

# **Workshop on the International NGO Experiences in Conflict Resolution**

Derek Mooney

Luz Piedad Caicedo

Ana Villellas

Hüseyin Oruç

Cuma Çiçek

Gülçin Avşar

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**Peace Foundation | Barış Vakfı | Waqfa Aşitiyê**

Kalyoncu Kulluđu Mah. Ömer Hayyam Cad. Aydın Apt.

No:40 Kat:1 D:534425 Beyođlu / İstanbul

**Tel:** +90 212 249 26 54 – 0552 254 29 00

**Faks:** +90 212 249 26 54

**Web:** [www.barisvakfı.org](http://www.barisvakfı.org)

**E-Posta:** [info@barisvakfi.org](mailto:info@barisvakfi.org)

**Facebook:** /barisvakfi

**Twitter:** /barisvakfi

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## From the Peace Foundation

In Turkey two precious quest for peace, the Oslo and the Resolution Process have failed after an armed conflict / war period which was going on around thirty years. Today, we live in one of the worst and critical periods of our history.

As the Kurdish Question, which is the cause of the conflict, has been transformed into a regional, global problem, the search for a democratic and just solution on the basis of universal human rights is utterly shelved and the social ground of peace was thus weakened.

From an environment where the idea of peace was developed, the country has passed to a period where security-oriented, confrontational policies and measures dominated in social life.

Peace Foundation is analysing the position of civil society organizations (NGOs) in Turkey, in terms of their capacity to build social peace and working for termination of armed conflict in the Kurdish issue and working towards to enhance their policy proposals for the issue. This work is done with the aim of preparing for a new peace / solution process.

In the last days of 2017 we published the report entitled “**The NGOs in the 2013-2015 Resolution Process**”, prepared by **Cuma ÇİÇEK** to whom **Prof. Alev ERKİLET**, **Bekir AGIRDİR** and **Etyen MAHÇUPYAN** provided consultancy. The report is based on an analysis of the results of the interviews with 45 NGO representatives and three experts in Diyarbakır, Van, Istanbul and Ankara.

Comprehensive report evaluation meetings were held in Istanbul, Mersin and Malatya with local civil society organizations which, for various reasons, had not been consulted during the preparation of the report. On 5 May 2018, a one-day workshop was held in Istanbul to evaluate the results with the NGO representatives and academicians involved in the report and to draw common conclusions about the upcoming period.

One of the results of this workshop was to conduct a study on the work experience of different civil society organizations from different countries which will be shared with Turkish NGOs.

For this purpose, we organized a one-day workshop in Istanbul on “**International NGO Experiences in Conflict Resolution**” with the participation of NGO representatives and academicians from different cities on November 3, 2018.

**Derek Mooney** from the Democratic Development Institute, **Luz Piedad Caicedo** from the Colombian Human Rights Association, **Ana Villellas** from the Barcelona Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Program, IHH Vice President **Hüseyin Oruç** and **Cuma Çiçek** from the Peace Foundation presented different experiences.

In this study, we gathered a general evaluation and recommendations of attorney **Gülçin Avşar** who took part in various studies on the subject, along with the presentations made in the workshop.

Our aim is to contribute to the development of more effective, capacity-enhanced NGOs in a new resolution process; to serve to find a new way to peace. We are confident that the different experiences will make a significant contribution to every institution and person who conduct peace work and that there are many lessons to be learned. We hope we’re not wrong.

As the Board of Directors we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the realization of this study.

We would like to thank **Derek Mooney**, **Luz Piedad Caicedo**, **Ana Villellas**, **Hüseyin Oruç** and **Cuma Çiçek** for their presentation at the workshop and **Gülçin Avşar** for her written article. We would like to thank respectively the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Turkey Representation and the Institute of Democratic Development for supporting the realization of the workshop and our editor **Arife Köse**, our translators **Eyyüp Subaşı** and **Sibel Erduman** and **Sergen Karakas** who helped to conduct this project.

Hope to meet in new studies.

**Peace Foundation Board of Directors - January 2019**

## Presentation

The book is composed of the speeches of the participants in “The Workshop on International NGO Experiences in Conflict Resolution” organized by the Peace Foundation on 3rd November 2018, in Istanbul.

**Derek Mooney**, from Ireland, who participated in the study as the representative of the Democratic Progress Institute, is experienced in joining the peace process through NGO's, focused on the role of the civil society actors in helping to build and promote dialogue by sharing his experiences in the Northern Ireland Peace Process and provided information on the work of the Peace and Reconciliation Center of Glenree, where he worked as a volunteer. Mooney, first provided information on the historical and social background of the conflict and segregation in Northern Ireland. Then he talked about the groups such as youth groups, sport groups, women groups, and semi-political groups such as Glenree Peace and Reconciliation Center and their contribution to the peace process and the lessons they learned from this process. In the light of these experiences, he stressed that in Ireland they have learned how to manage the conflict, even though they have not yet fully solved the problem.

**Luz Piedad Caicedo**, who attended the workshop as the representative of the human rights organization called Corporación Humanas from Colombia, first conveyed information regarding the background of the conflict and the previous peace initiatives in Colombia, and then she mentioned that the difference between this and previous peace processes was that there was a wide civil society participation in the last one. Caicedo explained that in the process of peace treaty between FARC and the Colombian government, there were mechanisms formed to provide a direct participation of the citizens to the peace process such as thematic forums, physical and virtual forums or meeting with the citizen delegations directly and she spoke about how they have been very effective in establishing the peace in Colombia. She particularly mentioned that the contribution of the women organisation at every level of the peace process has made a big difference.

**Ana Vilellas**, who participated in the workshop from Spain, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and who is an expert on conflict analysis and peace processes, has made a lot of research and study on these issues, mentioned the nature of the peace processes and conflicts, the possible roles and functions that civil society can have in the peace processes based on the action-oriented research that they conducted at the Center for Peace Culture. She fleshed out how civil society may have a particular function after she touched upon the points such as establishing a dialogue within an agreed framework, the peace processes are more than negotiation table, the roles that the civil society can play in peace processes. She explained the powers that the civil society has based on the researches and studies conducted on that particular subject and she explained the powers that civil society can have such as power to resist violence to bring about changes, power to expose, power to reframe and power to identify by also giving some examples from the world. Vilellas, also summarized the lessons taken from other peace processes in the world.

**Huseyin Oruc**, who took part in the workshop as the representative of the Human Rights and Freedoms Foundation (IHH) of Turkey, who participates in the international delegation monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement in the Philippines on behalf of the (IHH), first talked about the historical and social background of the conflict in the Philippines, and then, he gave information regarding the peace process there. He spoke of the importance of continuation of negotiations while the conflict is continuing, the functionality of continuing negotiations on the territory of a third country in order to prevent the negotiations being negatively affected by the conflict, and the benefits of the mediation of the number of countries including Turkey. He also mentioned the IHH's monitoring experiences in the Philippines since he is a member of the international delegation that monitors the implementation of the peace agreement in the Philippines. He particularly emphasized the role of the legalization of the peace treaty in making the peace perdurable.

**Cuma Cicek** who continues his academic studies in Paris Institute of Political Studies – Centre of International Researches, has a number of articles and studies on political science, particularly

the Kurdish question, pointed out to the changing dynamics in the Middle East and Turkey in the context of the Kurdish question. He emphasized that Turkey was at a crossroad, however, as is seen from other examples in the world, peace is not possible through only parties sitting around a negotiation table, and the participation of the civil society is of vital importance. In his speech, he also analysed the positions and capacities of the civil society in Turkey regarding bringing the conflict in the Kurdish issue to an end and building the peace within the society. In his analysis, he used the data gathered as a result of a research in which they met 45 NGO and 3 experts in Diyarbakır, Van, İstanbul and Ankara provinces of Turkey in 2017. After he explained the roles and functions that civil society can have in peace processes that were determined as a result of several research and study, he spoke about the experiences of NGOs in the Resolutions Process in Turkey. In doing this, Çiçek referred to the shortcomings in the socialization of peace and the reasons of these inadequacies, as well as what the NGOs did and was not able to do in the Resolution Process.

The Attorney **Gülçin Avsar** mentioned that although the most known peace process in Turkey was the recent Resolution Process, there is, in fact, a history of peace initiatives in Turkey and she gave information about this history. Avsar said that although the recent Resolution Process was largely welcomed in society, if we compare them with other examples of international peace processes around the world, the NGOs in Turkey did not get involved in the process sufficiently. Avsar, who pointed out that no peace process in the world was succeeded at once, also mentioned that the pressure of the society and civil society for peace could play a big role in keeping the parties stick to peace. She also said that although the peace seems very far away at the moment, we must not give up our faith and hope in peace based on the tens of examples in where the peace negotiations continue secretly even in times where intense violent conflict between the parties goes on.

We would like to thank the participants once again and wish you a pleasant reading.

**Arife KÖSE**



## **International NGO Experiences in Conflict Resolution**

***“What did NGOs do in the Solution Processes, how were they effective, what are the deficiencies, what should be done?”***

**Remarks by DEREK MOONEY**

### **Introduction**

I want to extend my thanks to our hosts and the organisers for inviting me to speak with you today.

I am happy and pleased to represent the Democratic Progress Institute here and to share my experiences from the Northern Ireland Peace Process and to explore some of the lessons learned by Civic Society NGOs and peace groups during that process.

I have a somewhat unique perspective on this topic as I have worked in the political, governmental and NGO sectors in Ireland.

My presentation will be structured as follows: first I will briefly tell you about me, about my work and my story.

I will then give a very short overview of the conflict in Northern Ireland, with a focus on the role of the various NGOs and civic society actors in helping build and foster dialogue.

I will then speak more specifically about work of the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, with whom I worked, as a volunteer, for about a decade – Glencree is a partner with the Democratic Progress Institute on a range of study visits by Turkish politicians, NGO activists, academics and journalists to Ireland, North and South.

**About me.**

I am a communications and political consultant. I advise a company called BEERG – it is a network of senior HR directors from major multinational companies operating in Europe/EMEA.

I am also a political consultant, I advise local and national election candidates in Ireland, mainly those associated with the Fianna Fáil political party. My candidates get elected.

I was an adviser to the Yes side on the recent marriage equality referendum and was director of research and messaging for the campaign to retain our Senate.

Between 2004 and 2010 I was the political and security policy adviser to the Irish Minister for Defence. Since 1995 I have worked on Northern Ireland policy for the Fianna Fáil party – not as part of party staff. I was secretary to the Fianna Fáil party delegation on the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in the early 2000s.

**A very brief history of the Northern Ireland Conflict**

The conflict in Northern Ireland is about what country Northern Ireland should be part of – Ireland or the wider UK.

There are Unionists who are mainly Protestant and there are Irish Nationalists/Republicans on the other side. The conflict has now taken a non-violent form.

Republicans blame England's colonial history for the conflict, particularly colonialist policies of plantation. The Unionists, however, see a natural bond between Ireland and Britain. They believe that British involvement has been good for Ireland and good for Britain.

The modern division is rooted in the plantations. The settlers who came over were Protestant – they displaced the 'natives' who were Catholic. This religious difference has retained the separateness of the two communities, but it is conflict about identity – not religion.

The conflict has long roots. In the 1950s and 1960s catholic nationalists started using education as a route out of their poverty. They started to follow the example of the Black American civil rights movement, learning from Martin Luther King.

Their call was for civil rights. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil Rights marches, these were about access to public housing voting rights etc.

The failure of the Unionist majority to respond to these calls and the belief that the issue was a security problem, not a political one saw the re-emergence and resurgence of the violent conflict – though it had never really gone away before that.

During the Troubles which lasted from 1969 until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, 3,635 people were killed and there were 500,000 victims (killed, injured or traumatised).

Relative to other conflicts across the world, these figures are not so high. However, proportionally, these numbers were very high. The effect of the conflict was to intensify the mistrust which had started the conflict in the first place.

In a conflict that has been going on for 800 years, the real victory of the Good Friday Agreement had been to reach a point where all sides could agree to settle their differences through peaceful, democratic means.

The conflict in Northern Ireland is not over nor is it resolved – indeed, Brexit has deepened the conflict and destabilised the situation.

We have not resolved our conflict in Ireland.

What has happened is that we have learnt to manage our conflict.

We just now agree that violence is not going to resolve the conflict and that we must all look to politics to try to resolve the conflict.

This is a major achievement and it is one that we ALL must protect and safeguard.

## **Role of NGOs and Civic Society in Conflict Resolution:**

The role of civil society in conflict resolution can be controversial.

There is a tension between the established political parties and the NGOs. The political parties are elected, and therefore claim to represent civil society! NGOs, no matter how large or well resourced cannot claim the same mandate. This is a matter I will return to later when I talk specifically about Glenree, because I think Glenree developed a way to address this tension and – indeed- to adapt use it to help.

In the negotiations, the political parties were the primary representatives.

There was one political party in Northern Ireland, the Women's Coalition which effectively was an NGO as well – but I will talk more about his later.

There were many NGOs and civic society and peace organisations operating in and around the Northern Ireland conflict.

It is estimated that at one point that there were 400 organisations working on the peace process in Ireland. Some of these organisations only had five to six people in them, some of them might have had 500 people in them. There were organisations that had paid staff and others that worked with volunteers.

Some of them had money and some did not, but almost all of them were involved in politics.

These NGOs covered a range of categories, there were:

- Church groups
- Youth groups
- Sports and Cultural groups
- Women's Groups
- Peace Groups
- Politically aligned groups

In Ireland, North and South, there are four main churches: Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist and Catholic.

In the early 1970s, the leaders of those four churches came together for the first time in a very public way and ever since then they meet regularly about six times a year.

The power and the importance of showing joint leadership, such as religious leaders provide, is important, and that has remained solid since 1971, through all the challenges.

Hardliners in both communities opposed this development with political leaders, such as the Rev Ian Paisley accusing Protestant leaders of selling out.

Many peace groups also grew out of the churches with small volunteer groups established with the intention of reaching out to those on the other 'side'.

The point to note here is that communities in Northern Ireland are highly segregated – particularly working-class communities. Nationalist children go to catholic only schools – unionist children go to protestant only schools – this is especially true for working class communities, especially urban communities. They live in close proximity – but separately.

In west Belfast there are two parallel streets that are less than a Km apart – the Shankill Road and the Falls Road. The point at where they come closest together is a catholic church: the Clonard Monastery.

Clonard became a safe place for community leaders on both sides to meet with each other discreetly and in confidence.

It also became the first location for the moderate and pacifist nationalist leader John Hume to meet and talk with Gerry Adams and became the birth place of the Hume-Adams dialogue which brought the Provisional IRA to the conclusion that peace was the way forward.

## **Youth & Sports Groups**

Due to the self-imposed and self-selected segregation young people in Northern Ireland had grown up and been educated apart – so the work of a range of youth groups in bringing young people together to meet and learn to understand the stories of those on the “other” side was vital.

Indeed the capacity and opportunity to tell your story to the other community and to hear theirs cannot be understated in helping to manage conflict.

Sports Clubs also had a small, but important, role to play in help manage the conflict, though this has primarily been since the 1998 Agreement. As with education, many sports were segregated. Nationalist/Republican mainly played and supported GAA (explain GAA). It is an all island amateur code with a vast infrastructure across nationalist communities. Clubs tend to be named after heroes of 1916 or the Irish War of Independence.

Since the Good Friday Agreement the GAA has made conscious efforts to reach out to loyalist youth. So too has Rugby. Though Rugby is more identified as unionist in the North, there is no Northern Ireland rugby team, for the purposes of Rugby internationals, players from Northern Ireland play for an all-Ireland team. They play under the Irish flag, the tricolour, though we use a non-controversial anthem at games called Ireland's Call rather than the Irish national anthem which is called The Soldiers Song, which comes from the War of Independence

## **Women's Organisations**

The most significant and important sectoral input came from women's organisations, women's groups, women's initiatives and individual women. It is not possible to understate their importance.

As I mentioned earlier there the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition was effectively a political party and an NGO – it has been the most important and significant group, but it is not the only one.

You had many others, such as Hanna's House (named after an Irish suffragette) which was feminist cross-border peacebuilding organisation that brought women together from all over the island to consider the legacy of the conflict and how it has impacted on their lives.

It explored how conflict affects men and women differently and how they have access to different peacebuilding organisations.

This is maybe a key to the role of women – their more immediate access to counterparts from the other community and that these contacts and interactions enabled a more contextually rich dialogue between community members in the North.

But it is a lot more than that. The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition was a key player in the talks process itself. The specific clauses and references to victims in the Good Friday Agreement are there primarily at the insistence of the NIWC.

This is perhaps because the unique set up and origins of the NIWC meant that the Women's Coalition were the only group which included all the stakeholders from both communities in one group.

## **Glencree**

As I set out earlier, as well as the very many youth, church, cultural, sporting and other NGOs have all sought to help reach out and help heal the conflict, there have been the quasi political – though not politically aligned peace groups.

One of the most significant and resilient of these is The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, which I have been honoured to be associated.

It was established in 1974 as a response to the violent conflict occurring in Northern Ireland at the time; in particular, the horrific wave of bombings that took place in Belfast in 1972.

