawn from my comparative research and international experience. As previous speakers have said, ending armed conflicts that have lasted for many years and have complex causes involves various steps spread out over time. These steps can be considered in the short, medium and long term. Although each process has its own specific circumstances, as you have also mentioned, we observe that almost all of them share some of the dimensions mentioned by the previous speakers.

Firstly, a peace process requires careful planning and implementation of various steps. I divide these into three main categories: issues, managing relations with actors, and the architecture and design of the process. In my presentation, I will focus more on process architecture design, which is my area of expertise, and this will be more at the micro level, as Havva Hoca mentioned. Honourable Members of Parliament, there is no example of achieving lasting peace in a very short time and with a single step. It is natural and necessary for different steps to be implemented at different times and for these to be tied to a timetable. Meanwhile, building trust – as Professor Betül also said – is one of the most critical issues, and confidence-building measures are an inevitable part of the process. The successful process between the Colombian Government and the armed group FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) took five years just to reach an agreement, a process that began in 2011. The final version of the agreement was put to a referendum in 2016 and failed to gain majority support. The agreement was then revised and this time submitted to parliament for approval, where it was accepted. Public support only began to rise once the issues were clarified and the FARC agreed to disarm. The implementation of the agreement's content is still ongoing. In short, these types of processes require patience. I often liken these processes to an accordion; sometimes requiring the support and participation of social groups and needing to expand, sometimes continuing among the elite and needing to contract.

At this point, the most critical element is the demonstration of persistent and stable will by all actors. Looking at examples from around the world, we see that some issues are common to all processes, while others vary depending on the root causes of the conflict. DDR issues arise in almost every process involving an armed group, but the specific challenges and solutions may differ once the context-specific root causes are identified. For example, in Colombia, key issues included ending cocaine production, addressing landlessness among peasants, and developing alternative, participatory models of development. In contrast, in Northern Ireland, a major concern was the Protestant domination of the police force and reforming the police force to ensure greater representation of Catholics and other

segments of society a pressing issue. Therefore, one of the critical objectives in a peace process is to identify the root causes of the conflict and work to address them. In cases where lasting peace has been achieved, this approach is a common feature.

Liberia is a successful example of lasting peace, initially established a main commission similar to this Commission. This commission conducted a nationwide study to identify the fundamental causes that triggered the conflict. This commission is conducting a nationwide study to identify the root causes of the conflict. Based on this study, specific issues are then determined, such as the dual legal system, among others. Following this, independent and inclusive commissions are established, bringing together technical experts and politicians to examine each issue in detail and develop solutions. Regarding the issues addressed in the resolution processes, Professor Betül mentioned them earlier, and I will continue with some examples, focusing more on Colombia. The DDR process between the Colombian Government and the FARC has been being carried out by establishing safe zones for the return of approximately 13,000 FARC members, about a thousand of whom are in Venezuela. How these special areas will be selected, their logistics, how they will be monitored and protected are being decided. In the first stage, after surrendering their weapons here, they are required to reside in designated areas, and then gradual programmes to reintegrate members into society are planned. After first collecting demographic and health information, they are transferred to these controlled gathering and living areas. Entry and exit to these areas is controlled, and only close family members are permitted to enter. Weapons are collected and locked away here, with the keys to the weapon safes left solely with a United Nations observer. Another important point is that this process is monitored and verified by a neutral party trusted by both sides and possessing the technical capacity to do so.

In Colombia, the government did not want to involve anyone in this process for a very long time. However, they spent about a year conducting research and concluded that the UN has the technical capacity they required. They found an interesting solution by creating a tripartite mechanism. In each meeting region, a tripartite decision-making body made up of a representative from the Colombian government, a representative from FARC, and a technical officer from the UN. Together, this trio carries out the process. Later, they address the issue of how the lives of those who have laid down their arms will be shaped going forward. To this end, experts and researchers from the university conduct a comprehensive survey and interview study with the organisation's members, asking them what they want to do. Their future plans are shaped accordingly, and the members who lay down their arms are asked to sign a letter of commitment. This letter is a pledge that they will not take up arms against the state again, and after signing it, they are given citizenship documents and identity cards. Throughout this DDR process, 90 per cent of the 13,000 former organisation members have fulfilled their commitments, but in recent years, 10 per cent have not adhered to the agreement by joining radical groups that have split from the FARC or by joining criminal organisations. Armed or legal action continues against them.