Since its establishment it has been dedicated to working towards peace, not only in Ireland but also in conflict areas around the

world through promoting inclusive dialogue and reconciliation.

The programmes run by the Centre have been wide-ranging in scope, involving the fields of education; recreation; fund-raising; work camps and the hosting of talks and discussions.

Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the Glencree Centre has been instrumental in promoting the ongoing peace process in Ireland. It has hosted countless talks, workshops and discussions aimed at promoting enduring positive relationships between those affected by the conflict in Ireland, including: former combatants; victims and survivors of the conflict; youth; churches and religious groups and wider society.

The biggest lesson that Glencree, as a civic society actor has learnt is that there is no sustainable security solution to a political problem.

Despite all of the efforts from both sides of the conflict in Ireland, we found that in the end violence did not create a sustainable solution for us to move forward. Whether it was non-State armed groups committing the violence or whether that violence came from the State, it did not get us anywhere.

In fact, it led us to a stalemate where we had to look for other new ways to move forward.

The second lesson is that you do not need to trust each other to engage in a peace process.

In many ways we were slow learners in Ireland. We said that we could not possibly build peace with each other. Why would we possibly trust each other? For years we have been killing each other.

At the same time, the people who held power had held it for many, many years and the people who did not have the power fought against them. We killed each other's children, we killed each other's neighbours and we killed people in each other's communities- so why would we trust each other?

It would be ridiculous to even think about trusting each other. You do not need to trust each other to build peace. You need to be able to trust a process.

Our process has been ongoing for many years. People say that it began at the same time as the ceasefires in the late 1990s but it goes back much further than that.

There was a time that we did not trust each other and today, the reality is that we still do not trust each other. However, we are in a position where we have learnt to manage our conflict.

We have not resolved our conflict in Ireland we have simply learned how to manage it. The management of conflict is about the reduction of violence and it is about creating an opportunity for everyone to think that they are winning.

That is what the process of Glenree has been doing.

In any conflict resolution process the tendency is to try to scapegoat the other person and to blame them for the conflict.

This is where Glenree differed in its approach to others.

While participation in Glenree workshops was limited to those who sought non-violent resolution of the conflict, it was still important to have those present who understood and could speak to – if not for – those who still help to the path of violence.

These workshops had to be safe spaces where confidentiality was respected and where people could feel they could speak openly and candidly.

All dialogues in Glenree were conducted on the basis of the Chatham House rule. There were minor breeches of it over the years – and these workshops covered the period from before the Good Friday Agreement – from 1994 onwards to several political hiatuses after the Agreement and the collapse of the political institutions in the North.

As a political professional I personally feel that the thing that set Glencree apart from other peace organisations and NGOs in Ireland – North and South – was that it encouraged and supported politicians.

While others were keen at times, often deservedly, to criticise and call up politicians to tell them that they were doing a bad job and blamed them for the conflict, Glencree avoided this.

In fact, Glencree did the opposite.

In 1994 it went to every single political party in Ireland, both the North and South, and told them that Glencree would like to be their partners.

Glencree told them that it would not advocate something that they were against, it was advocating peace.

As part of this process Glencree went to every political group in Ireland and said that we would like to engage with them.

The political had things that Glencree did not have, but Glencree also had things to offer them, things that maybe they did not understand yet.

So, it was never Glencree lecturing the politicians, it was Glencree seeking to work with all of them, on all sides to give them the space and environment to engage and dialogue.

On two occasions, Glencree took out a full-page advert in all of the British and Irish newspapers.

It said:

*‘A message to all politicians in Britain and Ireland: We, the undersigned, would like to say thank you for your leadership towards peace and Ireland.*

*Your dedication and your devotion has been inspirational to the whole island.’*

Glencree then persuaded 300 of the wealthiest people and companies in Ireland to sign that statement.

It was an attempt to reinforce positive leadership.

Glencree's work was about building relationships, honest relationships that we could sustain and relationships that we felt were critical to the process.

There is a third lesson: nobody really wants to be violent.

One of many non-political programmes which Glencree in the post agreement phase was its victims – this is a programme which it still runs.

Some of those victims and relatives of victims asked Glencree if it would facilitate and host a programme where they could meet some former combatants, this was done with a group for ex IRA prisoners, called Coiste.

Coiste were keen to meet with these victims and had no hesitations about this interaction.

Though this was painful for victims, they wanted to meet with those who had perpetrated violence, if not on them or their relative, then on those like them.

What emerged from these encounters was that (with some very few exceptions) that ordinary people do not want to be violent - but when they feel that there are no other options open to them, that violence is the only way.

This is not a justification, but an attempt at explanation.

I witnessed several such encounters personally. I have met with former combatants and have had tough and fraught conversations with them.

I have also developed important back channel communications routes via contacts made at Glencree.

My mobile phone contains the mobile numbers of key party officials from across the divide – something that could never have happened without places like Glencree and other alumni like me

have been able to use contacts gained through Glencree to help diffuse political situations in the many years since our involvement there.

The Northern Ireland conflict was one of identity, its descent into violence was a consequence of broken relationships.

Glencree saw that its role and obligation was to leave the politics to one side and to work, through intensive dialogue to repair broken relations.

We had intensive dialogue between UK politicians, people from Southern Ireland and people from Northern Ireland (including paramilitaries).

We began to look at a three-sided process which worked on this triangle of broken relations – these were

1. Within Northern Ireland – between the two communities
2. Between the two parts of the island of Ireland, North / South
3. And between the two island – East/West

Discussions were held with a high degree of confidentiality. People formed bonds and relationships.

When relationships developed between people, understanding and empathy – if not agreement – developed too.

This was vital when the many moments of tension and crisis hit.

This is important as I do not want to give the mistaken impression that there was a seamless and steady progress from beginning to end.

There wasn't.

In 1992, '93 and '94, the violence increased hugely. It was ferocious. Behind the scenes, Glencree (and others) worked to try to

foster the conditions to get the violence to stop, but there were bombings all over.

NGOs had to constantly make value judgments based on their best read of the circumstances about what was going on in the Republican movement.

At this time, we were seeing the end of the dual (political/ military) strategy in the IRA – this followed the Hume/Adams dialogue that I referenced earlier.

After that period, there were more difficult conversations which needed to take place about a process bringing former paramilitaries/combatants into the political mainstream.

When you bring former paramilitaries into the room, politicians leave. The political mainstream does not want to be ‘contaminated’ by people seen as terrorists.

It is a very difficult conversation to manage. During the period 1994-96, Glenree were beginning to make progress bilaterally between both groups.

When the ceasefire broke down, Glenree had to regroup, to pick up the pieces and then try to recommence and continue dialogue with people who had now actively re-engaged in dissident violent activity.

By definition, a lot of discussions and encounters had to be conducted in private. While there were many all-party workshops, there were also many confidential bilateral meetings conducted at the request of those parties – these were not revealed to others – then or since.

Glenree’s integrity was central.

Because of the intensity of the violence in the build up to the ceasefire, people wanted a space for dialogue but there was also a lot of fear.

Participants needed to be secure that what was being said, who was speaking to who would never be reported publicly

The conversations were extremely private and put great emphasis on the effort to humanise relations.

Closing remarks.

## **The Participation Of Women From Civil Society In The Peace Process Between The Government of Juan Manuel Santos and The Revolutionary Armed Forces Of Colombia - People's Army (Farc-Ep)**

**Luz Piedad Caicedo, Corporación Humanas**

**Istanbul, 3 November 2018**

### **Context**

The dynamics of the internal armed conflict in Colombia was surpassed the confrontation between its armed groups. This is seen in the high proportion of civilians affected and, in general, the debasement of the armed conflict. Especially since the mid-1990s, the unarmed population became progressively involved in armed projects not by consent or social adhesion, but by coercion and victimization.

The Colombian government acknowledged in 2017 that there was a total of eight million four hundred thousand (8,4 million) victims of the internal armed conflict. The armed conflict in Colombia has not adopted a distinctive form of violence: the armed groups (mainly the guerrillas movements FARC and National Liberation Army -ELN- and paramilitary groups) have used and combined all types of violence in their confrontations. All of them have used diverse methods and have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, making civilians the main victim of the conflict.

### **The Peace Processes in Colombia**

Colombia does not only have a long history of conflict, but also of peace agreements. During the 1990s, several peace agreements were signed with some guerrilla groups: Movement April 19th (M-19), People's Liberation Army (EPL), Armed Movement

Quintin Lame, Socialist Renewal Current, and paramilitaries of the Magdalena Medio and of Cordoba (two regions of Colombia). In 2003, a peace process was carried out which included all paramilitary groups. Today, attempts are being made to carry out a peace process with the guerrilla group ELN.

With FARC-EP, there were two unsuccessful previous attempts: the first one with the President Belisario Betancur (who governed from 1982 and 1986) and the other one with Andrés Pastrana who was President from 1998 to 2002.

In this last attempt there was a very broad participation of civil society, women played a very important role. In particular, the following stand out:

- Pressure from women's groups and civil society prompted peace talks between President Pastrana and the guerrilla group FARC in 1999. Women in official capacities and civil society challenged leaders to consider gender issues for the first time.
- The 2002 collapse of the dialogues led to disillusionment within Colombia's peace movement; women's groups are leading new efforts, raising awareness of the human costs of conflicts and calling for negotiations that include civil society.
- Women's organizations developed a process to build consensus and create an agenda for peace addressing the root causes of conflict such as political, social and economic exclusion. Local authorities are replicating their consensus-building model in the constitutional assemblies of Antioquia, Nariño, Cauca and Huila.
- The conflict is regionalized as paramilitaries and guerillas control parts of the country. Despite being targeted through violence and repression, women are leading local resistance efforts, establishing informal agreements with armed actors and forming « peace zones » to protect their communities.

- Women's groups are using UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) to demand inclusion in future negotiations. Government entities, also drawing on 1325, are initiating dialogue with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regarding leace and security issues.

### **Peace Process Between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP**

The peace process between the government of Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC-EP was carried out in three phases:

- Initial contact phase. In August 2010, soon after the presidential inauguration of Juan Manuel Santos, contact was established between the Government of Colombia and the FARC. In February 2012 the parties were ready to start the secret exploratory talks in Havana.
- Exploratory phase. From February to August 2012 ten negotiating rounds were held in Havana.

August 27th 2012 the parties were ready to sign the agenda for the talks. It was a short, focused and realistic agenda that only addressed six items – five on substantive matters and one on implementation – as well as concrete rules for procedures at the negotiating table.

- Public phase. The process was formally launched in Oslo on October 18th 2012.

After the formal launch in Oslo, the talks moved to Havana, where they continued until their closure on 26 September 2016. This day, President Santos and FARC commander Rodrigo Londoño signed a peace accord in the city of Cartagena.

In November 2016, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group and Colombia's government signed a second, revised peace deal after a slim majority of Colombians to reject the peace accord in a referendum on 2 October 2016.

### **Civil Society in Havana**

The negotiating table in Havana established several mechanisms through which citizens could participate in the peace process. This involved the reception of proposals through physical and virtual forms, thematic forums held in different cities of the country on negotiating agenda issues, and delegations that visited Havana for meetings with the negotiating table or one of the sub commissions.

All three mechanisms provided the negotiating table with important and valuable input. There was criticism from Colombian civil society that these mechanisms were too limited, which was exacerbated by the fact that the talks took place outside Colombia. Those who complained argued that the distance between the realities on the ground in Colombia and the talks in Havana was too great and that more formal communication channels between the peace table and the Colombian public were needed. As the talks progressed and the negotiating table started to address the agenda item on victims' rights, the parties decided to strengthen consultations with various stakeholders.

One of the most visible and impactful mechanisms proved to be the direct dialogue between victims of the conflict and the parties. The visits of victims connected the peace table with the realities on the ground in Colombia and transformed the dynamics between the parties.

The UN, in collaboration with the National University and the Colombian Bishops' Conference, was given the mandate to organize visits of five 12-person victims' delegations to directly participate in the peace talks. They presented their proposals to the parties on issues that included truth and justice, reparations, reconciliation, and guarantees of non-repetition. The delegations represented victims from all sides in the Colombian conflict. They also represented communities and networks, and would, on returning to Colombia, be important advocates for a negotiated resolution of the conflict. The victims' delegations also played an important role in defending the process publicly in times of crisis and demanding that the parties should not abandon the negotiating table.

- Submission of proposals - the negotiating table received a total of 67,371 proposals throughout the process. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the vast majority were delivered anonymously via the thematic forums and the Women and Peace Summit in 2013. Proposals submitted using physical or virtual forms do have a record of the person who submitted them. As of April 2016, 6,713 forms had been submitted, of which 3,701 were submitted by men, 1,760 by women (26%) and in 1,252 this information was left blank.
- Thematic forums - five thematic forums were requested by the negotiating table and organized by the National University of Colombia and the United Nations between 2014 and 2016. In the forum about comprehensive agricultural development, women represented 33% of the total number of participants, 40% in the one on political participation, 48% in the forum on resolving of the drug problem (including the regional forums), 32% in the victims' forum (including regional forums), and 50% in the forum on ending conflict and verification and ratification.
- Delegations that visited Havana for meetings concerning the different agenda items and with commission or sub commission - to develop the different topics on the negotiating agenda, the negotiating table convened members of civil society as experts to share their knowledge, experiences and the work they have developed on each topic. For the topics of comprehensive agrarian development and political participation, only men were summoned. In the resolving of the drug problem forum, one woman (13%) participated in a group of 8 persons and in the group of victims, there were 36 women (46%) in a group of 60 persons.

The Gender Subcommission developed its work by holding 3 meetings with representatives of 18 women's and sexual diversity organizations (December 2014 and February and March 2015), a meeting with 10 women sexual violence experts (August 2015), a meeting with 10 women insurgency ex-combatants from different countries of the world (May 2016) and presented the results of their work at a public event in Havana that was held in July 2016 with the participation of several women's organizations, politicians and delegates of international cooperation.

### **Achievements of The Women's Movement**

After a long advocacy process, it was made possible that the Peace Agreement include 122 measures that incorporate the gender perspective in each one of the six points of the Agreement, which are: **1.** Overall Rural Reform, **2.** Political Participation, **3.** End of conflict, **4.** Solution to the problem of illicit drugs, **5.** Agreement concerning the victims of the conflict, and **6.** Implementation, verification and endorsement. Achievements regarding truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for women victims of sexual violence.

According to the research we did in the Humanas Corporation on the role of women in Havana we found that the inclusion of the gender perspective was complicated at times, not necessarily due to disagreement or opposition by their delegation peers, but rather because the women members of the Subcommittee on Gender lacked enough knowledge in that respect.

It was strategic their work with women's organizations, not only because of their experience and track record in the promotion and defense of women's human rights, but because their advocacy made the very existence of the Subcommittee possible. Moreover, they supported the latter's work by sending proposals both to the Subcommittee and the Table, and through their participation in various joint meetings held in Havana. Likewise, the efforts made by those organizations in Colombia to visibilize the importance of including women's needs in the negotiation agenda contributed to the work the women were carrying out in the context of the conversations in Havana.

## Contributions, Results, and Achievements

It is difficult to produce a detailed account of all the contributions, results, and victories of the women belonging to the National Government, FARC-EP, international cooperation agencies, and guarantor countries delegations, since their impact permeates every aspect of the peace process. Many of them are specifically reflected in the Final Agreement, while others are evident at the level of individual and collective transformations, as well as in the very fact of achieving the Agreement.

According to the interviewees, the specific contributions of women to the peace process—within the framework of the eight thematic lines regarding gender perspective in the Agreement—are all reflected in the Final Agreement.

The eight thematic lines defined by the Subcommittee on Gender for the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Agreement were the following: **(1)** Access to and formalization of rural property in equal conditions to men. **(2)** Guarantee of the Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (ESCER) of women and persons with diverse sexual orientation or gender identity in rural sectors. **(3)** Promotion of the participation of women in representation, decision-making, and conflict resolution spaces. **(4)** Prevention and protection measures to counter the specific risks women face. **(5)** Access to truth, justice, and reparation, and guarantee of non-repetition. **(6)** Public recognition, elimination of stigmatization, and dissemination of the work carried out by women as political subjects. **(7)** Institutional policies aimed at strengthening women's organizations and the LGBTI movement. **(8)** Separate information systems. These lines were announced on 24 July 2016.

With respect to comprehensive rural reform, the women highlighted that their main interest was the empowerment and improved access of rural women to land, loans, and technical assistance, as well as the formalization of property titles. With this, they sought to ensure that women could benefit from the provisions of the Agreement in equal conditions: Land Fund,

Massive Property Formalization Plan, and Social Development programs. Likewise, they considered it essential to have achieved recognition of the need for rural women's organizations to participate in all the different levels provided for by this point of the Agreement.

As far as political participation is concerned, the interviewees were proud of having achieved recognition of the fact that women have faced countless obstacles to their participation and that the discrimination that keeps them from being able to exercise power and participate in decision making continues. Other fundamental accomplishments were fostering the political participation of women, the special measures to protect human rights defenders and female leaders, and the massive issuance of citizenship cards.

In the end of conflict point, specifically with respect to the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, the women's contribution was to have gender-based violence and the denunciation of acts of sexual violence included. With respect to the negotiations on conflict victims, the women recognized as a key achievement the fact that victims' rights were placed at the center, as well as the emphasis on the importance of the issue of sexual violence, reflected in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the fact that sex crimes did not qualify for amnesty or pardon, and the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Commission for Clarification of Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Repetition. In relation to this point in particular, the women acknowledged the significant contributions of women's organizations.

In addition to the specific achievements embodied in the different points of the Final Agreement, the interviewees highlighted what they thought to be the achievements of the Subcommittee on Gender which go beyond the Agreement, some of which were fundamental for the successful completion of the Subcommittee's work:

- First of all, the fact that the Subcommittee convened specific meetings with civil society members in order to

strengthen their work on certain points of the agenda. This was an achievement given that, at the time the Subcommittee was created, the only civil society participation that had been foreseen was the presence of five delegations of victims, and they managed to get three more meetings convened with women's and lgbti organizations, one with national experts on sexual violence and representatives of various women's or mixed organizations, and one with female ex-combatants from insurgent groups in different countries.

- Secondly, the organization of a high-level event to present the outcomes of the work of the Subcommittee on Gender. The women interviewed believe that the public presentation of the Subcommittee's work in an event attended by representatives of UN Women (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the international level; Luiza Carvalho, at the regional level; and Belén Sanz, at the national level); the Colombian Ambassador to the United Nations, María Emma Mejía; representatives of Colombian women's organizations; and representatives of the guarantor countries, Norway and Cuba, among others, was very important because it showed the international support and that of women's organizations to the inclusion of the gender perspective in the agreements. The events served to prove that the work carried out had not been secondary, but just as important as the other aspects worked on throughout the peace process.
- A third fundamental achievement of the Subcommittee on Gender was its positioning as an international referent in the context of peace processes and resolution of conflicts, not only because of its historical significance in the context of a peace process, but also due to the inclusion of the gender perspective in the Final Agreement. Both the interviewed women and the women's organizations consider this a positive example of women's participation and gender mainstreaming that can encourage similar experiences in future peace processes.

- Fourthly, the interviewees thought that the increasing support they garnered within the National Government and FARC-EP delegations was an important result of the constant work of the Subcommittee - although they did not all agree on the extent of that support. Nevertheless, this led to the recognition by their male peers in many public settings of the work they had carried out in the Subcommittee and of their participation in the peace-building process. Additionally, the women believe that their work accomplished transformations in both delegations, in terms of the internal positioning of women's issues. In particular, the women of the FARC-EP delegation consider that, after the reflection exercise fostered by the Subcommittee, the organization made the "irreversible" decision to include women's rights and gender equality in their commitments and struggles.
- Finally, it is necessary to include in this list of achievements, the fact that the work carried out by the Subcommittee on Gender and the influence of women's organizations laid the foundations for the women to demand participation in the implementation of the Final Agreement. The women are convinced of the need to continue exercising influence so that their achievements are not lost along the path of implementation.

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## **“The Roles of Civil Society In Conflict Resolution Challenges and Opportunities Across Peacebuilding Tracks”**

**Ana Vilellas November 2018**

Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you today. I would like to thank specially the Peace Foundation (Barış Vakfı) for organizing this seminar and inviting me to participate.

In this presentation, I will share some ideas on the roles of civil society in conflict-resolution by reflecting on lessons learned from the dynamics of conflict and peace processes worldwide. I draw on the action-oriented research of the center where I work, the School for a Culture of Peace, at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, in Spain. I prefer to think of this forum today as multi-directional conversation, where we all engage together in creative thinking. I very much wish to learn from your questions and ideas afterwards.

I will start first with some trends in conflict-resolution and with the nature of peacebuilding and peace processes, to move afterwards to potential roles and functions of civil society in conflict-resolution, as the Peace Foundation asked me.

First idea. **Dialogue under an agreed framework continues to be the most frequent way to end violent conflicts.** According to the yearbook *Peace Talks in Focus*, in 2017 there were 43 peace negotiations worldwide. In almost all the cases analysed (all except one), the governments of the respective countries were one of the parties to the negotiations. In most cases, armed groups (individually or in coalitions or umbrella organisations) also participated in the negotiations. A third party was involved in the vast majority of the peace and negotiation processes (35 of the

43, equivalent to 81%). A smaller proportion of the negotiations studied in 2017 (six cases, representing 14%) were conducted directly between the parties or there was no evidence of third-party mediation or facilitation efforts. Notable was the role played in negotiations by third-party intergovernmental organisations, including regional organisations and regional organisations as well as third states. Other third actors included religious actors such as the Community of Sant'Egidio in Senegal (Casamance) and Mozambique, and the Vatican in Venezuela, or religious leaders in Central African Republic, among others. Peace processes face advances and setbacks. A former UN high level mediator used to say that internal armed conflict usually lasts between 10 and 50 years and peace processes between 10 and 20 years, without counting implementation. Those long time-frame relate to the difficulties and challenges of moving from violent antagonistic positions to a jointly agreed framework of dialogue.

War economies, as in Colombia, DR Congo or Libya, as well as complex geo-political and geo-strategic contexts, as it is the case in today's conflicts in Ukraine, Syria or Yemen, to name just a few, can entrench conflict and protract them. Despite difficulties in dialogue, very rarely does a conflict party impose itself militarily, and when it does so, as in Sri Lanka, even the whole country may suffer severe consequences, including in terms of human security, international status or external economic investment, that could have been avoided. Relatively recent cases such as the Philippines (MILF) and Colombia –which decades-long conflicts with entrenched violent dynamics and complex structural causes– have shown us that **dialogue under locally agreed terms is not only desirable but possible**. That could give us, civil society engaged in conflict-resolution, reasons to remain committed to peacebuilding.

**Second idea. Peacebuilding and peace process are much more than peace tables, while at the same time peace processes continue to be dependent to a large extent on the willingness of conflict parties to initiate a dialogue process, to sit at the table.**

Peacebuilding can be understood as multiple processes at multiple levels by multiple actors that try to resolve conflicts and transform their root causes through peaceful means. Therefore, it is a very broad arena, with many potential roles and functions for civil society throughout all phases of conflict, including periods of escalation. On the other hand, peace negotiations are dialogue processes between at least two clashing parties in a conflict through which they discuss their differences in an agreed framework to put an end to violence and to find a satisfactory solution that meets their demands. Conflict-resolution still much depends on the acceptance of governments and non-state armed actors to engage in dialogue. In that sense, the role of civil society can be understood generally as supportive, rather than decisive. At the same time, this supportive role can be very relevant in contributing to shift conflicts from protracted violence to opportunities of peace. In addition it can help for not just addressing the visible elements of conflict but also for trying to transform the context of relations. And when peace processes start, effective participation of civil society through different methods and levels can increase the possibilities of reaching an agreement, it contributes to the sustainability of the process and increase its social legitimacy, as research has shown (Paffenholz, O'Reilly...).

**Before moving to potential roles and functions of civil society, a parenthesis to address the concept of civil society.** Civil society can be understood as a broad constellation of actors that includes: faith groups, religious institutions and religious leaders, trade unions, business organisations, foundations, professional organizations and bodies, women's movements, education and research institutions, traditional structures, cultural centers and cultural actors, among others. Some also include here political parties. There is not a universal common definition, but the importance lies in the broad nature of civil society. Civil society organisations are not peacebuilders by nature, some may support, promote or justify violent conflict and violent strategies. Still, civil society actors have mobilized in many conflicts around the world to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts.

International actors often overlook the richness of local civil society constituencies. Local civil society actors in big cities may sometimes also overlook civil society actors and experiences at the very local level in other parts of their countries. From Colombia and other cases, we have learned the **importance of “territorial peace”**. As conflict impacts locally in different and specific ways, so it’s important that peacebuilding emerges from the different areas of a given territory, from local actors of towns, municipalities, or –as in the case of Colombia and many other conflicts, also geographical regions-, based on context particularities of conflict dynamics and social, political and economic dynamics of each part of the territory. For example, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is a regional organization that builds on national networks in western African countries, including conflict-affected countries such as Nigeria and Mali. Among its many methods of peacebuilding, they have developed early warning systems that draw from indicators that have been developed bottom-up, and take into account the specificities of the different parts of the territories, by engaging local constituencies.

Third idea. **There are different roles and functions that civil society can play in conflict-resolution.** There are also different ways to reflect on these roles. Academics and peace practitioners like Thania Paffenholz and her team identify 7 functions for civil society in peacebuilding.

- *Protection*: activities and initiatives to protect citizens from violence from all conflict parties
- *Monitoring*: initiatives to monitor respect for human rights, or civilian monitoring of cease-fires, monitoring of local agreements, etc.
- *Advocacy*: advocacy activities in support of dialogue and an end to violence, through different strategies: mobilization, media, etc.
- *Socialization*: initiatives to spread the values of peace, coexistence, including throughout formal and informal socializing institutions, such as schools, faith groups, etc.

- *Inter-group social cohesion*: initiatives to build bridges between groups from across conflict divides
- *Facilitation*: initiatives to accompany and facilitate dialogue, which can take place at various levels, at micro-level, including local ceasefires
- *Service-delivery*, which can horizontally incorporate conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding goals.

Some of you, or maybe all of you are familiar with this classification, as the Peace Foundation has studied in detail the work of civil society in Turkey using this model of 7 functions, so I will not repeat what you have already worked on.

As reknown peace practitioner Norbert Ropers says, protracted armed conflicts need protracted multi-track peacebuilding efforts. Peace practitioner and academic Catherine Barnes, based on her experience on more than 30 countries and multiple levels of peacebuilding, identifies various civil society roles and functions.

These include: **power to resist violence to bring about changes, power to expose, power to reframe, and power to expose/analyse/propose. I will develop this more in detail and share examples of each one based on our research and open-data sources:**

**A) Power to resist violence to bring about changes**, at national or micro level, community level. Some examples:

- **NEPAL** In 2004, numerous partners, including national and international NGOs and the UN Children's Fund launched a campaign to promote schools as zones of peace. They advocated in the national media, lobbied both the army and the Maoist armed groups, and eventually negotiated codes of conduct with political parties and the government representatives in several areas that respected schools as conflict-free zones.

- **SRI LANKA** In 1998, the armed group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the Sri Lankan military base in Kilon-

chchi. 609 military personnel were reported missing in action, as soldiers in the Army did not carry identification tags at that time. Among them, the son of Visaka Dharmadasa. She felt the war had reached her door. Parents of missing soldiers started meeting, including in vigils, to share their pain and to discuss what actions they could take to help find their missing children. The meetings led to the creation of the Association of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action (PSMIA). They managed regulation changes in the Army, including identification measures. Dharmadasa then tried to meet the LTTE, in order to promote dialogue between the Government and the guerrilla. She led an all women civil delegation that managed to meet with the LTTE. They all shared their experiences. It was the first civil society group that met with the LTTE. That encounter paved the way for a following ceasefire and peace talks with the government. Visaka and other members of the association continued communication with Tamil civil population. She says that she started to understand the pain felt by Tamil women. After that, the Association of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action created another association, the Association of War Affected Women, which worked as a network of women who have lost sons or husbands from both sides of the conflict. We know the war in Sri Lanka ended years later in a very painful way, through military destruction. The Association of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action (PSMIA) and others had shown that dialogue was possible, and had resisted to violence in brave and creative ways. By the way, Visaka Dharmadasa is one of the women experts of the gender network of the Global Part

• **SOMALIA** In Mid 1993, during a clan-based war in Wajir district, women from across different clans agreed on the idea of a safe market: the market should be safe for any women of any clan. They established monitors to watch for the market & a small committee to deal with issues that could arise. They also created the Wajir Association for Peace. Subsequently, together with other actors (elders, youth, businesspeople, local religious leaders) they created the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. Ceasefires were agreed on. The Committee managed to find ways to protect the villages, although it also faced serious problems.

**B ) Power to expose** Based on moral authority and legitimacy, civil society actors can bring to light and expose situations of abuse and violence, to contribute to transform passivity or impunity, and to rise some consciousness about the negative impact of violence. Some examples:

- **COLOMBIA** The mass women movement “Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres” (Women Peaceful Route), which includes more than 300 women organisations from 9 regions and has a long history of proactive peacebuilding initiatives, undertook in 2010 a process to work on memory and truth on violence committed against women in the armed conflict. It was a bottom-up initiative that researched on the experiences of more than 1,000 women from many different backgrounds and parts of the country. It was a process of memory and empowerment for them. It resulted in an in-depth report that is available on the internet. This process, undertaken when armed conflict was still active, is a contribution also for the current work being done on memory as a result of the peace agreement signed in 2016.

**C) Power to reframe** This relates to the capacity of civil society to contribute to transform conflict attitudes, images of the enemy, and alleged incompatible interpretations of the conflict in order to contribute to rehumanize relations and come to a certain understanding of the perspective of the others. Norbert Ropers describes these processes as empathetic learning. The power to reframe can be developed through people-to-people dialogue processes, that is, by bringing together people from different sides of a conflict, often people that share a common professional background (teachers, journalists, academics, politicians, businesses), people that share identity traits (youth, women) or that are moral authorities (religious leaders, etc.), among other examples. People-to-people dialogues use methods of active and empathic listening, that often leads to personal transformation and the deconstruction of the image of the enemy. As John Paul Lederach says, “At difficult and less difficult times, peacebuilding involves the confluence of persons and processes that otherwise would not be together”. Peace education is also a powerful way to reframe conflicts. Some examples of the **power to reframe**:

• **SPAIN** Ahotsak (the basque word for “Voices”) was women movement that emerged in the 2000s, calling for a greater role for women in the search for solutions to the Basque conflict. It emerged as an initiative by female politicians in the Basque Parliament, from different sides of the conflict, who were convinced of the need to act to change the status quo of violence, break the dynamics of isolation, develop a new narrative and promote a peace process. They were convinced that “something had to be done”. It started as a confidential rapprochement between some MPs at opposite ends of the political spectrum, during times of violence, it later engaged more female MPs, still discreetly, and later on by women from trade unions and feminist organisations. They committed to a methodology guided by the principle of “working on what unites us and not on what divides us”. It went public in a new context of ceasefire and peace process, local groups were created, MPs from opposed sides of conflict travelled together from town to town and gave joint presentations, to contribute to re-frame conflict attitudes. In public events, women from different backgrounds shared their different experiences of pain and suffering and their desires for peace. Despite difficulties, this initiative contributed to re-humanise relations and to reinforce the common desire of peace. Unfortunately, the peace processes that was initiated at that time failed. However, peace materialized some years later. In retrospect, the current peace process in the Basque Country is considered a result of multiple initiatives at multiple levels over time, including the shifts in conflict-attitudes that this women initiative promoted.

• **COLOMBIA** In Colombia, long before former President Santos approved by decree the implementation of peace chairs in all public and private education institutions, the word “peace” and “peace education” was too dangerous to use. At times of difficulties, peace educators from Colombia had to use other concepts and words, including “citizenship”, “coexistence” (“convivencia”) to pursue their peacebuilding work. They promoted creative ways to deal with conflict at local level. Some examples are the “Peace Schools” association (Escuelas de Paz), or the Network of Peace Educators (Red de Educadores para la Paz),

which includes teachers from different educational levels. At certain periods, peace educators received support from local institutions, like the municipality of Bogotá. Peace educators from other countries, including from my center, have had the opportunity to share tools and lessons learned with Colombian peace educators.

**D) Power to identify**, analyze and propose. This relates to the capacity of civil society to generate spaces and processes of deliberative thinking in which to develop positive images of the future, which can be guiding principles. Here, one needs to take into account how to make those deliberative spaces accessible to common citizenship and how to connect those spaces with decision-makers. The power to identify, analyze and propose is crucial in pre-negotiations and negotiations. Some example:

- **COLOMBIA** This power to identify/analyze/propose has been very tangible in Colombia, a country with a long history of civil society participation. Through the National Women Summit in 2013, women from all over the country and from different backgrounds (including ideological differences) joined forces and came up with some agreements and strategic common proposals to influence the peace process that had just started. 3 main points were: **1)** to support the peace process, **2)** to demand the participation of women in all stages of the process and to demand the inclusion of concerns of how the war has impacted on women, understood as heterogeneous, **3)** to demand the establishment of a sub-commission on gender, as a mechanism in the negotiations for guaranteeing and overseeing the participation of women and the inclusion of diverse women's experiences of conflict. The National Summit managed to impact on decision-makers and in the peace process.

All these four functions are interconnected. The power to re-frame polarization and build bridges across conflict divides through people-to-people dialogue groups can lead these groups to jointly propose recommendations for a de-escalation of a conflict.

Another idea. Civil society faces numerous challenges during phases of violent conflict, as we see around the world. Among the difficulties, civil society can be a direct or indirect target of violence and prosecution in conflict, they can be excluded from pre-negotiations and negotiations, they may lack broad social support and capacity to mobilize population at large scale and lack the capacity to influence political actors and conflict parties, they might be affected by increasingly complex conflicts and regional spill-overs that add new layers of conflict or risk scenarios.