Again in Colombia – as Professor Betül mentioned – another important aspect of the process, apart from DDR, is political participation. One of the most important issues in the peace process here is how the FARC will transform into a legitimate political party in exchange for laying down its arms, the guarantee of representation in Parliament in the first stage, and the issues and laws regulating its participation in elections over time. Again, in Northern Ireland, Professor Sevtap touched on how political power would be shared between the two social groups, so I will move on. The third dimension, an important issue, as Professor Betül said, is the issue of law and justice, as Professor Sevtap also said, so I will move on quickly. In Colombia this process differs somewhat from other processes, and I believe this is an important difference. It is the only process that places victims at the centre, i.e., a process that operates on the axis of human security or humanitarian security. Generally, while armed groups dominate such processes, the needs and demands of civilians and victims can be pushed into the background. Northern

Ireland, for example, has been a much-criticised process in this regard. However, placing civilians and victims at the centre of the solution, both by the state and the FARC, is important in convincing society and strongly conveys the message that peace will be a gain for ordinary citizens.

The fourth dimension, the socio-economic dimension, which we touched upon, is particularly important in Colombia. Here, they are developing participatory, development-oriented methods. There are provisions related to local land reform, known as "PDET," and so on. Now, I would like to return to the process's architecture and design that I mentioned earlier in my opening remarks. The issues here can be listed as follows:

1. Ensuring that the process and the solutions it brings are embraced by broad sections of society is very important.
2. Effectively managing actors who seek to disrupt the process.
3. Deciding to what extent confidentiality will be maintained at which points in the process, at which points social transparency will be pursued, and how the proposed solutions and regulations can be presented for social approval.

We refer to peace processes that aim to involve relevant segments of society at different points in the process in order to achieve these gains as "inclusive peace processes." Inclusive processes, based on a sound and solid foundation, pave the way for lasting peace by securing public support. Achieving lasting peace is one of the greatest challenges of today's peace processes. According to data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, approximately 40 per cent of peace agreements fail to be implemented within 0-5 years of being signed. Many peace processes have experienced multiple failures, and there are numerous examples of this: in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Somalia, peace agreements have been signed repeatedly, but conflicts have resumed before they could be implemented. On the other hand, processes such as those in Indonesia, Aceh, Liberia, and Northern Ireland have achieved lasting peace. One of the most important factors enabling the successful implementation of peace processes is, as I mentioned earlier, their ability to generate social consent and secure public support. So, thinking about it from this perspective, the Northern Ireland peace process, for example, achieved 70 per cent support for the agreement in the referendum, despite all the difficulties. Therefore, the participation of social actors in the process is, as I said, critical in terms of increasing the legitimacy of the process, securing public support for the process, and reducing the influence of actors who could sabotage the process.

Furthermore, studies show that when civil society actors and political parties are included in peace processes, peace is more sustainable in the long term. A statistical analysis of 83 peace agreements indicates that when these actors are involved in peace processes, the risk of peace breaking down decreases by 64%. A possible explanation for these findings is that social participation lends greater legitimacy to peace processes. Now, I will touch upon how this social participation is achieved. There is often an excessive focus on the negotiation process, the table, as the main trajectory of the peace process. However, an inclusive peace process is much more than just a negotiation. The participation of social actors can occur at different stages of the process. My Swiss colleague Thania Paffenholz and I examined 40 peace processes, as I mentioned earlier, and identified six participation models that show how different social groups participate in peace processes. These are as follows:

1. The first model is direct participation, where social actors participate directly in the negotiations. This occurs in two ways: either through the participation of these actors in the main negotiating teams or through what we call national dialogue conferences. For example, A method implemented by the UN in Yemen in 2013-14.

2. The second model involves granting observer status to certain social actors. observer status. This is sometimes granted to selected groups, such as women's groups and civil society groups in Liberia; sometimes certain parts of the sessions are open to the media.
3. The third is consultations: Consultations can be held formally and can be an official part of the negotiations, as in Guatemala, which I will elaborate on shortly, or they can be held informally with small groups, as in Kenya, or they can be more public, like our wise people, our wise council, which is a consultation model.
4. The fourth model is commissions: I will elaborate on this a little later, as I am moving quickly.
5. The fifth model is what we call problem-solving workshops, which Betül briefly mentioned earlier. These workshops are interactive, generally not open to the public, and conducted in confidence. They provide a safe and comfortable space where representatives close to the decision-makers of the conflicting parties can come together in an informal setting to discuss various critical issues without the pressure of reaching an agreement.
6. We could say that the sixth model is public votes and referendums, but this is a highly controversial topic in the literature