At the same time, civil society organizations and local populations worldwide have a tremendous capacity of resilience and mutual support. Among the learned lessons from other conflicts and from peace practitioners, we can highlight here some ideas:

**A) The importance of processes, rather than isolated activities**

**B) Related to processes, the importance of sustainability** This implies making questions such as those that John Paul Lederach proposes:

- What does really exist and work well? There might be social structures already in place across conflict divides that we may want to engage with for strengthening peace infrastructures and peace constituencies. In the case of Nepal, some of these were the forestry associations.

- What does not work well and would have to be changed?

- What does not exist and if created would work well? In the case of South Caucasus, women from across conflict divides are building a women's mediator network, that aims to be a tool for sustainable and inclusive peacebuilding in a region of protracted conflict and entrenched conflict attitudes.

**C) Another lesson learned is the importance of context-specificity** The most crucial resources for peacebuilding emerge from local actors. At the same time, trust-based **alliances between local actors and regional or international actors** can be strategic in advancing peacebuilding for several reasons. Al-

liances can mitigate the negative effects of isolation in times of escalation and violent cycles, and they can offer complementary strengths and resources to local actors, such as logistics, economic support, channels with decision-makers, comparative-learning, etc.

**D) Besides, it may be useful to think of space-related issues**

Who are strategic actors to be reached and engaged in any process, for example due to their condition as connectors with other sectors of society? How to build relations between different peacebuilding initiatives or processes, so as to reinforce synergies and impact? Coalitions, platforms, networks and alliances have proved useful in some cases, such as for women's organizations in many different conflict-affected countries.

**E) In terms of time-frames, it may be important to find the balance between the short-term and the medium/long-term**

As said before, peace processes are long-term processes. Changes in the relational context take time. At the same time, civil society and population in general faces the urgent need to address immediate issues and very concrete needs, including the lives of sons and daughters. The thinking of time-frames alongside conflict-analysis may be useful for reflecting on methods, roles and functions for civil society. For example, at times of high polarization and acute violence, certain civil society initiatives that try to build bridges across conflict divides might require certain level of discretion over a certain period of time, so as to protect them and give them some time to consolidate. A comprehensive approach to time-frames is a challenge and an opportunity.

**F) Civil society in terms of acute conflict has also identified art as a powerful tool for individual and collective healing and nurturing** souls, bodies and minds, as in the case of RD Congo, Colombia and many others.

I will stop here. Thank you very much for your attention. I am very much willing to listening to all your ideas and experiences, and do not hesitate to contact also during the breaks or through email.



## HÜSEYİN ORUÇ

I wish you have a good day.

I thank our moderator; I'll try to tell you about Moro -rather than Turkey's process. We do not know much about that region.

The role of IHH was in effect little discussed, but Moro was much less spoken. I would like to sum up Moro's war and peace very shortly.

Moro is one of the oldest conflicts that we know in the world. It started in 1521. Since then, there has been a peace from time to time but the war has been continuous. First by the Spaniards, followed by the Brits for a short while then, there is a terrible American period. During this American period in which there were great massacres, the people of Moro have been cornered and, their territories were occupied by methods very similar to those in Palestine.

By 1946, when the New World Order, the new world was established, the most fundamental question that was asked was whether everyone, all communities, will continue with their desired form and, with their historical background. Moro is a community that became a state before Philippines became one. The first time the name of the Philippines was spoken was in 1521, when Magellan came in the name of the Spanish king Philip and called it the land of Philip. But, when Magellan came there were already two major Muslim Moro states; The Sultanate of Sulu and The Sultanate of Maguindanao. In other words, we take the Philippines, which is the side of the conflict, as a state, but when we look at its historical background, it is the opposite. The state belongs to the Moroli, and then there are others coming to occupy.

By 1946, Moroli community was there. It has a community with its history, language, culture, and its own geographical structure, and expects to be a state. America says it will give their independence, and when that independence is given, the people of Moro naturally will begin to work as an independent state, but it does not happen. The Philippines is being transformed into a free country by the United States, and the regions in Maguindanao and Sulu on the south, where Muslims live predominantly, are also included in the state of the Philippines, where Muslims have historically owned and established a state. Even this does not trigger a conflict immediately. A legal struggle continues from 1948 to '67. For the Muslim minority in the Philippines, it is considered that in the newly established world, they can take their rights diplomatically and according to law. But in 1967, there is a massacre of Corridor Island in the immediate vicinity of Manila. Young Moro people, nearly 100 young people are killed shot while asleep. Only one man survives the massacre. When he tells what had happened, the whole of the Philippines begin a new movement, especially in the South where Muslims live. And it is decided; there will no longer be a solution to this conflict. A resistance is inevitable. By 1967, there is a small group of resistance. In 70, this resistance is getting organized, an umbrella organization is established. These small organizations, which are part-built, come together under this umbrella. The very important thing was that a resistance organization was representing the whole society. So in this structure where everyone under this umbrella was an actor. In 70, an organized resistance begins. By 73, the state of the Philippines was at the table for the first time.

The thing we talk about today, which we call the peace process has started from 1970 or 1967, and first peace talk were in 1973 since then the conflicts have been going on. Agreements are reached in 73, '76, '89, '91, '96, '97, 2001, 2008. I say this to you, as Peace is constantly being spoken at the table, collapses, spoken, deteriorating, but both sides are very stubborn about peace. They continue to pursue their path without ever leaving the table.

Then this structure is divided into two. The structure that represents the whole Moro is divided into two. The divided side says;

we are not an ethnic or a geographical representation, we are Muslims, our historical identity is our Moro. Moro name is already coming from that. The Spaniards who come to the region with Magellanes call them Moro people like Muslims they know in Andalusia. "We are Muslims, this is the foundation of our identity, so we need to act accordingly" says a leader called Selamet Hashimi. He's starting a new movement. Moro establishes the Islamic Liberation Front and acts on a very important basis. He says, "Our war is not to kill anybody in order to preserve our community. We are trying to create a society. That society can only be created in a safe environment". A very important difference from the first structure, which remains in defense, constantly reveals a resistance without any attack. The Islamic criteria was the basis of this struggle. Non-Islamic criteria is not accepted. War is also carried out based on Islamic law. Many examples of this can be given. But I'm going to go with one that affects me so much and then let me explain the structure of the peace process.

I did not meet another place where such guerrilla system exists and no revolution tax was taken. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front has never forced anyone to give them money or anything. It was a mechanism run by volunteers' alms. It hasn't been fed from abroad either. The system was made exclusively for Moro. No one from abroad controlled the system.

Now when we go there, we hear it from Muslims, but it doesn't mean much. So is this really applied to the land? Cotabato is the capital of Moro. When we visited the top-most Catholic representative as a delegation, I said, how can you trust them? He is someone who wants peace. How do you support peace? You will be a minority here. Your position will be fully rotated. There will be an autonomous structure which will be around 5 million people. 4 million Muslims and 1 million will be Christians and you will be a minority. How do you trust them? In response, he said that "Even in the war environment, we have never suffered any harm from them so why should we be scared in peace?" This proved to me that the law was very well implemented. A very important promise of Selamet Hashimi: "No war that does not

go to peace is unacceptable". A very strong guerrilla system has been created. There's a military force of about 50,000 people. An important amount of those people is mobilised. This is one of the important reasons of why Philippines sit at the peace table.

After the death of Selamet Hashemi in 2003, the current leader Hadji Murad Ibrahim has taken over. He also runs the same politics, never get up from the peace table. There are very serious attacks in this period, there are very serious massacres. None of them distract the Moro Islamic Liberation Front from the peace goal.

Today's process is mediated by Malaysia. But the intermingling of Malaysia is demanded by the Philippines government. As I said, there is such a long period of peace process and there is a mechanism that is constantly deteriorating in this peace process. So when the Moro Islamic Liberation Front sits back on the table in 2001, they say, "We should not stay in this country, we need to go to another country. We need to do this in a third country, we can only express ourselves fully then". A table is set up in Malaysia and two sides are sending their deliberative delegations to Malaysia. There are over 60 sessions. The main mediator is Malaysia. Malaysia is the main mediator and is sitting constantly at meetings and trying to bring the two sides at one point. They have not contented with Malaysia, and Turkey, Indonesia, Japan, England are also determined as the contact group of countries. These countries support the meetings of the Malaysian mediator and give the two sides constant consultations and propositions on resolution.

In 2012, this proves fruitful and the framework agreement is signed. In 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) is signed, which includes the agreements that had been made during all of the previous periods.

The IHH was given a responsibility in the framework agreement in 2012. Again with the experience of these past peace tables, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said: "We had many deals agreed, then the deal was broken. Each time, the state by means

of being a state told the whole world that these agreements were corrupted by the Islamic Front. The Front's voice is diminished, can't tell the world anything. But the state with state facilities always said much more loudly that the peace was broken by Muslims, and it had the opportunity of cultivating on this. In order to prevent this happening this time, a monitoring committee of the Islamic Front (*Third Party Monitoring Team*, TPMT) asked that there should be an independent five-person delegation which should be responsible to check whether both sides fulfill their responsibilities or not. It should be a "completely independent structure and have a binding force". Five people were from outside, not from within the process, not from the direct sides of the state or the Front, and an international figure, the former ambassador of the European Union was chosen for the presidency. Two international representatives were requested. The names were proposed and accepted by the both parties. One of them was [from] Asian Foundation, which is based in America. It is a foundation that has intense activities in Southeast Asia and works intensively in Philippines. The other representative was IHH, which took responsibility as an international NGO. We travel to the region every 2 months. We prepare reports for the last 15 days by discussing with the parties the extent to which the agreement has been fulfilled. Two kinds of reports are being prepared, one is the report we prepare after each mission. In this report we are talking with two main parties. We are holding long meetings with two negotiating delegates and we are receiving the feedback of the two parties on what point they came to. We are not content with this meeting only. In the meetings with the representatives of the civil society, academia, church representatives and Islamic representatives, the statements of these two panels were confirmed and tested. After each two-month mission, a report is sent to both sides. We declare that "These are our detections." This report is taken by the two sides and thus, they are written down in the history. The process is recorded step by step; these are done, the following is not done, for the following reason. A press conference every year is expected to share annual developments. In the press conference we try to be sensitive. The peace processes are very bumpy. It is also very

bumpy within both sides. I had the same experience in Moro, too. Some periods the hope is very low, periods of very high level of distress, some periods are very positive, you are moving fast. Depending on the conditions of that day, we declare somethings openly or limiting ourselves with a panel. In the annual report, the sections that explain the hope that the process is going well is highlighted and these are presented in the press conference. But the shortcomings are necessarily reported and shared with the two main parties. In our meeting with the public or at the press conference, the points that will not harm the peace are put forward and the reports that will contribute to the process are presented.

We had a very important breaking point. I will finish with this. Maybe we'll set up more detailed answers to the questions. The two sides make the deal. But in order for the agreement to be applied, it must be enacted. No agreement that is not enacted has nothing in return. There is a 17-year negotiation, an agreement made at the end of 17 years. And in this deal, when you look at the process, it is actually an agreement where serious concessions are made from the first point. The process was stopped in 2014 with several external interventions when it came to the Assembly stage. The new head of state re-elected in parliament and passed it last July. As a law, this agreement was passed, but some of the articles were cut and rubbed, especially the ones critical for the Front. It was a very serious decision point for the Front. Either they would say yes or not accept it and would return to the conflict. Very basic clauses in the agreement were not put in to the law. They found a very serious solution within themselves. They said, "This is not our agreement. We didn't agree on that. But we accept this law as a first step of the agreement. But we will not make the final point without the other clauses of the agreement being fulfilled.

The agreement basically was this: Both sides are taking one step back. Muslims from independence, the state of Philippines are giving up to destroy the armed forces of the Muslims or the Muslim organizations and deciding to live together. The state acknowledges the past. They acknowledge the report of the com-

mission on all injustices. They acknowledge massacres. They acknowledge all the wrongful punishments and apologize for that. They say that necessary steps will be taken not to repeat them. They acknowledge that these lands belong historically to Moro Muslims and underline this point. Although there is no federative structure, (there is a unitary structure in Philippines) the region has acquired an autonomy and allows it to be governed by its own parliament, the cabinet of its own parliament, and all the authority within it. The troops' retreating, and the creation of a police force of Bangsamorolus: That's the most important thing which is not in the law. The parliament did not allow this, it did not occur. The wealth are distributed as; 75 percent to the Bangsamoro state, sub-state, 25 percent to the central government. In order to tolerate past troubles, 5 percent of the Philippines state's budget is automatically made available to this government every year.

When you look at it financially, an autonomy with about 2 to 3 times more financial resources than the existing structure is being created with the opportunity to be used by its own government.

Another very important acquisition is that they will have a double-law structure. The most basic demands of the Muslims are sharia. The state accepts sharia courts. A new system of sharia courts will be established. From the Constitutional Court to the bottom line, these courts are limited only to the autonomous region. When the both sides are Muslim, all of the cases will be seen in these courts. A scale was brought to this. All of the normally spoken cases would be seen here. But first of all the civil law will apply religious provisions. Later, it was said that the courts related to criminal law would also be comprised within the period. In return, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front promises to lay down its weapons.

An interesting mechanism was created. In fact, it is a mechanism which was previously tried in England. A weapon is too valuable, too sacred to give to the enemy. For this, an independent commission was created to deliver the weapons (*Interna-*

*tional Decommissioning Body* International Disarmament Structure). This commission consisted of Turkey, Norway and Brunei and Turkey assumed the presidency. They will take delivery of weapons as a trustee. They will store them in their designated areas. The Army, the Police and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front will provide the security of these weapons. An institution will include both of the warring parties. The government will decide on how to use these weapons after the process is completed. They will do this in three stages. When the referendum is accepted 30%, when the state fulfills the words and do what it needs to do another 30% , and when the process finished and everything is ok, the last remaining 35% will be discharged. At the beginning of the process 5% was symbolically discharged. Four institutions will decide if the process is completed. First of all, two sides. They will say, "We have fulfilled our promises". But the Malaysian mediator, along with them, and the monitoring committee we are in, will say, "Yes, the agreement is fulfilled. The parties have fulfilled their responsibilities." The process will be completed with these four signatures.

On January 21st, a referendum will be held for the enactment of this law and a transition period will emerge. In the transition period until 2022, a transition government will be established under the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the implementation of this agreement will be followed by this government. We will continue our journeys at two-month intervals until 2022 and we will witness the completion of the process.

[QUESTION couldn't decipher out]

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** The matter is assuming the process. We are not a side of this mechanism. We are not part of the bargaining mechanism. We are not asked to put our opinion here. We are monitoring. Whatever the frame that the two sides agree on, we're looking at whether or not they are keeping their promises. For that, we do not say either do or do not do this. We say that you must do what you promised to two sides. I have an opinion of course. I do say things to both sides when I see them in private,

but we have no opinion as delegation. We must not. The delegation is just a measure of whether the responsibilities are fulfilled.

The mechanism that is set up for weapon or for normalization is as follows: four phases are created. There is disarmament in all four phases, there is general amnesty, there is socio-economic support, there is integration of the armed groups into society, there are rebuilding of cities, there is security issue and improvement of camps and returning these camps to social life. These were determined step by step, transformed into a matrix. The first goodwill indicator was a 5 percent disarmament. It was an important step demonstrating that the process is adopted by the two sides. This was done with a program attended by the head of the state, and the leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. It was very symbolic. A small number of armed group came and said that they had left their weapons. Thus 146 people were thus disarmed. Some of the weapons were delivered. But there still are 30 percent, 30 percent, 35 percent disarmament to accomplish.

**QUESTION:** Didn't they arrest them later?

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** No, they were not arrested. They did not get arrested. If we get into details, something like this came up: It's actually something that's formed by a long experience. There are things that cannot happen in Turkey, there are things that can happen. I will tell you that, too. So this deal was signed in the presidential palace. All the command levels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front attended to the agreement. They made a program where all front commanders and the leader of the general staff were ready. So the predictions are very different. But what the Front wants at first is that; again this is not possible in Turkey. The entire leadership of the Front that carried out the process was given a preliminary immunity. In other words, when the process started, those who carried this process received immunity. Because of that they have freedom of travel. They can go wherever they want and talk. This was not valid for the commanders but only for leadership. There is no warrant

against Hadji Murad Ibrahim, leader of the Front. All his cases are halted and he is able to hold all his meetings in the international arena. If this referendum is accepted on January 21, if the autonomous region is founded and the transition government is formed, then a 30 percent weapon will be released.

**QUESTION:** After the referendum?

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** After referendum comes the process of laying down the % 30 percent of arms. So it is not easy to keep timings within the course of the deal. Normally this law had to be released in 2014. Now it is already four years late. This time, the Front also moves very slowly at some points. For example, the first laying the 30% of arms down will take 7-8 months. In this 7-8-month period, one of the important things for Front is the determination of the general framework of amnesty. The State constantly says 'give us names, we will forgive them'. The Front answers, "I want an amnesty with a general definition, not by name. Because you can forgive the names that I give you today, but tomorrow someone else, another case will occur, what will we do with them?"