Now, looking at successful processes... The most commonly used method – as identified in our research – is consultations, and the second most commonly used method is commissions. Successful processes are generally a combination of these models; they are not mutually exclusive methods. Let me give you an example from the process in Guatemala: In the successful peace process between the Guatemalan Government and the armed organisation URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity), different models of social participation were used at different stages of the process between 1989 and 1996. In addition to the narrow and closed negotiations between elites that began with secret talks in 1989, the Civil Society Consultation Forum was officially established in 1994. This was a parallel forum, running alongside the negotiations, which brought together all civil society actors to contribute to the process. The recommendations here are conveyed to the small-scale negotiations and decision-makers and play a significant role in shaping the agreement. They offer solutions that focus more on root causes. Subsequently, during the implementation phase of the process, the Human Rights Commission is established between 1997 and 1999. Finally, in 1999, the different components of the agreement are put to a public vote. Now, the most frequently used structure in this process architecture is consultations – as I mentioned – followed by the second most common model, commissions.

The implementation of all the steps we have discussed in these areas often occurs through independent and inclusive commissions. In our research, we identified a total of 580 independent commissions in various peace processes worldwide between 1990 and 2016. For example, in Northern Ireland, 5 out of 9 commissions are independent commissions operating in the process. These are the Independent Commission on the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the International Disarmament Commission, the Independent Monitoring Commission, the Past Advisory Group, and the Human Rights Commission. Similiarly, in Liberia, 9-10 independent commissions, 4 of which are inclusive, are implementing the agreement. So, how should commissions be designed to contribute to lasting peace? Commissions in peace processes can be established in different ways. In the literature, we refer to commissions that are not under the control of the executive, have the authority to act independently, or include independent members outside of bureaucratic and political appointments as "independent commissions". Independent commissions are generally not under the full control of the executive authority that appoints them; in fact, they often include external participants, as is the case here, and they usually report directly to a high authority, such as parliament or the president, rather than to a minister or government department. Commissions are generally appointed by special laws. This ensures their resilience once established.

In recent research, we found and emphasised the importance of inclusivity in independent commissions and identified that power sharing and an inclusive approach in such structures are directly related to the non-recurrence of violence. Inclusive commissions contribute most to lasting peace compared to the other six models of inclusivity. A commission can be formed inclusively according to the degree of social and political representation, as is the case with this commission. Women, civil society groups, and a broad range of political party representation all contribute to calling this a "inclusive commission." We see that these can be established and function at every stage. They can be present during the preparatory and initial stages for planning the process, during the negotiation process to resolve certain crises, or to monitor and implement decisions taken after an agreement. Again, we see commissions being established on all kinds of thematic issues. The most common ones we see are DDR and disarmament commissions, which focus solely on this task. Human rights commissions, socio-economic reform commissions, constitutional commissions, and so on. All of these are examples of commissions established during peace processes. So, what contributions did we find that commissions made to the process? In other words, how do commissions contribute to a peace process?

First, commissions contribute by building bridges between different segments of society and between different stages of the peace process. They contribute by connecting the different levels of that pyramid you saw earlier. Secondly, they create new institutional spaces for cooperation. Through these institutions, which are not tied to the electoral cycle, politically difficult and unpopular decisions can be made more easily, which contributes to trust building and overcoming the problem of commitment in peace processes. Thus, these commissions ensure consistency, reliability and continuity in the process. When commission members include independent actors and decision-making processes are conducted through consensus, they contribute to overcoming polarised environments. A positive correlation was found between consensus-based decision-making in the commission and the non-renewal of conflict. Furthermore, we identified impartial commission chairmanship as another factor that reduces the likelihood of conflict recurrence. Commissions also offer an advantage in complex, sensitive, and technically specialised areas such as security and legal regulations, as they can bring together policymakers and technical experts. Finally, another research finding: we found a strong positive correlation between the establishment of a special commission on security, particularly in the monitoring and verification process with DDR, and the non-recurrence of violence.

Now, looking at the classification of these 580 commissions I mentioned, where does our Commission fit in? First, the first group of commissions: The type we see most often are commissions established for this purpose in the monitoring and implementation phases; this is the most common group of commissions. One of the most important among these is the National Peace Commission established in South Africa. This commission was tasked with monitoring and supervising the implementation of the National Peace Agreement, which was in force between 1991 and 1994. This commission is the main commission in the South African process. Apart from this, there are many other examples where DDR commissions – as I said – are being established.

The second group consists of commissions established for transitional justice or human rights issues. Most of you will have heard of these; the famous truth and reconciliation commissions and so on. The third group we identified consists of commissions related to political reform. Now, we mentioned "root causes"; these are commissions established to identify and implement reforms addressing the underlying political issues at the heart of the conflict. For example, in Liberia, the Governance Reform Commission was established after the 2003 Accra Agreement. This is a very important commission in terms of resolving the problem. This commission aims to establish a government system structure that is responsive to the interests of the Liberian people, accountable, transparent and inclusive in the delivery of public services. This is the official definition. The fourth and less common type of commission

is the "technical preparation and dispute resolution" commissions. These commissions are established to consult with various social actors in order to determine the steps and roadmap of peace processes, and to support the peace process in various ways, particularly by resolving crises.

Some of these commissions, within the scope of their duties, also intervene to resolve disagreements between actors in the peace process. An example of this is the National Coordination Commission established during the preparatory process for the National Reconciliation Conference during the Somali peace talks. This commission holds discussions with various actors from Somali civil society – like this Commission – and in this context, it acts as an active bridge between the community and decision-makers and negotiators. Commissions in this category generally serve as commissions that conduct these consultations, convey the results of the consultations to decision-makers and negotiators, and plan the rest of the process. Finally, there are several key factors affecting the success of commissions, as revealed in the research. The first of these is the implementation of the commission and its decisions. South Africa and Liberia are successful examples, but in these cases, everything is implemented very smoothly, with only minor hiccups, so to speak. On the other hand, for example, an inclusive commission is being established in Burundi, but it is very weak, and there is no political will to allow its implementation or the implementation of its decisions and the process is failing. The second important point is the development of mechanisms, methods, and strategies that will enable commissions to successfully connect the decision-making level with the community level such as the National Peace Commission in the South Africa.

The third important success factor relates to how commission members are selected. It is crucial that criteria, such as objective criteria, are agreed upon in advance. Fourthly, the selection process for commission members must be fair and approved by all parties. Quotas can sometimes be used, proportional distribution. reflects, commission members are appointed with diversity in mind. Sometimes different appointment methods are used; for example, nomination is one method, direct election by the public or election by a broader assembly or council is another method, merit-based appointment is another method, and an open application process is another method; the most common appointment method we see. This is the method used, for example, by the equality commission established under the Northern Ireland peace agreement. I will conclude my presentation by making a few suggestions in the last minute I have left. The commission's mandate and expected outcomes must be clear; it should not be expected that a single commission will carry out all the steps that need to be taken during the different phases of a multilayered peace process. The commission should reach consensus on designing and planning the process, deciding what the next steps will be, and agreeing on a roadmap for these. Within the scope of this roadmap, it can make recommendations on what steps will be taken later, what structures are needed for these processes, and perhaps what other commissions might be. When determining the steps to be taken in subsequent stages and the roadmap, as in the examples given here, focusing on and resolving the root causes of conflict in determining the areas of work should be a goal for other commissions and structures to be established. For example, a commission involving technical experts on DDR could take on such a task. In particular, it could monitor and follow up on the implementation of this.

The consensus-based decision-making process adopted by the commission is, as I said, very important in terms of building trust. Other commissions may also discuss and decide on other confidence-building measures. My colleagues have given other examples, but let me give one example on DDR: in Colombia where a small area is selected and the state's armed forces and members of armed organisations work together to clear this area of mines, and this area is then opened to civilian access. This is very important. It is an example of an important confidence-building step that increases social support. Finally, consideration should be given to how the commission structures can be combined with other models,

such as consultation, observer status, and other creative models, and how they can be used harmoniously together. Expectations from the final process, especially expectation management in the eyes of society, should be considered and planned. - what we call "expectation management" in the literature - is of critical importance. Therefore, the Commission should again adopt an effective public communication method based on consensus.

Thank you very much.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. VAHAP COŞKUN -

Dear Chairman and esteemed members of the National Solidarity, Brotherhood and Democracy Commission; I am grateful for the invitation. First of all, I would like to commend the Speaker of Parliament, Numan Kurtulmuş, who has played a major role in the formation and advancement of the Commission's activities with his approach based on reconciliation and dialogue, and you, the esteemed members of the Commission, who continue your work with great dedication. I also extend my best wishes to all individuals and organizations that have contributed to this process and supported efforts to find a solution.