Like I said, I do not take side. For me, what the Front says is more accurate. But whatever the agreement says, we remind it to the both sides, over and over again. This issue of release of weapons during the process depends on the fulfillment of certain responsibilities. There is a very important issue here, there are other armed groups in the region, albeit small, outside the two sides, these armed groups have security threats. There will be a huge security gap in the region when the Islamic Front 's (MILF) weapons are released. The security of some areas is entirely under MILF control. The MILF says that here there is this job of creating a police transition power jointly. As long as this does not occur in the field control, he says, "I do not leave my soldiers". This is a must. At the moment their education continues. Step by step. The last point is, after all, this is over, when the quadruple structure that I mentioned earlier, says "yes, the agreement is completed," and signs the Exit Agreement, the last 30 percent of the arms will be released. The number of arms are

not determined yet. So I dubbed the number of 50 thousand, but although the two sides came to this point, they are not agreed on the number fully. The Front says it is 50,000 and the state predicts that it is 20,000. But somewhere in the meantime, I suppose there will be an agreement and the number will be announced. So it will be the base to move on.

**QUESTION:** Thus, after the general amnesty, and after the referendum % 30 percent is advocated by the Front, is it right?

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** No. Determination of general amnesty in these circumstances, will determine those criteria. After the criteria are completed, the general amnesty will be declared. Later. Then there will be a 30 percent process. But the most important criterion here is the referendum. The referendum is supposed to come out 'yes'.

Every place has its own conditions. If I were in Turkey with this position, I would be deported the next day and that would be natural in it. The mechanism of the peace process there gave this monitoring committee a very wide authority. We have the opportunity to ask questions to all parties. I talked to the Chief of General Staff. I had the opportunity to attend the National Security Council meetings and discuss the process there. We interviewed the President. You are in the position of meeting the commanders and the leader of the Front and asking everything you want. So when you enter the national security council, let me share this small thing, could it be ok elsewhere? It was ok there. A new Philippines emerges with Rodrigo Duterte. With him, Philippines has a much more nationalistic structure. I mean, I may not be in the position of acting like I was two years ago. The commander of the Air Force said, "There would be no peace with these Muslims, you are making peace with someone and then someone else comes out. They are messing around. We have now agreed with this Islamic Front, but this will be divided after the agreement. This time we will continue with them then. This will not be acceptable." There is a very formal ambience there as it is here. And I took the floor and said; "The responsibility here is not Front's, it is yours. You are the one who has to

keep it. If you have organizations outside of your agreement, you do not have the right to appropriate it to the Front. Your agreement is with the Front. Whatever we are talking about right now is actually should be about what Front did and what they did not. If we did not talk about third actors here, so you have no right to say something like that". He did not answer, he could not. So questions like that in Turkey or in another country probably will not be asked to air force commander. If you ask, you do not get any serious answers.

As I said, we can have more commend over there. For example, the Front is much more open. They are very open to criticism. You can say all of these things to the people from the leadership down to the bottom. And you feel safe when you are saying all these things. You are not worried about the Front. It is nothing exclusive to me. This is the case for all foreigners and external NGOs involved in the process. There is no third actor harmed so far in the area. There is nobody arrested or suffered of any problem when they were at places under the control of the Front. Here [in Turkey], when we go back to Syria as Ufuk Bey said, everything is intertwined. Neither the journalist nor the civil society nor anyone else has no security in the field. None of us has life safety. This is also the case with the Islamic identity, and you have the same mistrust in terms of Islamic groups in the area, and you have the same distrust of other groups.

Here, let me tell you, we as a foundation (IHH), among Turkish institutions in Syria, I leave the state aside, are the most hard-working organization. We are trying so hard to work in the PYD-controlled areas, but neither our security nor our entrance to the zone is allowed. You cannot enter. You do not have this limit when you move to the Philippines. You go easily wherever you want to go, you reach and you can work.

In terms of women contribution, I can say that the architect of the last period of this peace is women. So if we had opportunities, as the head of the panel on the Philippines side, Miriam Coronel Ferrer, professor would be talking today, we tried hard to mediate. Mr. Tahmaz wanted a lot. Her life is about peace, not

only for the Philippines, but also for the whole world. I think the most important step taken by the previous president about peace was to bring that woman to the head of that panel. It was a courage. Her moderation was really important. A woman's hands' touch. The cuisine of the peace process was also entrusted to a woman. There was a lady at the head of the structure that carried out the borders of the state and a lady at the kitchen of peace, which worked under the National Security Council. Moro peace is made by these two ladies of the State side. I witnessed how they intervened at very critical points and turned it back. I think the criticism that you are conducting or saying has nothing to do with Philippines. It is rather a structure where women come to the fore.

**QUESTION:** Will I get an answer to my question? So I ask you to compare Philippines with Turkey, could this be possible in Turkey?

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** That's what I said. I gave example.

**QUESTION:** I felt like It was an answer to another question.

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** So the conditions are different than here. For once, our mobility is defined by the two sides there which allow us quite a spacious space. As I said, it allows us to talk with everyone from the president and the leader, down to anybody. You are completely free in the possibilities of speech.

**QUESTION:**(not understood.)

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** Cannot be. I mean here, my or this committee mobility is not very feasible in Turkey. Actually in our traditions, in our predictions this easily acceptable... It would be useful, I do not know, needs to be measured. But it is not what is going on here. In other words, I think the most extensive action here was the Wise People Delegation. Even that organization had to be conducted in a certain frame. In that sense, it is here, but it is not something we take, it is something the parties give. If the third eyes do not respect the sides and force their limits, they cannot be the third eye. We have to apply and observe what is de-

cided. So I am not going to decide how this peace will be. One of the important details of this peace is the peace of the two sides. There are facilitators, but neither Moro nor the Philippines have involved -any third part in this peace. For Moro, I'm saying this very comfortably. There were people who wanted to end the process. Clearly, especially in 2014, America wanted to stop the process with an outside intervention and it stopped. In a very unlawful operation, 44 special forces soldiers were killed in the region. This stopped the process, but when we came to 2018, the process started again.

The women are also included in Moro side, but not as much as in Philippines. In Moro side, there is a central committee of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, managed by the central committee. Among the organizations I know, it is one of the structures where consultation, dialogue and decision-making are the best. Each step taken is decided by this central committee. The leader doesn't decide alone. Surely everything is talked there, they make decision there, and run from there. There are women in this central committee. But I think 12-13 of them are women out of 60 members.

**MODERATOR:** Mr. Mesut, then Gülçin. Then you...

**Mesut Hodja:** Thank you Özge. I would also like to ask Hüseyin Bey about the Moro experience. So when I heard about you, I remembered something I had read before, maybe written by yourself. One really gets hopeful. It's about a process that is run very good. I have felt that. So you really did tell us the factual process, really well. That gave me some hope, but what would you say if I asked you to do a more structural analysis? So you have a successful example. What makes this example successful is more cyclical, is it related to the current disposal of the actors involved, or are there any other factors that are unique to the Philippines or Moro? I mean, analyze it yourself, but here is what I am really interested in: For example, is the culture here, let's say general culture more prone to peace? Secondly, unlike here, are the actors more engaged than the state, that come to my mind? Or, I do not know, was that a specific moment which

helped to start the process? The emergence of good leaders on both sides, etc. You make something out of them, again, I do not know how to compare it with other samples or with Turkey. First, what you can say, in terms of the structural elements? Secondly, I may have missed it, but are there places where a process is clogged when you are involved or not? If there has been any deadlock, how did they come out of it, in Moro? And maybe you can say something, if there is a tendency to peace, for example, when we compare Muslim societies, those who are less prone, etc. Thank you.

**HÜSEYİN ORUÇ:** Actually, the politicization of the events identified in the report and the fact that it is looked at through these glasses are more prominent, but I do not have any discomfort in this matter. I have no objections to any questions. Five years ago, when I took this responsibility and IHH assumed this responsibility, I went to the region, we have had a baseline. We took responsibility in a process and we must avoid comparisons that would harm this process. We should not emphasize on negatives, but let the people see the positives, so processes do not get hurt.

When I go there, I am being asked similar questions. Trying to compare this with our issue. I try not to touch it as much as possible, because you can get the good, but when you move the negativity to one another, you do harm and do not benefit. We took this responsibility as IHH, we did not take it as a State. In IHH, there is no State representation. It is a civil representation. This committee has to be like that. It has to be civil representation, that is the only way that it would make sense. Turkey's government also has responsibilities in other structures. There is a Turkish consignee in the commission of the arms decommissioning commission and the handover commission, and he is also the head of the delegation. At the same time Turkey was partly involved, together with Malaysia in the contact group countries by by one ambassador I cannot say that Turkey involves fully but they were there at least in name. The position of IHH was determined by the proposal of Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and formed by the approval of the Philippines government. This is why we are comfortable with that. That is the frame. Everyone

has their own mechanism. We should not be in a position to compare disarmament by disarmament. Because they all have different dynamics. If I could reflect, we prepared a matrix. This is a whole thing. We cannot take lay down arms or general amnesty out of that whole and say that is it, we can do that. The mechanism is a whole.

The second part of your question was asked about two years ago when Sabancı University organized a program in Istanbul, to the panelist of the Philippine side of the peace there, Miriam (who had been invited here too, but could not come). Miriam replied on our behalf: “We invited the IHH both as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the state, and they came.” So, wherever the IHH receives such an invitation in the world, it goes. Civil society does not have the right to say “I am a side of this or that” nor has it any position to do that. However, you can go and be the side of this or that. But, you have to have an invitation to be in a position agreed by the two sides. This invitation came from there, we accepted and have become a part of the process.

If you excuse me, I do not want to go into the comparisons, as not to harm. IHH’s Kurdish issue, we are saying, there is a Kurdish issue. IHH has worked on the Kurdish issue until today. But IHH has three feet: Help, rights advocacy and human diplomacy. Help option is well known. Our areas of practice were mostly outside of Turkey; it became like that. But IHH was involved issues like especially the preparation of the first reports and the field studies in the region. I believe that one of the most effective work in the organization of humanitarian aid work is done by IHH, it still is so, and we have the opportunity to reach to many other regions.

To bring an issue on to the agenda is also important in itself. It is one of the things I care about Moro, without getting too deep. Involving all the people, including the involvement of all actors in the process, it was IHH’s idea. I think this was one of the important positions that were accepted.

What is the structure behind this peace? I can say there is an original structure. Features like being national and native, which we think are blocking the process here, are doing the opposite in Moro. Being national and native have been the main structure of the solution. No structure, no state with interests on the region, wouldn't be allowed to get involved in the process. Especially Muslims, both the Front and others, did not allow foreign actors to enter the region. ISIS, which is one of the main causes of the burning of all sides in the Middle East could not be in the region. They tried to have foothold there but could not. Perhaps, monitoring from the outside had an important effect on this. I have warned both the Philippines state and the Moro Liberation Front regarding the danger of ISIS several times in the last 2 years. When they come to the region necessary measures has been taken with this prediction. I think this is the most important measure.

Secondly, one of the things which we have identified in the process of peace, the Islamic Front carried out a process in which all the actors were involved. There is a lot of actors and groups in the region. There are ethnic differences when you get into it. There are 13 main ethnic groups among the Moros. They speak 13 different languages. There is no language that all of them share in common. But from the outside we see one Moro photo. They have their own inner historical problems too. The most important achievement of the Front is that all of these ethnicities are included in this process, under the upper identity of Moro, rather than their own ethnic identity. The fact that Moro should be governed by one Bangsamoro Parliament: this has been the main point that cannot be compromised from the beginning so that full representation of these differences would be possible. There was also a special women's quota. There is a male dominant society. It is like that in every war. A women's quota was put on women's representation. There will be a quota for women within 80 people.

We also observed this: Peace is built up by big structures but small structures can always hold a potential to break it. For that reason, whether small or big every group or structure needs to

involve in the peace process. One of the important works that the Front has done is that it has ensured that all of them take part in the process. They made no statement against the others. He invited them all the time. In the past 17 years, except for one figure, a political figure, everyone has supported peace. Some people were directly involved, some said they would not allow this peace to be undermined. In other words, they managed to keep their side in a fully represented position.

And there are obligations. Perhaps this is one of the most important things to underline. Al Jazeera asked the leader of the Front “why do you hurry about peace?” He said, in reply, “I have been fighting in the woods for over 50 years”. He left the university, and started struggling. Now he is close to his 70s, he still continues to fight in the forest. “During this period, 300,000 people were killed. 2.5 million people became refugees, gone from the country. If I don’t hurry, there will be no community that will make peace”. This is a very important reference. On the opposite side this may make you seem weaker. It is a balance. But the other side knows that not only there is still a serious resistance, but that this conflict does not end, it continues with them. There is that kind of a balance.

When the main body, Moro Nationalist Front, Nur Misuari reconciles with state, then Selamat Hashimi is outside this and have a smaller group. When Nur Misuari signed the 1996 agreement, he sent an envoy to Selamat and asked his opinion about it. He said, “I do not sign this agreement. This is not our deal. But I would not do anything to disrupt this agreement.” This attitude has become a tradition in all other groups. Selamat Hashimi is a very important name, a name we do not know enough in our geography. But I think we should know him.

Peace is really a life style. Is there any predisposition? I think I just gave you the answer. A word from Selamat “All wars must be in order to achieve peace.” This very clearly sets your position. There is a community that is prone to this. On the state side there are ups and downs. But the Moro side is a very stable process. There is a Marcos period, up to 1986 in the process of

EDSA (the collapse of Marcos, the People's Movement), until the departure of Marcos, there is a process. His politics make peace. But in this period of peace, there is a state policy that is built on a structure that weakens the opposition by fragmenting. You cannot go along with this, there's no peace. After that, some of the presidents wanted peace and some preferred war. When it comes to Aquino, the former president, his lifestyle is very much in line with Front's perspective. He wants peace and has brought peace.

One man's rule is really dangerous. This exists in Moro. The war and the peace are always made by him. The administration of the Philippines is managed by the head of state especially after 1986. No political parties. The parties have no power. When a man is elected, he can conduct country politics as he pleases for six years. He is elected only once. He is in office for 6 years only and the 7th year there is a completely different person. And the parties in the parliament are shaped according to the leader. Those who were liberal before, became nationalist with Duterte, there is no stability on the opposite side. So there is no stability in the state of the Philippines. At a point where they had achieved stability, this peace agreement emerged. There are blockages, very serious blockages. In 2014, when America intervened directly with its own soldiers, as I said earlier, 44 people were killed. This stopped the process. There was a nationalist atmosphere. The Front was right about it one hundred percent. The state was the party that broke the ceasefire agreements. But the front didn't say it. He didn't say it out loudly. He came in the House and in the Senate. He didn't say loudly the reality, in order to safeguard the ground of peace. Everyone knows that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was not faulty at that blockage. But there are 44 soldiers on the other side. There is an atmosphere formed. They preferred silence, waited patiently.

The attempt to occupy the Marawi was, in my view, the arrival of ISIS into the region by American intervention. Marawi had a revolt in May last year. It is the only Muslim city in the whole Philippines. The whole city was destroyed. But in previous warnings, both the state and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front convinced

the people that this was something else, the process was not affected, and so on. For me, the most monstrous break-up was the that of the time when the agreement become a law. In all these break-ups, the red lines of the Front were tresspassed. It was a very important thing for the Front. Nevertheless, they chose to continue with the solution that I mentioned before. "Let's use all the possibilities without overthrowing the table, at least until the end of this transition period, will the state really keep its promises?" In other words, as this constitutional provision has been accepted by a referendum, so the amendment can only be made

by a referendum. No matter how many promises the presidents make to you. Duterte promises to fulfil them. But in 2020 Duterte will not be there and there will be another president. They will have to finish the process with him. Will he fulfil or not? This is a huge risk for the Front. However, they preferred peace.

Another... Yes. The concerns of politicians are of course related to this process, in particular the law of autonomy. In the world there is no such a large autonomy that has been made and accomplished with revolutionary organizations. An important part of the structures on the Philippine side perceive this as a sub-state, not as an autonomous structure. The agreement is very long. The law is also quite long. When you look at their rights, there are very serious rights, a very serious agreement. Because of that, politicians, especially those of the nationalist regions did not want it. It was with these political concerns, that the agreement is rasped. My opinion, if the President wanted, he could have obstructed the rasping.

There is no fear of a political future. Because, like I said, presidents are elected for only one terme. If he makes peace he will be written in history as the peace maker. He won't pay for it. He won't be accountable again. But he didn't choose that. He is not content with only Moro peace; he wants to reunite the Philippines with a federal structure that he thinks will solve all other internal conflicts. He continues to work on the federal structure, the constitutional commission works on it. He made the law or

constitution amendment concerning Moro to be a steppin stone in the federal structure. He promised to give other rights by Federation. I think that is why het did not interfere, in order to leave an open door for it.