The Kurdish issue is an age-old problem; it is as old as the Republic and, unfortunately, has not yet been resolved. A century of experience has shown that this issue causes serious damage both internally and externally. The Kurdish issue weakens the bonds that hold society together in harmony. Economically, it is draining resources, with costs estimated to be trillions of dollars. Funds that should have been allocated to the country's education, health and infrastructure. In politics, it sharpens polarisation and makes it difficult to find reasonable solutions. "Legally, it lowers the standard for fundamental rights and freedoms and fosters widespread lawlessness. In foreign policy, it constitutes Turkey's soft underbelly. Those who intend to destabilise Turkey or prevent it from becoming a powerful actor are attempting to restrict Turkey's room for manoeuvre through this issue.

When these increasingly damaging issues are considered as a whole, it can be said that the Kurdish issue is one that defines the character of the regime in Turkey. Therefore, this issue should not be confined to daily political disputes. Given its potential to shape the present and future of society, it must be addressed from a broader perspective and with a more historical view. In this regard, two points must always be kept in mind:

The first point is that Turkey is not in a unique position in dealing with an ethno-political problem such as the Kurdish issue. My colleagues have given many examples in the previous session and in this session. They illustrated that political communities in many parts of the world are grappling with such problems. Confronting ethno-political issues and considering them as legitimate or illegitimate part of political negotiation is not an exception but a norm in this day and age; it is not an accident but a rule. In this day and age, confronting ethno-political issues and treating them as either formal or informal parts of political negotiation is not an exception, but rather the established norm. In short, the existence of ethno-political issues is universal. Wherever it occurs, if a social group feels excluded and victimised, it will resist. Resistance sometimes does not involve violence and takes place in the democratic arena as a non-violent conflict. Sometimes it becomes violent and paves the way for bloody conflict. Once a conflict begins, certain demands come to the forefront, and the resolution of the conflict is often tied to their fulfilment. The demands proposed to resolve conflicts are, in most cases, similar.

Almost universally, these processes generally revolve around the same demands. There are essentially three demands:

a) Reorganisation of the administrative system and distribution of power
b) Recognition and protection of rights and freedoms
c) Sharing material and spiritual sources of power.

In the Kurdish issue too – leaving disarmament aside – it is possible to say that the demands are along these lines. Here, too, there are three prominent demands.

a) The free use of the mother tongue, primarily in education,
b) Inclusive and egalitarian constitutional citizenship,
c) A stronger local government system.

A solution will be one that, in the long term, establishes a minimal consensus on the legal and constitutional changes needed to address these demands

The second point is that, while learning the necessary lessons from global experiences, we must also recognise the value of our own experiences. Turkey is not attempting to get the PKK to lay down its arms for the first time. Since the late Turgut Özal's first attempt in 1993, the state has attempted many times to disarm the organization through negotiations. All governments, from Süleyman Demirel to Tansu Çiller, from Necmettin Erbakan to Mesut Yılmaz, from Bülent Ecevit to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, made efforts to disarm the organisation. Although these efforts did not yield the expected results, a significant body of knowledge was accumulated. We must make use of this knowledge.

During the 2013-2015 attempt at a solution, as an academic who happened to be working in this field and as a member of the Wise Persons' Committee[1], I was assigned to the Central Anatolia Region, where I had the opportunity to follow the process very closely, with all its successes and failures. In a study I conducted during that period and published with the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI), I identified six risk areas that threatened the process.

The first was that the actors leading attached different meanings to the process. The government and the PKK understood the process differently. When the government referred to the "process," it meant ending the armed struggle and discussing demands within the framework of democratic politics. In contrast, the PKK wanted the demands that formed the basis of the Kurdish issue to be negotiated with them

Secondly, tensions arising from domestic politics had a negative impact on the resolution process. The political atmosphere, heightened by incidents such as Gezi Park, the 17/25 December Operations and Kobani, had diminished interest in a resolution among certain circles. In particular, reactions directed at the government had, over time, taken the form of a reaction against the resolution process. In other words, opposition to the government had turned into opposition to the process.

Thirdly, there were problems stemming from the language used between the parties and a lack of coordination. The harsh language used by both sides sometimes undermined confidence in the solution and damaged the moderate atmosphere that the process required. There was also a clear lack of coordination between the parties. Sometimes, statements made after bilateral meetings contradicted each other, and occasionally both sides allowed certain issues that could easily have been resolved to persist. These problems were undermining the process.

Fourthly, there was a breach of public order. The conflict-free environment was exploited by the PKK and its youth wing, the YDGH (Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement), to establish control and exert

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[1] A committee comprised of intellectuals, artists, and former politicians formed to facilitate dialogue, build trust, and promote reconciliation between the Turkish state and Kurdish communities.

pressure on individuals in the region. This further fuelled complaints about the process. Activities such as roadblocks, identity checks, burning construction machinery, kidnappings, trials, tax collection and punishment

eroded the hopes for a solution among Kurds and seriously undermined confidence in the process.

Fifthly, it was the failure to produce responses to the changing conditions in Syria. Turkey was alarmed by PKK linked PYD (Democratic Union Party), gaining dominance in parts of Syria and saw this as an existential issue. The PKK, on the other hand, placed more value on having a de facto sphere of power in Syria than on the resolution process in Turkey. Preserving an existing power base became more important than working towards an imagined peace. As the gap between the parties widened, it became impossible to continue the process.

Sixthly, there was the poor use of time. On the one hand, the process was being conducted with an eye on the election, with the actors taking each step with electoral interests in mind. When the requirements of the process conflicted with those of the election, they took decisions and actions that could have adverse consequences for the process, prioritising the maximum benefit they could gain from the election. Conversely, it was also unclear which side would take which step and when within the process.

It is inevitable that every process will contain mistakes, but what is important is to learn from those errors and not repeat them. Therefore, in this process, we must not repeat the mistakes of the past and fall into the same pits again. In other words, in this process:
- The ultimate goal of the process must be defined,
- Efforts should be made to ensure that internal political disputes do not negatively impact the process,
- Maximum attention should be paid to the use of language and coordination,
- No concessions should be made on public order,
- New policies appropriate to the conditions in Syria must be determined, and
- Care must be taken in the use of time.

The path Turkey is following today is different from the past. Disarmament, which is usually considered the final step in such processes, has been brought to the agenda as the first step here. If this is achieved, a model called the "Turkish Model" will be added to the literature on the resolution process.

In the process that began on 1 October 2024 with the bold move by MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, Turkey passed through important historical crossroads. At the call of its leader Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK disbanded and symbolically burned its weapons. There has been intense public debate about why the PKK laid down its arms, and this debate continues. In discussing this question, particular attention is given to the significant advances in weapons technology, the progress of Turkey's defence industry, and the changing nature of the conflict, with some drawing connections between these developments and the PKK's decision to lay down arms..

Of course, the impact of these developments on the PKK's decision to lay down its arms can be pointed out. However, evaluating the PKK's decision to lay down its arms solely from this perspective prevents us from seeing the whole picture. I believe there are deeper reasons behind this decision. Three reasons can be highlighted:

Firstly, there is a general consensus that 41 years of conflict have solved nothing. The solution lies not in arms but in democratic politics. The clearest indication of this is the unequivocal rejection by Kurds of the PKK's strategy of bringing the conflict to the cities in 2015-2016.

Secondly, much water has flowed under the bridge of politics since 1990. On the one hand, the Kurdish issue has taken centre stage in Turkish politics; on the other, a movement championing Kurdish demands has become a decisive actor in both national and local politics. As it gains momentum and supporters, it is only natural that politics became the sole means to which the people turn for a solution.

Thirdly, Kurdish sociology has undergone a major transformation. We are not talking about the sociology of the 1970s or 1990s. There is now a more urban, more literate, more middle class Kurdish sociology that is more attached to its Kurdish identity but at the same time more integrated into broader Turkish society. In this sociology, women are becoming increasingly influential in political and social life. Areas of popular culture are expanding and different channels are opening up for the struggle for identity. All of this removes weapons as an option and increases the appeal of politics. Taking into consideration of this shift, it can be said that PKK's decision to lay down arms has become a strategic decision rather than a tactical one.

It goes without saying that the Syrian arena holds particular significance for this process. Currently, developments in Syria pose the greatest risk to the resolution process. For roughly a year now, events in Turkey have been unfolding along a different course compared to the past. Therefore, Syria and the actors in Syria cannot be viewed through the same lens as before. Turkey must be confident about the Kurds within its own borders and should not feel suspicion, concern or unease about the gains of Kurds outside its borders. Turkey must not repeat in Syria the mistakes it made in the past during the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. Like the Iraqi Kurds, the Syrian Kurds are not a threat to Turkey, but an opportunity. For years, it was said that a Kurdistan Administration in Iraq would be a great danger to Turkey, but the Kurdistan Administration became Turkey's greatest ally in the region.

Turkey can cooperate with the Syrian Democratic Forces just as it does with the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. A network of close relations similar to, or even broader than, the one established with the Iraqi Kurds today can be established with the Syrian Kurds tomorrow. This is because the Syrian Kurds are sociologically closer to Turkey than the Iraqi Kurds. Turkey should establish a more constructive relationship with the SDF. This would bolster domestic efforts towards a solution and strengthen Turkey's hand in the region. Naturally, Turkey will maintain its relations with the Damascus government, but in doing so, it should also increase its contact with other groups. In the process of the emergence of a new Syrian state, Turkey siding with one party while opposing another is not the right policy. Turkey should be able to talk to all parties in Syria and bring them together around a table. A policy that is multilateral and takes on the role of honest brokerage could make Turkey a guarantor country in Syria.