I can give you the answer to a question personally. We did this once as IHH. We distributed a humanitarian aid for 50 lorry in the regions under PYD control. We did it together with local institutions. After that, it didn't work again. But IHH is open to any kind of cooperation. If we find such a base, we can work in that area as long as the safety of our teams and the safety of our materials is guaranteed. We do not have a problem with it.



## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

### **Kurdish Conflict in Turkey and The Resolution Process (2013-2015)**

#### **Cuma ÇİÇEK**

### **Introduction**

The new wave of violence on the Kurdish issue has been going on since July 2015. The Resolution Process of 2013-2015, which created great public hopes for the termination of the armed conflicts and the building of social peace, came to an end after the June 07, 2015 general elections. The conflicts that resumed by the end of July, unlike the past, have concentrated in urban areas and have caused socio-economic and spatial devastation<sup>1</sup> in the last two years, which has resulted in a large number of casualties not comparable to the past.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, there were large-scale urban disasters. In this period, also the arrest of the deputies and mayors, the appointment of trustee to nearly one hundred municipalities including Diyarbakır, Mardin and Van metropolitan municipalities,

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**1** United Nations, *Report on the human rights situation in South-East Turkey: July 2015-December 2016*, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, New York, February 2017, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR\\_South-East\\_TurkeyReport\\_10March2017.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR_South-East_TurkeyReport_10March2017.pdf), access date: 26.04.2017.

**2** According to the Anadolu Agency data, official news agency of the state, from July 2015 to January 2017, 823 security officers and 343 civilians lost their lives in domestic and international operations and about 10.000 members of organisation lost their lives or were severely injured. Okur, Yunus, "Terör örgütü PKK'ya 557 günde ağır darbe," *Anadolu Ajansı*, 31.01.2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/teror-orgutu-pkky-557-gunde-agir-darbe/738313>, access date: 11.05.2017.

the closure of dozens of NGOs and media organizations sensitive to the Kurdish issue dealt big blow to the accumulation of both the civil society field and the political arena.

While the Turkish society was not able to completely get out of the socio-political earthquake that was the result of urban conflicts that created very heavy consequences, it experienced a second political and social shock with the military coup attempt on 15 July 2016. Within the scope of the State of Emergency practices, which started after the coup attempt and extended for two year-long period, the closure of hundreds of opposing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and media organizations, the arrest of more than one hundred journalists, exportation of opponent academic from universities, who are not related to the coup attempt, caused hard destruction in the Turkish democracy tradition, especially in terms of freedom of expression and freedom of association.

While there was a great earthquake in the socio-political area in Turkey, on the other side there were significant geopolitical breaks in the Kurdish issue. *De facto* autonomous Kurdish territory has expanded considerably geographically under the leadership of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the “sister organization” of the Kurdistan Communities Union (*Koma Civakên Kurdistanê* - KCK) in the Kurdish region located in the northern Syria. Syrian Kurds have made significant progress both in the military arena and in the political arena. On the other hand, the search for independence in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, which has been operating in Iraq since 2003 as a semi-independent state, has increased in this period. On September 25, 2017, “Independence Referendum” was held in Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah provinces within the IKR and in disputed territories such as Kirkuk. 72% of the approximately 4.6 million voters participated in the referendum, and voted “Yes” with 92.73%.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rudaw, “Resmi Sonuç – Yüzde 92.73 Evet”, 27.09.2017, <http://www.rudaw.net/turkish/kurdistan/270920177>, access date: 12.10.2017

The dynamics summarized above show that we have come to an important distinction as a society in the context of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. In a cross-border context, in a period where the Kurdish space<sup>4</sup> is losing and becoming fragile, Turkey will either become a peaceful and stable island of democracy in a place that going down into the ambiguities which increasing day by day, or it will continue to remain a part of those ambiguities and conflicts which created by ambiguities itself.

The termination of violence and the construction of social peace are not possible through the dialogue and negotiation processes between the actors who are directly involved in the conflict alone, as shown by the internal conflicts taking place in different times and places in the world. Three dialogue processes in Turkey during the period of 1999-2015 confirm this situation. Dialogue and consensus processes between actors in different fields of society as well as conflicting actors are also important. The work of “construction of social peace” that aims to overcome the problems caused by conflicts in areas such as economic, social, cultural, political, psychological, plays a critical role in termination of domestic conflicts.

This research aims to analyze NGOs’ positions and capacities for the end of conflicts in the Kurdish issue and the construction of social peace. In this context, it accounts for NGOs’ work on conflict resolution and social peace-building in the 2013-2015 Resolution Process. This report analyzes the place and the role of the NGOs both in the failed Resolution Process and a possible negotiation process, by their own point of view.

Qualitative research technique was used as research method. A semi-structured in-depth interview was held with a total of 45 NGOs and three specialists in the cities of Diyarbakir, Van, Istanbul and Ankara between 15 May and 30 July 2017. Based on the

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<sup>4</sup> I borrow the concepts of “Kurdish space” (*espace kurde*) or “Kurdish area” (*sphere kurde*) from Jean-François Pérouse. These concepts draw attention to the geographical, cultural, economic and political boundaries of the Kurdish mobility. Pérouse, Jean-François, “Reposer la ‘question kurde,’” in Semih Vaner (dir.) *La Turquie*, Paris, Fayard, 2005, 357-387.

seven basic functions of NGOs in conflict resolution and compromise construction, the NGOs that fulfilled any or a few of these functions in the Resolution Process were mainly preferred. In addition to conducting activities in the Resolution Process, it was tried to be discussed with NGOs that have different socio-political motivations and operate in different fields as much as possible. In order to reflect the voice of the Kurdish space where the conflicts intensified, Diyarbakir and Van cities, which have regional metropolitan area characteristics, were selected. In order to understand the general tendency in the scale of Turkey, Istanbul and Ankara were preferred as the two cities where civil society activities intensified and have capacity to influence the country scale.

### **1. Conflict Resolution and NGOs: A Theoretical Framework**

JP Lederach, one of the prominent figures in conflict resolution and social peace-building issue, in his work entitled *Building Peace: Sustainable Consensus in Divided Societies*,<sup>5</sup> groups the negotiation processes and actors for peace construction on three levels: Top leadership, middle-range leadership and grassroots leadership.

Accordingly, senior negotiations within top leadership take place among military, political or religious leaders with high visibility. These negotiations, which take place at a high level, deal mainly with issues such as ceasefire and are governed by a single mediator with a high level of visibility.

Negotiations in middle-range leadership include respected leaders in various sectors, ethnic or religious leaders, academics, intellectuals and civil society leaders. Negotiation at this level consists of activities such as problem-solving workshops, conflict resolution trainings, peace commissions, internal or sub-commission studies.

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<sup>5</sup> Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999, p. 39.

Finally, the grassroots leadership consists of leaders at the local level, NGO leaders, opinion leaders, managers of public service organizations such as the field of education and health. Figure 01 shows this model developed by Lederach.

Lederach's model underlines that the conflict resolution and social peace construction work is a very scaled and multi-actor process. In addition, the model demonstrates that community involvement and negotiations, particularly in middle-range and grassroots leadership areas, are as important as peace studies in the area of top leadership, taking into account the size of the affected population at each scale. In this sense, it emphasizes the importance of actors and their roles at the intermediate and societal level in conflict resolution and social peace construction work.

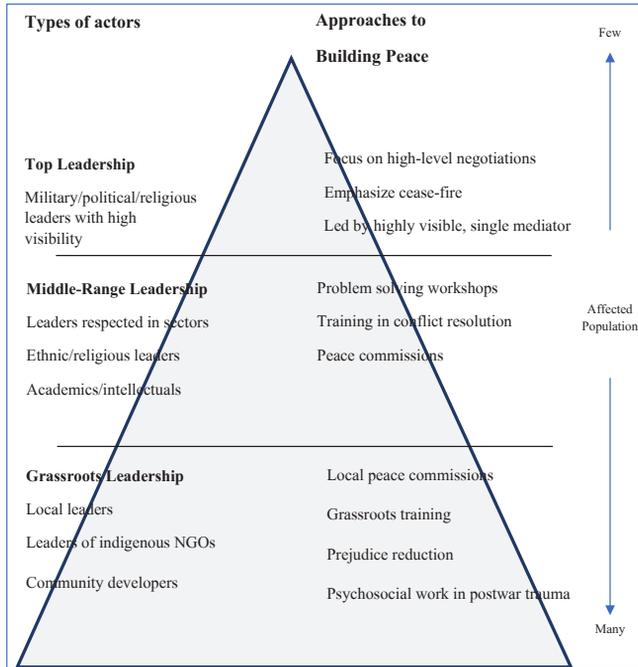
The removal of the fears and threats that emerged during the conflict period, the removal of the social polarization of the different social groups, in short, the construction of "social peace" depends on the socialization of conflict resolution and consensus process<sup>6</sup> and the establishment of social consensus.<sup>7</sup> As seen in this approach developed by Lederach, NGOs, which constitute one of the most critical actors of both middle-range and grassroots studies, play an important role in the process of social cohesion.

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**6** Çelik, A. Betül and Mutluer, Nil, "Toplumsal Barış ve Barış Süreci'nin Toplumsallaşması," in, Necmiye Alpay & Hakan Tahmaz (eds.), *Barış Açısını Savunmak. Çözüm Sürecinde Neler Oldu?*, İstanbul, Metis Publication House, 2015, 59-75.

**7** Çelik, A. Betül, "Kürt Meselesini Dönüştürmede Toplumsal Mutabakat İhtiyacı: Neden, Nasıl, Kimle?," in, Murat Akbaş (ed.), *Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2014, 131-152.

Figure 01: Actors and Approaches to Peace-Building



Reference: Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999, p. 39.

On the other hand, as demonstrated by recent experiences, NGOs can also play a critical role in top leadership. For example, conflicts between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on the Bangsamoro region in the Philippines and those that have killed over 100,000 people for decades ended with the mediation of NGO-state mixed structure that consist of Britain, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey states and also four international NGOs. Conciliation Resources based in London, Center for Humanitarian Dialogue based in Geneva, Muhammadiyah based in Indonesia and Sant'Egidio Community in Rome provided

significant contributions to the Peace Process in Philippines.<sup>8</sup> The International Contact Group, established in the Philippines, provided an important reference to peace studies with a mixed mechanism, in which state and non-state actors co-existed and were unprecedented<sup>9</sup>. In the process of monitoring the deal in the Philippines, NGOs played and still playing a critical role. There is also the Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) from Turkey within the “Third-Party Monitoring Team” (TPMT), which is responsible for monitoring and reporting compliance with the peacekeeping steps taken by the parties after the agreement.<sup>10</sup> The TPMT is chaired by an impartial international actor and consists of local and international NGOs proposed by the state and the MILF<sup>11</sup>.

In the Indonesian-Ache conflict like the Philippines-Bangsamo-ro, civil society has also played a critical role in high-level leadership. The 30-year conflicts in Indonesia have been reconciled as a result of five rounds of negotiations, led by Finnish former president Martti Ahtisaari, who is the mediator of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), an international NGO.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the principle of “No agreement has been reached on any issue without an agreement on every issue” developed by Ahtisaari in the negotiation process has become an important reference in peace studies. Ahtisaari make actual “the keeping the negotiation process alive” approach<sup>13</sup> formulated as the “bicycle theory”

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**8** Democratic Progress Institute (DPI), *Briefing: International Contact Group for the Southern Philippines Peace Process*, Democratic Progress Institute, 2014; Söylemez, Hatice, *Moro: Uzakdoğu'da Bir Bağımsızlık Mücadelesi*, İstanbul, İHH İnsani ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Merkezi, 2016, pp. 156-148.

**9** Democratic Progress Institute (DPI), *Çatışma Çözümünde Filipinler Deneyimi' Konulu Karşılaştırmalı Çalışma Ziyareti Raporu*, London, Democratic Progress Institute, 2016, p. 20.

**10** DPI, *ibid.*, p. 40; Söylemez, *ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

**11** DPI, *ibid.*, p. 40.

**12** Aspinall, Edward, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* Policy Studies No. 20, Washington, D.C., East-West Center, 2005.

**13** Powel, Jonathan, *Teröristlerle Konuşmak: Silahlı Çatışmalar Nasıl Sona Erdirilir?*, İstanbul: Aykırı Publication, 2014.

by J. Powel, the representative of the Tony Blair government in the British-Northern Ireland peace process and directing the whole process at first hand. Accordingly, the irreconcilable differences between the positions of the parties can only be overcome by keeping the negotiation process alive, and this principle ensures this vitality.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up, NGOs play important roles in conflict resolution and peacekeeping at all three levels. What is more, the experiences that have emerged in the peace processes that NGOs have been involved in recent years, have begun to set an important reference for conflict resolution and compromise construction.

T. Paffenholz and C. Spurk, who work on the roles of NGOs in the context of social consensus, underline the seven functions of these organizations: **(1)** protection of citizens, **(2)** monitoring and accountability, **(3)** advocacy and public communication, **(4)** in-group socialization and peace culture, **(5)** conflict-sensitive social cohesion, **(6)** intermediation and facilitation, and **(7)** direct service delivery (See Figure 02).<sup>15</sup>

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**14** Aspinal, *ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

**15** Paffenholz, Thania & Spurk, Christoph, "Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding," *The World Bank Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*, Paper No. 36, Washington, DC, October 2006; Paffenholz, Thania & Spurk, Christoph, "A Comprehensive Analytical Framework," Thania Paffenholz (ed.) *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010, 65-76. Based on the seven basic functions of the NGOs, this work takes an in-depth look at Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Cyprus, Israel / Palestine, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Somalia and Nigeria cases. Ayşe Betül Çelik's work on Turkey presents a remarkable analysis of the role of NGOs in terms of the end of conflicts in the context of the Kurdish issue and the construction of social peace, what functions are developed at what level and what needs to be done. See: Çelik A. Betül, "Turkey: The Kurdish Question and the Coersive State," in, Thania Paffenholz (Ed.), *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010, 153-179.



Figure 02: Seven functions of the NGOs in conflict resolution

*Protection of citizens* includes protecting the lives, freedom and property of civilian citizens against state or non-state authorities during periods of conflict. Examples include the creation of peace zones where the entry of weapons is not allowed, the removal of landmines, the disarmament of child soldiers and their participation in social life, in context of the protection of citizens.

*The monitoring and accountability* function involves monitoring and identifying the activities of actors in conflict, particularly the state apparatus and the government. For example, human rights violations stemming from the conflicts of NGOs and demanding the accountability of the responsible actors and related actors can be evaluated within this function.

*Advocacy and public communication's* role involves NGOs' work on disseminating information on conflicts to the public, taking into account the interests of the public and the interests of citizens, particularly the exclusionary groups. Campaigns aimed at raising social awareness of conflict-related child deaths, mass mobilization for the resumption of peace talks or lobbying activities for political actors can be shown as an example of this function.

*In-group socialization and culture of peace* function involves the work of NGOs to disseminate peace cultures among different social groups. This can include talking about interdisciplinary dialogue, eliminating discriminatory ideas from radio or television programs/series, street theaters, sporting events, music festivals or school books on cohabitation.

*Conflict-sensitive social cohesion* function involves efforts to create the infrastructure for the conflicting segments to live together as equal citizens in society. This function mainly focuses on common activities between old and new hostile groups. Examples of bringing together those who have opposing political ideas, bringing together the families of those who have lived their lives on different sides of the conflict, or peace attempts initiated by these families can be given as examples in the context of social cohesion.

*Intermediation and facilitation* the function of involves the development of dialogue at local and national level between the conflicting group and the state or between different social groups supporting the conflicting groups. For example, an attempt may be made to release detained soldiers, to talk with the actors of the ceasefire or non-violent days, or to participate as an observer in the process of dialogue and negotiation between the conflicting actors.

Finally, the *service delivery* function includes services offered to the victims in social, medical, legal, economic areas during or after conflict periods. Service delivery can be in a variety of areas, from providing food assistance or providing legal or psycho-

logical support to displaced persons, to providing health services directly to those who have been tortured.

Based on the theoretical framework summarized above, the following sections analyze the roles of NGOs in the end of conflicts stemming from the Kurdish issue and in the context of social consensus.

## **2. What Did the NGOs do in the Resolution Process ?**

When the involvement and contribution of NGOs to the Resolution Process is examined in detail, the first point that should be underlined according to the results of the field work is as follows: The NGOs focused mainly on the lobbying and advocacy activities directed to the AK Party government and the mainstream Kurdish movement. It is seen that most of the NGOs tried to get involved in the policy-making process by presenting their opinions both verbally and in writing to the AK Party government and the components of the mainstream Kurdish movement at various levels. For example, an NGO representative in the economic field in Diyarbakir notes that, the state had a remarkable archive of the Kurdish issue and that NGOs played an important role in the accumulation of this knowledge. He also underlines that most of the information transferred by the bureaucracy from the local places to the center was “corrected” by the NGOs. On the other hand, most NGOs express that they convey their views to the government and mainstream Kurdish movements, but these were not effective and most political actors did not pay regard to themselves in most instances.

Secondly, although the state and the mainstream Kurdish movement did not take account of the information produced by NGOs sufficiently, as some participants pointed out, the Kurdish issue in this period was visible to the public in a size that would not be compared to the past, and was spoken by large segments of the society in different details. For example, an NGO representative in Ankara on the social field states that many issues that they have not been able to talk about in the past have become easily debated during the Resolution Process. NGOs have played

a critical role in discussing and debating the issue at this level in the public sphere. In this regard, most participants especially point to the Wise People's Committee. Most NGO representatives, together with different critics, consider the Wise People's Committee as a civil society work. The two main reasons for this evaluation are that the committee had many reputable and institutional persons in the field of civil society and that the regional delegations contacted NGOs in the cities where they went to.

Thirdly, although NGOs could not participate in the process as a formally recognized third party, they were seen to mediate between both local government officials and the components of the mainstream Kurdish movement, as well as between HUDA-PAR and HDP. This goes especially for Diyarbakir. These mediation initiatives were effective in most cases such as the 6-8 October Kobanî incidents, the road closures, and the release of detained public officials, during the Resolution Process continued. However, attempts to mediate in trench and urban conflicts that occurred after the end of the Resolution Process failed. In the regard of mediation, it has also been observed that some civil society actors advocating knowledge-based have played bridge building role and constructed dialogue mechanism sometimes directly or sometimes indirectly between actors who taken different position in Kurdish Issue such as political groups, business communities and NGO communities.

Fourthly, during the Resolution Process, it is seen that some NGOs, especially rights-based NGOs, took the initiative and opened up new domains related to their work fields and tried to contribute to the process. For example, the de facto Monitoring Committee of 25 people created in Diyarbakır can be given as an example. Throughout the process, this delegation, monitoring both the PKK and the state actors and trying to intervene in times of crisis, has worked to prevent the failure of the process by giving feedback to the parties. It has also been observed that an NGO working in the field of gender and peace in Turkey has made considerable efforts in order to continue the process in a gender-sensitive way. The NGO in question, has made efforts to make the delegation's efforts to become gender sensitive by

negotiating with 14 women in the Wise People's Committee that had 63 members. The efforts of the institution have continued through similar negotiations both to the two parties of the process and to other political actors. A NGO, operating in the field of confrontation the past and justice, has been at various levels of contacts with the government, the HDP and the CHP, in order to put this issue on the agenda of the political parties.

Civil society's works seem to be more successful in Van city, perhaps because of the city's two hegemonic powers and dynamic political configuration. Unlike Diyarbakir, Istanbul and Ankara, efforts to dialogue and cooperation between NGOs working in left-secular and Islamic-conservative motivations in the city of Van have emerged and a remarkable mobilization of local peace building has been created. Some NGOs have worked on the construction of social peace taking initiative. A representative of an NGO with an Islamic-conservative referenced in this initiative summarizes the works done in this way:

With the beginning of the Resolution Process, we have created an initiative and, like I said from different environments; from HUDA-PAR to AK Party and to HDP, we tried to get everyone into this initiative. We tried to visit operational areas with the commission we created on this initiative. A consciousness-raising work about peace. For example, we went to the battalions, governorships, district governorships, municipalities, parties ... The districts of Başkale where the operations made, we went there. We went to the battalions there. We were guests of the battalions. This created an extraordinary morale both on the public and on the conflicting parties.

An NGO representative in Van states that the active involvement of several NGOs with critical roles in the local created a movement throughout the city by causing a domino effect. The participant expresses the dynamism and effects of it that emerged in the city with the following words:

Almost all structures in Van - both Islamic and the other side - have contributed positively. In fact, discussing was a contribution. This work was a contribution. Even from the Islamist or Islamic tradition segment that stands in the most controversial point on this issue had to engage in the Kurdish issue after a certain point. In this case, beyond the situations of 20 years ago, they had to accept new situations, which was a development. Or here, let me say the extreme one, even the representatives of the CHP or the MHP had come to be able to argue in this intense agenda.

Fifthly, in this period, it is seen that some of the NGOs did researches more effectively which they do routinely perform in the social field or they could not perform before and postponed. For example, an NGO working on conflict victims expresses that they have been able to do field work to create an inventory including all conflict areas that they could not do due to political and legal problems in the previous period. Another NGO representative, providing psycho-social support for the victims of the conflict, states that they strengthened their institutional capacity to make more contributions in their field of expertise in case of a possible political solution. An NGO representative, working in the field of women and the economy, underlines that they have done works to reduce violence-enhancing effects of the conflicts in the streets, daily life and workplace.

Sixthly, some NGO representatives argue that the pressure of civil society is effective not only during the Resolution Process, but also at the beginning of the process. The issue was socialized largely and there was a social demand for solution as a result of the studies carried out in the field of civil society throughout the country. Accordingly, the works in the field of civil society had a remarkable effect on this social demand and the need to step. It can be said that this situation is especially valid in the Kurdish space. Since, the contribution of NGOs cannot be ignored in the fact that both the conflict resolution and the awareness of social peace construction reached wide circles, and that the sense and idea which it is not possible to solve the issue by violence became

dominant in the Kurdish space. With the expression of a rights-based activist in Diyarbakir, NGOs in one sense “disseminated to country-wide what the Kurdish people, the people from Diyarbakir think, want and desire”.

Finally, it appears that some NGOs worked on improving the capacities of civil society actors on conflict resolution and social peace construction. The most prominent activities in this regard are the workshops and field trips in which similar cases are examined and discussed. In the field work, it was observed that many NGO representatives interviewed were involved in experience sharing projects to see similar conflict resolution processes in different countries.

### **3. What Could Not NGOs Do?**

Given the scope and difficulties of the Kurdish issue, the work outlined above shows that the participation and contribution of the NGOs to the Resolution Process was very limited. Civil society actors have generally been influential in the areas of “declaring their views, making meetings and conducting diplomacy in this sense”, as underlined by a representative of a rights-based NGO in Diyarbakir. However, in the Resolution Process, they could not “think ahead, design it, and put it in front of the parties as a route map”.

A participant who is knowledge-based advocate in Istanbul points out that NGOs could neither facilitate the process by smoothing the way for the parties producing information, nor fulfill their duties in the fields of “social peace”, “coexistence with the differences”, “despite differences, solving issues by talking without arming”, “expressing differences democratically”, which the society “poisoned” by the 40 year-long conflict was expecting from them. Some participants, particularly through the Wise People’s Committee, claim that peace has been attributed to people significantly and that a social consensus about peace has been created, but many participants underline that “peace is not socialized”. In this regard, most participants remind us that even the regional reports of the Wise People’s Committee

have not been declared out. A participant working in the field of discrimination and building of equality between differences in Istanbul expresses the passive position of NGOs in the Resolution Process with the following words:

The most important cause of the failure of the last process is that the process was not attributed to the social segments. Because, if it was a process attributed to the social segments, warning mechanisms could be produced from civil society to state's or PKK's every attitude as "we want peace, this can prevent it". They were not produced. We watched. They went to İmralı, negotiated, then to Kandil, from there to National Intelligence Organization (MİT -*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*) the things like this... We watched this process. We watched in this way: When the demands we want to defend appeared, we stood around them, we were clustered. But we did not produce a demand.

In the regard of socialization/publicization of peace, some participants argue that in the Resolution Process the NGOs could/ have not do(ne) enough activities to disseminate especially the peace culture in the social field. In this issue they argue that the civil society actors themselves were not very familiar with the "peace culture", that they could not build a "language of peace" and that it is influential in the weakness of the work towards the construction of social peace. An NGO representative working in the field of human rights, going a step further suggests that especially left-wing NGOs have "militarist discourse", very centralized decision-making processes and that it is therefore not possible for these institutions to make civil decisions within themselves and to implement democratic methods.

Some of the participants are discussing the debate on socialization/publicization of peace through concept of "localization of peace". Accordingly, peace was required to "localize" in the Resolution Process. In this regard, the Wise People's Committee could play an important role despite all its borders. NGOs could play an important role in this issue. However, neither the AKP

government nor the mainstream Kurdish movement set a such a goal, nor did the NGOs be involved in the process by taking the initiative in this regard. A participant working on NGOs states that the socialization the peace was completely ignored in the Resolution Process: “There is such a thing in this matter. First, it has to be a dialogue between the conflicting parties. Secondly, there must be a connection between the subject, the dimensions of it and the society. I think this second part was not even planned in the Resolution Process”. The participant states that this can be achieved through topics such as women, the environment, disability, children, not the subjects. Because, speaking of the Kurdish issue by subjects “free from issues” does not lead to a solution, on the contrary, it prevents talking about the multidimensional Kurdish issue:

We were talking about stone-throwing children 7-8 years ago, did not we? Now we are talking young people who fight for the trench. We saw the that the children who threw stone that day become the youths who were fighting for the trench. Thousands of them lost their lives in this thing (urban conflicts). Now, what will we talk about in the new generation? If the evolution of this situation is so, if Kurdish youth, stone-throwing children turned into the ones who fight for the trench, what will the next generation of Kurdish young people become? So as long as we do not deal with these social dimensions of the issue, pay attention to stone-throwing children, develop a civil society activity to understand it, make connection with here and there, I think it will be pointless political debate nothing more than an effort transmit unilateral declaration to the other.

Some participants state that NGOs are not able to follow up and cannot claim “peace request”. A participant who works in a rights-based field in Istanbul remind us the “Monitor Request”, which is transformed into a crisis through the “Monitoring Committee” in the Resolution Process, and argues that NGOs can actually do without waiting for the parties, but no significant work has been done in this regard. A participant who works in the

gender field in Ankara reminds us that we still do not know why the process was terminated, who terminated, and who has how much share of it is due to the lack of this “social arbitration”. Another participant who stated that peace was a political promise of the PKK and the AK Party government, is expressing that NGOs did not stand for:

Peace is a political promise given to this society, to the people of Turkey, to the nations of Turkey. Just like we have to pursue it as a promise of financial matters, retirement or hiring. We do not do that. The right, the left, the opposition, “Hang on. You negotiated in seven geographical regions with Wise People’s Committee and other people. You went İmralı to interview, Kandil you did this, the other did these.” This is the words given after the official announcement of the PKK and the state of Turkey. Therefore, while I am waiting for peace, I must be a claimant. I must be owner of the demand.

The development of partnerships that will overcome political ghettos and make dialogue among different social groups is another domain where NGOs were weak. Many participants state that NGOs preferred to “stay in their neighborhood and did not engage in co-operation with different segments during the Resolution Process. In this regard, ghettoization, gray areas, political engagement in the civil process, which was underlined in the previous section, continued in the Resolution Process. An NGO representative in Ankara states that “the confrontations of different social groups” were not provided, and the fears that exist in this issue were effective. Again, a knowledge-based NGO representative in Istanbul underlines that the left-secular community and the Islamic-conservative community could not have partnerships with a few exceptions. In the Resolution Process, while the left-secular community established associations in itself and involved in the process, the Islamic-conservative community remained largely out of process and referred the work to the ruling party. An NGO representative who is working in the field of conflict-sensitive social relations, which brings together conflicting social groups, supports this argument and states that

the right-conservative sector is moving held themselves at a distance to the process and waited in the expectation that “when is this issue going to come to end and our being right will be understood?”.

On the other hand, an NGO representative from Istanbul, known for his/her Islamic-conservative identity, states that for the first time the Islamic community, with the Resolution Process, considerably involved the Kurdish issue. The participant expresses the works of the Islamic-conservative community with the following words:

For the first time, the Islamic community has got involved in this issue almost immediately. At least 30-40 meetings were held in the south east, Urfa, Diyarbakır. All Islamists went to this region. From the Islamist madrasah and theologians of the region, to the civil society organizations, they sat around the same table for the first time. So, they came to the table. It was a very important thing. So, it's been an atmosphere that anyone have not seen for 80 years. It was a nice situation. Everyone trusted this situation.

It seems that the regional dissidence as well as the political ghetto could not be overcome in the Resolution Process. As some participants underlined, there was no dialogue between the east and the west of the Euphrates, and the necessary ways for it were not opened. NGOs could play a role in this area. However, a remarkable activity was not performed in this regard. A NGO representative working in gender field in Ankara states that the Kurdish Women's Movement, which includes many NGOs, participates in the process as a direct party, but this is not valid for women's organizations operating in Ankara. Just because of this situation, according to the participants, the regional dissidence is being reproduced in the field of civil society and it is becoming difficult to talk about the Kurdish issue, conflict resolution and peace for a very limited number of NGOs in Ankara that do something about social peace. In this regard, another participant from Ankara reminds us that the activities to produce so-

cial consent for peace in the western region have not been done sufficiently. According to the participant, in the west, there is a limited number of NGOs who are willing to contribute to the political solution of the Kurdish issue and the social peace. These NGOs need to focus on activities that produce consensus on social peace, spread peace culture in the western part of the country rather than to engage in solidarity activities with institutions in the Kurdish space.

Some participants point out that problems such as political ghettoization and regional dissidence, which are prevalent in the field of civil society, can be overcome, in particular by truth and confrontation, but that NGOs did not contribute adequately to this issue. Although this issue has a very important place in world experiences, has been spoken in Turkey for many years and has been expressed in the Resolution Process, the works on this issue has been limited.

#### **4. Dynamics Limiting the Participation of NGOs in the Process**

On the limited contribution of NGOs to the Resolution Process, NGO representatives point to the problems originating from the process side, while underlining the problems caused by the civil society itself.

Most respondents state that the Resolution Process is closed to civil society participation. They argue that the limited negotiations with NGOs were more “procedural” and that they have instrumentalized NGOs to create legitimacy for the work they do. Accordingly, both sides managed the process by “an authoritarian peace organization” and did not want to involve civil society as a playmaker. The AKP government and the mainstream Kurdish movement demanded civil society to be excluded from the process or to involve civil society in the direction of their own will.

An example often reminded in this issue is the Wise People’s Committee. Many participants underlined that this committee actually functioned as a kind of civil society and that many people from NGOs were involved in it, and that NGOs could not

intervene in the formation of this delegation. As expression of a NGO representative from Diyarbakir, the Wise People's Committee was "prepared not by the non-governmental organizations' power, demand or the labor they gave to this process, large part of it prepared by the government, some of it by the PKK, we can say by asking Ocalan". A rights-based NGO representative in Ankara states that the Wise People's Committee should have been established as an independent structure consisting of experienced NGOs in various fields such as gender, children, urban rights, disability, human rights, but the government preferred to form the committee by appointment in accordance with the political culture.

Another participant working in the gender field claims that the AK Party government has not only appointed members of the Wise People's Committee, but that kept the NGOs out by hand over the role of civil society to this committee. An NGO representative in Ankara states that the AK Party and HDP did not speak enough of this issue even with their own grassroots aside from NGOs, reminding the crisis that emerged from the leak of an interview minute with Ocalan at the beginning of the Resolution Process. Because the basic consensus was not to talk about the issue:

For example, if an essay contest was held in which all the middle schools as "what would happen in peacetime?", people could have started talking more about it. It is not possible for civil society or anyone to claim this as a social demand, as long as it proceeds only through the minutes of interviews between certain delegations behind certain gates. Even the political parties of the sides did not even talk about this issue with their own grassroots. Because the basic consensus was not to talk about the issue.

Secondly, it is important to note that most of the NGOs expected from the state and the mainstream Kurdish movement to "open space" for their participation in the Resolution Process. It is seen that the tendency to intervene within the roles given to

them in the playground determined by the direct parties of the conflict is seen to be dominant within the NGOs, rather than being involved in the process as a party, a collocator and a subject of the issue. As an expression of a NGO representative rights-based advocating in Istanbul, NGOs in Turkey do not position themselves so much as actors of a certain process. However, NGOs constitute a structural part of many peace processes in the world.

It has been observed in the fieldwork that NGOs approach the conflict resolution and social peace construction issues as a process of negotiation at the top-level leadership and do not sufficiently consider them as negotiation processes to be carried out at the grassroots or middle-range leaderships. In this sense, many NGOs limit their roles to mediation, arbitration or monitoring among the parties and advocacy functions. These organizations seem did not to work adequately in the field of activities that can be summarized as “socialization of peace”, such as protection of citizens, direct service providing to conflict victims, int-group socialization and dissemination of peace culture, strengthening of conflict-sensitive social cohesion.

Thirdly, it is stated that the fact that AK Party government and the mainstream Kurdish movement had a very limited space for civil society actors and that the NGOs had an expectation rather than taking initiative and that the Resolution Process was not open enough to allow public debate, limited the participation of NGOs. Most participants emphasize that public oversight must be provided, although they acknowledge the necessity of closeness to some degree so that the process is not spoiled by actors who oppose it. Most participants state that they still do not know why the “table was knocked over though two years have passed since the termination of the Resolution Process. To summarize, closure to public oversight was one of the most important obstacles preventing many NGOs from being involved in the process, according to many participants.

Finally, some participants argue that the state and the mainstream Kurdish movement did not only exclude NGOs, but also for-

ced to take sides. Accordingly, both parties have forced the civil society actors to stand with themselves and support their political arguments. This situation, on the one hand, prevented the parties from receiving criticism, views and suggestions from the society, but on the other hand, caused especially the NGOs who preferred to stay in the “gray area” to become ineffective.