Every conflict is unique, and every solution has its own characteristics. If we are to build a solution, it will be our solution. Managing the psychological environment on the path to a solution is vital. There are many delicate tasks that need to be carried out to prepare people psychologically for a solution and peace. It would be useful to recall some of these:
- First, confidence-building measures should be taken to strengthen the sense of trust among the parties.
- Second, a zero-sum view of the conflict where the perception that the solution benefits one side and disadvantages the other must be prevented, and the view that the solution will benefit everyone must be established.

- Third, careful attention must be paid to the importance of language. A language that prioritises the solution and takes into account the sensitivities of different social groups must be used.
- Fourth, political actors must stand firm in the face of criticism and attacks. One of the most important differences between successful and unsuccessful processes is the presence of strong political will behind the successful ones.
- Fifth, the process should not be conducted based solely on two sides; as many actors as possible should be involved in the process. Symbols are important. Women, young people, workers, employers, etc., different social groups should be made stakeholders in the process by finding a way. Civil society can play a critical role here.
- Sixth, it must be understood that even if this process is successful, not all problems will be solved. One must refrain from placing heavy political burdens and all social goals on the shoulders of the process. One must avoid attempting to realise all political or ideological visions through the process. The process is not a magic wand.

Even if a solution is reached, intellectual debates, ideological divisions and lifestyle differences will continue. However, the struggle between these differences and divisions will be conducted through politics and the ballot box, not through weapons.

We must not lose sight of reality. In my opinion, a conflict resolution process should have two fundamental objectives: to stop the conflict – that is, to remove the weapons from circulation – and to work towards eliminating the causes of the conflict over time. In this context, the role of the National Solidarity, Brotherhood and Democracy Commission is crucial and the commissions activities have demonstrated to the public that there is consensus on three point:

The first is political consensus. The Commission, named the National Solidarity, Brotherhood and Democracy Commission, has a strong political foundation. The fact that political parties representing over 90 per cent of the public have agreed to participate in this commission demonstrates the great importance these parties attach to resolving this issue, contributes to political consensus, and ensures that the regulations to be implemented in this process have strong legitimacy.

The second is bureaucratic consensus. The fact that the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of National Defence and the Head of the National Intelligence Organisation briefed the commission is important in terms of demonstrating that there is full bureaucratic support and that the process is being treated as state policy. Indeed, there was no such agreement in 2013-2015. There was internal state conflict and resistance to the process, which was a fundamental factor in its failure.

Thirdly, there is social consensus. Reliable public opinion polls show that more than two-thirds of our people support this process, which will establish brotherhood in our country. However, despite the high level of support, the level of trust is still far from the desired level. This situation imposes a twofold duty on the Commission in particular and on those who support the process in general: those who want the process to proceed smoothly must, on the one hand, strive to consolidate the segments that have a positive approach to the process. On the other hand, they must make an effort to understand and address the hesitations of those segments that have concerns, anxieties and fears about the process.

The Commission's work has involved opposition parties part of the process, while also creating an opportunity for ruling parties to share the risks of the process with the opposition. The positive attitude of the opposition is of great value. Despite being diametrically opposed to the ruling party on many issues, opposition parties have not shied away from participating in the Commission. They have not

turned their opposition to the ruling party into opposition to the process. In this regard, the leaders of all opposition parties who have lent their support to the Commission deserve credit. To date, the Commission has both served as a repository of memory on this issue and become a platform for different segments of society to voice their democratic demands. The value of these efforts in making the process more inclusive and broadening the pool of support should be recognised.

However, the Commission's ability to fulfil its responsibilities adequately depends on the careful definition of its remit. It would be neither fair nor functional to assign enormous tasks to the Commission, such as resolving all of our country's structural problems, meeting all of the people's democratic demands, or drafting a new constitution. In such a case, it would be impossible for the Commission to work or make decisions. The Commission's primary task is to record the memory of the past and democratic demands, while also preparing and presenting to Parliament a bill that is in line with the spirit of the process and will completely dismantle the weapons. There are two ways to achieve this: the Commission can either accomplish this through certain amendments to the existing legislation or prepare a bill specifically tailored to the disarmament process.

In my opinion, developing a specific bill for this process would be the more appropriate choice. Feti Yıldız, one of the Commission's esteemed members, stated in a social media post that it would be beneficial for us to share our "preliminary legislative proposals" with the Commission members, in addition to our political assessments. In the hope of responding to Mr Feti's justified expectation, I would like to share my concrete proposals regarding the legal framework to be prepared by the Commission.

1. The law should be drafted with an understanding that enables organisation members to lay down their arms, encourages their return to social life, enables them to live peacefully, strengthens public order, is sensitive to the community's sense of justice, and protects the rights of victims. It should establish transparent and accountable mechanisms.
2. The law should not merely determine the legal position of organisation members who lay down their arms, but should also include provisions enabling them to return home and participate in social life. The law should be based on a holistic perspective aimed at disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.
3. The purpose of the law should be clear, limited and measurable. Bearing in mind that vague and ambiguous definitions lead to legal problems, definitions should be as clear as possible.
4. The groups covered by the law should be clearly specified. Four groups that should be covered can be mentioned:
    a. PKK members against whom no investigation or prosecution has been initiated
    b. Those convicted in cases related to the PKK
    c. Those who are being tried in cases related to the PKK
    d. Those who are abroad due to cases related to the PKK (those who have lost their citizenship, those who are banned from entering the country, etc.)
5. With the entry into force of the law, prosecutions and investigations related to the PKK should be halted; the enforcement of sentences that have been handed down and finalised should not commence, and the enforcement of those that have already commenced should be halted.
6. General and unconditional amnesty may be applied in such cases. Indeed, Turkey has resorted to this legal instrument on various occasions throughout the history of the Republic. However, if it is considered difficult to generate social consent for unconditional amnesty, a phased arrangement should be made for members of the organisation.

a. The stages should not be determined according to concepts such as "organisation leader", "organisation manager" or "organisation member".

b. The levels can be determined based on the length of the prison sentence imposed on those who have been convicted, or, for those who are under investigation or prosecution, based on the maximum penalty envisaged for such prosecution and investigation.

c. Judicial measures and probation periods should also be determined according to these levels. These periods should not be prolonged.

7. The law should grant the President general authority to take the necessary measures in the political, legal, socio-economic, psychological, cultural, human rights, security, and disarmament areas, as well as related matters, as provided in Article 2 of Law No. 6551 on the Termination of Terrorism and the Strengthening of Social Integration.

8. The law must establish monitoring and support mechanisms to prevent those who have laid down their arms from resorting to violence again. To accelerate the process of integration into society, these mechanisms should include:

a. Education, health, vocational skills training and employment programmes

b. The provision of psychosocial support

c. Housing and temporary income support.

9. The law should introduce special measures for women, children and sick members of the organisation.

10. The law should not be indefinite but should last for a specific period.

11. An independent commission may be established to monitor and supervise the implementation of the law. It would be appropriate for this commission, which will report regularly to Parliament, to be composed of individuals from different sources (Parliament, ministries, local authorities, civil society and representatives of victimised families). Public oversight by Parliament reinforces democratic legitimacy.

While the commission works like a legal workshop to develop options for the process, the government also has important responsibilities to fulfil. The government should strengthen the commission's foundation and act in a way that increases public support for the process. There are some steps the government can take quickly. For example:

- Implementation of ECHR and Constitutional Court rulings

- Ending the practice of appointing trustees and reinstating the elected mayors of municipalities where trustees have been appointed

- The release of sick prisoners and detainees

- The quick cessation ongoing prosecutions and investigations involving mayors

- Preventing prison administrations from arbitrarily and unlawfully rejecting requests for conditional release and transfer to open prisons

- Remedying the grievances of those who have been left to a kind of civil death by Decree Law.

- The enactment of legal regulations concerning the Right to Hope could be considered within this scope.

If the government takes these measures, not only will the objections of certain groups to the process be removed, but the belief that the process will yield beneficial results for society as a whole will be strengthened. This will also facilitate the Commission's work

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated yesterday that "lasting peace" in Syria is Turkey's greatest desire. Ensuring lasting peace in both Turkey and Syria is directly linked to this process. If the process reaches its goal, it will be a giant step towards lasting peace.

Today, Turkey has a historic opportunity before it. Never before has it reached this point, and never before has it come so close to a solution. This historic opportunity must not be missed and must not be sacrificed to certain preconceptions. Turkey must put destructive fears aside, put an end to the Kurdish issue holding it hostage both internally and externally, and build lasting peace with founding courage.

Thank you for listening, and I extend my respects to the audience.