In addition to the problems stemming from the direct sides of the conflict, which are summarized above, many of the problems arising from civil society itself are underlined. The most important issue that is often emphasized in this regard is the problem of prejudice and political engagement that dominates civil society. According to many participants, these partisanship and political engagements prevented NGOs from taking a critical position in the Resolution Process, and in most cases directed them to legitimizing their political discourses and to doing business on the axis of those discourses. A participant working on NGOs states that in the Resolution Process, the problem of political engagement and prejudice is very decisive at NGOs’ exclusion by political actors or at not opening enough space for civil society. As a result of political engagements and partisanship of NGOs, political actors have treated such organizations as actors who support themselves in the process and as political contributors. In this regard, for example, an NGO representative from Van argues that the Justice for the Brotherhood Platform (*Kardeşlik İçin Adalet Platformu*) has essentially lost its function and dispersed due to this partisanship and political engagement. An NGO representative trying to stay in the “gray area” in Van suggests that this partisanship has also arisen in the work of the Wise People’s Committee and that there was in fact no real ground for dialogue as a result of this problem:

For example, in the provincial meetings of wise men, this was very obvious. The pro-government, or civil society advocating the ideology of the government, assessed issues from the point of view of the government. Also, opponents looked at the issue from that perspective and criticized. At those meetings, nobody actually nurtured the process by taking a step back or getting close to each

other, raising common discourses. In other words, everyone again approached with their own ideological point of view, party, guard at that time.

A participant in the field of civil society goes one step further and argues that the NGOs' political engagement and their partisan participation in the process behind the political actors makes dialogue and negotiations impossible:

Participants are involved in a kind of partisan participation. As far as I can tell, the state also preferred it, and so did Kurdish politics. Now this is not a good negotiation method for me. More precisely, it does not produce good negotiations, quality negotiations when it comes to solving a problem with social or security-oriented dimensions, when the parties take their civil society's support. Then you are gathering the NGO behind its policy engagement. When everybody brings their NGO into their own engagement, there may be the environment of those one-sided declarations. That cannot make sense.

As an expression of a participant from Diyarbakir, NGOs, as a result of their political engagement and partisanship, "got into the wind of politics instead of developing creative projections". The NGOs who lost their criticism affirmed the process in public sphere, but this prevented them from contributing to the process and seeing weaknesses of it. Moreover, while this situation has inactivated NGOs on the one hand, on the other hand, it has also damaged the credibility of these organizations in society.

A participant working on NGOs states that the main conducive and facilitating actors in the negotiation process may be actors in the gray area that have not been involved in political engagements in the past but this have not been provided in the Resolution Process as well:

NGOs who have not been involved in political engagements in the past, who can explain to us what kinds of victimization are experienced by different social groups in Turkey, and can convince society that such victimiza

tion is experienced should have got involved in the issue. They did not get involved in. There were no environmental organizations, no disabled organizations, no organizations that make an effort for urban rights. There were no organizations that struggle for gender equality. All these organizations are actually institutions that have not involved in any political engagement within the Kurdish issue, but have the capacity and potential to understand the consequences of the problems. Because they did not participate in negotiations, we could not tell the society that Kurdish issue caused what kind of victimizations. Society, therefore, did not understand what we wanted to solve. They just thought that what we wanted to solve was a war that was going on. In other words, ceasefire. However, we were trying to solve something beyond the ceasefire. Therefore, the involvement of civil society with this incomplete or equipped with political engagements participations have not contributed to the .

The fact that they did not have a strong social base as well as partisanship played a significant role in the fact that NGOs have not been sufficiently effective in the Resolution Process. An NGO representative in social fields in Diyarbakir summarizes this situation with the following words:

But there still was something missing. It did not reach the parties. We need to look at a bit the civil society like this. Because the base is weak, these works can be undesirably a little more elitist. And civil society, which have a base, has a higher effect on mediation and monitoring and evaluation of these issues. Like I said, because of two reasons: being not able to maintain its impartiality and especially not having a societal base.

In addition to partisanship, weakness of the societal base and elitism, thirdly, some actors state that NGOs were unprepared about the political solution of the Kurdish issue and the construction of social peace. A knowledge-based NGO representative in Istanbul expresses that NGOs were caught unprepared to the

process and therefore could not offer a “constructive” or “creative” contribution. An NGO representative in Van known for his/her Islamic-conservative identity states that despite the many studies, civil society actors were highly dispersed, could not conduct systematic studies, develop problem-focused solutions, that the inexperience in respect of political sphere and civil society were intense and widespread, and that all these activities diminish the capacity and productivity of NGOs. An NGO representative who provides direct services to the victims of conflict in Diyarbakir states that the AK Party government and the mainstream Kurdish movement were unprepared for conflict resolution and social peace-building and that this created a great opportunity for NGOs to get involved in the process. However, instead of creating practical solutions in their own fields, preparing and making the ground suitable, NGOs just took a side in the process and supported it at the discursive level:

For example, the bar. The bar is actually a very important institution of our society. It is one of the most important institutions of every country in the whole world. The Bar Associations should prepare the legal ground for me, rather than discussing the political advocacy of this matter or the rightness of wrongness. How is this going to happen? What will happen to our tens of thousands of young people? What will be their reflections in the framework of those rights and constitution? And these are useful when transferred by projecting. Otherwise “I am side with peace process”, “long live peace”, “this terminated the process”, “these did this”, all this rather than contributing to... Let’s say passivity.

Fourthly, it is underlined that that large-scale NGOs, especially those located in the western part of the country, which have an impact on both the government and the public, did not support the process. A NGO representative working in the economy sector in Diyarbakir states that distance of institutions to the process such as Bar associations, Chambers and employer’s associations are effective in the failure of the process. Some participants state that NGOs in the Kurdish area had various initiati

ves to convince such civil society actors which were influential throughout the country for supporting the process, but that these efforts have not resulted.

Fifthly, NGOs both in the Kurdish space and on the western side suggested that especially the distant and critical stance of the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) to the process also affect the field of civil society in a negative manner. It has been stated especially in the left-secular civil society, the statements such as "AKP and HDP came to an agreement" and "give presidency, take democratic autonomy" were widely circulated and this has caused CHP and civil society under influence of it to stay distant from the process.

According to a NGO representative advocating knowledge-based rights in Istanbul, "we went through a political climate where positive consideration of the peace process was equal to positive consideration of the AK Party", which did not contribute to finding solutions to Kurdish conflict and constructing social peace. As some participants underlined, debates and criticisms over the issues such as "peace with a right-wing government?", "peace with an anti-democratic government?", "democracy first, then peace", are constantly held on the agenda by the left-secular community. These debates and criticisms show that the relationship that the left-secular community have established with the AK Party was more primarily than the political solution of the Kurdish issue and the social peace-construction. The anti-AK Party community has always been skeptical about this process, has not contributed, nor supported it and has not even wanted the success of the process. Another NGO representative in Istanbul, who works in knowledge-based activities, goes a bit further on this issue and argues that the Kurdish issue is "a secondary issue" for the western left-wing NGO community. Accordingly, during the Resolution Process there was a sharp distinction between the priorities of the actors in the Kurdish space and the priority of the left-secular communities on the western side. A participant known for their work on NGOs points to Gezi Park Protests in this regard and states that the Resolution Process was not the primary agenda for most of the actors in the Gezi Park

Protests period, and that the discussions on “Gezi and Kurds” was denoting this separation. Since, the Resolution Process was announced to the public on March 21, 2013, just two months before the Gezi Protests, it was necessary to protect this process that began with the aim of finding a solution to such a painful and deadly issue.

Some NGO representatives also point out that anxiety about not harming the process drove most of the civil society actors to stay passive and not to take the initiative. Accordingly, matters such as the process’ closure to the public oversight, the mainstream Kurdish movement and the AK Party’s preference to exclude civilian actors, the strength of the anti-process actors and the protection sensitivity of the process against these have caused NGOs to be “too cautious” and not take initiative for not harming the process.

### **Conclusion and Evaluation**

As a result, the five main conclusions from the above discussions on the role of NGOs in the 2013-2015 Resolution Process should be particularly underlined. First, although emergent experience in different time and location is indicating that NGOs are fulfilling different functions in conflict resolution and building social peace area but in Turkey’s Kurdish conflict they fulfil their functions relatively on the issues like direct services delivery, monitoring and public advocacy. It is seen that the functions of protecting the remaining citizens, mediation and facilitation, social harmony sensitive to conflict, socialization within groups and dissemination of peace culture couldn’t effectively fulfilled. In this sense, it can be said that NGOs directed their attention mostly towards the decision-making actors such as government, state, mainstream Kurdish politics, and have not focused on community-oriented activities.

Second, the peace-building work in Turkey does not become localized sufficiently. Debates on different concepts such as “localization”, “nationalization”, “socialization” of Peace, mainly shows that conflict resolution and in peace-building work in

Turkey run with an approach that appeals mostly in countries scale. It is important to note that NGOs do not work sufficiently directly in localities, neighborhoods, districts and provinces in conflict resolution and peace building work

Thirdly, the NGOs in Turkey are not directly involved in issues such as the Kurdish issue and is seen that only %2-3 of NGOs making efforts on the subject. Most of the associations that are active in the field of civil society are composed of the structures that are built for the construction of sports, the assistance of the fellow citizens and the construction of the mosque. Ensuring these associations participation which have no direct engagement in political structures in the social structure of this peace-building work towards the solution of Turkey's Kurdish conflict constitutes one of the most important trials.

Fourth, in Turkey's Kurdish conflict a ghettoization seems to be notable. The three main ghettos and boundaries can be mentioned: political ghettos, geographic ghettos and sectoral ghettos. It appears that NGOs are largely in the shadow of politics and prefer to remain in 'their own political neighborhood', in other words, in their ghetto. In Turkey's Kurdish conflict cases contacting with different neighborhoods, establish dialogue and make joint action is a very limited. It is also seen that the NGOs acting in political ghettos also disintegrate geographically. Close partnership with the NGOs in the Kurdish areas and NGO's in the western Turkey is very limited. Finally, it is seen that NGO's remain at sectoral boundaries and their capacity of the to do multi-sector / multi-site joint works is quite low. Institutions working on themes such as human rights, gender, migration, etc. cooperate with institutions that work on similar themes. However, NGOs which are working on different issues are not coming together adequately. This situation makes it difficult for NGOs to associate their activities and prevents them increasing their activities by maintaining their positioning in larger networks with protecting their corporate structures.

Finally, the Kurdish issue in Turkey was discussed at the level of macro headlines and it must be noted that establishing rela-

tionship between these macro and micro area is not addressed sufficiently. The activities that would relate to the different dimensions of the Kurdish issue and to redefine the Kurdish issue in this sense on a micro scale could increase the activities of NGOs in social peace building. For example, taking the issue of mother tongue together with the education of children having special pedagogical needs, with a decentralizing approach and sharing the power issue together with the environment and water management would have made it easier to overcome political and geographical ghettos. Together on this, when we look at the case of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, it can be said that NGOs often preferred to be mobilized around the macro issues.

## **Examples of Conflict Resolution and Turkey's Peace Experience**

**Gülçin Avcı**

Turkey said farewell to the last conflict resolution process that had started with a meeting between Hakan Fidan, Chairman of the National Intelligence Organization and Abdullah Ocalan in İmralı island in December 2012.

Even if today the experiences of the peace process seem to us like something belonging to a magical and rare fable, this was not the first and the only solution attempt. The conflict between Turkey and PKK has a history of negotiations and cease-fires which deserves to be spoken.

### **History of Negotiations**

The first known contacts between the PKK and the state took place under Turgut Ozal. It has been confirmed within the scope of the investigation regarding his death in 2010 that Eşref Bitlis, the former General Commander of the Gendarmerie, who died suspiciously in a plane crash wrote a letter to Ozal issuing detailed explanations regarding the solution of the Kurdish question seven months before his death. The first of his two-step proposal that he wrote to Ozal consisted of the measure against PKK which he believed that has some connections with some components within the state and some USA commanders. And in the the second step which consisted of taking some moderate steps towards Kurdish people and "eliminating the Kurdish people's being stuck between PKK and the state"<sup>16</sup> through a change in the state policy.

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<sup>16</sup>"Eşref Bitlis'ten Ozal'a Son Mektup" <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25137395>

Also, Adnan Kahveci, who lost his life in a suspicious accident like Eşref Bitlis, prepared a report at the request of Ozal and in that report he stated that the military measures should be abandoned and bold political steps should be taken. The National Security Council of 27 August 1992 was a Council where the discussions were shaped by Kurdish rights and bore the stamps of the proposals that were put forward by both Kahveci and Bitlis. The last report of the Ozal period was the one prepared by Kemal Yamak in January 1993 who was a retired Full General and the General Secretary of the Presidency at that time and in his report he emphasized that the solution was out of the military sphere.<sup>17</sup>

As an answer to Turgut Ozal's positive attempts, PKK declared the first ceasefire unilaterally in its history on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1993. However, after Ozal's death, despite a two-month extension, the ceasefire came to end following the death of 33 soldiers.

After the two very violent years following the breakdown of the ceasefire in 1993, the PKK again declared a unilateral ceasefire on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1995 and made a statement declaring its demands. However, these demands were not met and operations were carried out against the organization's camps in Northern Iraq, and the ceasefire ended once again.

In 1996-1997, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan tried to show the will to solve the Kurdish issue politically. It is even said that Erbakan sent letters to Kandil three times in this period. As a matter of fact, after years, Bayik confirmed that this had happened.<sup>18</sup>

The 1st of September, 1998, The World Peace Day, was the date that the PKK declared the third ceasefire. On 9<sup>th</sup> October 1998 Ocalan was expelled from Syria and on 12<sup>th</sup> November he was taken

**17** "Devletin PKK ile İlk Teması" <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/dosya/devletin-pkk-ile-ilk-temasi>

**18** The statements of Cemil Bayik confirming that Erbakan sent them letters three times: <http://www.internethaber.com/pkk-ile-devletin-gizli-gorusmeleri-577474h.htm>

to Italy. And on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1999, Ocalan was captured in Kenya and brought to Turkey. In the local elections held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1999, immediately after his delivery to Turkey, HADEP (People's Democratic Party) won 37 mayors. On 29<sup>th</sup> June 1999, Ocalan was sentenced to death as a result of the trials in Imrali island. And immediately after that, in July, the PKK took a decision of quitting the armed struggle. Upon Ocalan's demand, PKK left the borders of Turkey on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1999 and a group of members of PKK surrendered. During this withdrawal, according to state resources 200, according to PKK resources 500 members of PKK were killed as a result of a unilateral attack by the Turkish state. On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2002, PKK declared that it dissolved itself and founded KADEK (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Party). At the end of the same year, with the government of the Justice and Development Party, a new era was entered in which a period of rapid steps towards democratization, realization of the reforms required for accession to the European Union and the return of civil and political rights of the Kurds began. The ceasefire process which lasted until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004 was terminated on the grounds of Ocalan's conditions in Imrali, the military operations against the PKK and the government's lack of political effort. The ceasefire which was announced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 for the fifth time ended again due to the military operations. Following the declaration of ceasefire by PKK (KCK) again on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2009 based on "self-defense", 34 members of PKK were brought to Turkey via Habur Border Gate. On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010, PKK broke the ceasefire; however, it first declared that it took a decision of no action for 40 days on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2010 and then it extended this period until the general elections of 12<sup>th</sup> June 2011. The ceasefire which was extended until 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011 was ended by PKK with an attack in Silvan province on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011, a day before the end of the ceasefire. Until the new process launched in the end of 2012, nearly one thousand people lost their lives in the conflict.

### **AK Party Period and the Last Resolution Process**

The "Resolution Process" was the third known initiative during the period of government of the Justice and Development Party

(AK Party). The process called “Democratic Opening” was started in July 2009 and embraced some cultural and political rights, including the entry of 34 members of PKK coming from Mahmur and Kandil mountains into Turkey through Habur Boarder Gate upon Abdullah Ocalan’s call. As this very “revolutionary” Habur entries surpassed the pace of the evolution of society, they remained in the history as a crisis. However, then there was another process in Oslo where the state and PKK members met. Oslo talks/meetings, which were thought to be a second trial around a table in which the parties made demands to stop the conflict, were found out with the leakage of the sound recordings.

In the Oslo notes of Afet Güneş, who participated in the talks on behalf of the state it is said: “Habur has been the breaking point of our two-and-a-half-year-long relations, starting from Ankara” and this note clearly shows us that the talks between the state and PKK and Ocalan began after 2007. According to this statement, there were negotiations between the state and the PKK at a time when there were armed conflicts, harsh political discourses and intensive street incidents.

The last resolution process was different from the others since it took place before the eyes of the Turkish society and was almost too transparent.

### **Experiences of international NGOs and NGOs in Turkey Resolution Process**

The Solution Process which lasted for almost three years, was carried out through the meetings between the state officials and Ocalan and the contacts of representatives from BDP (later HDP) between the government, Ocalan and Kandil. All these negotiations were known to the public, although their content was not always reflected in full. Although these negotiations were widely accepted in the society, this was limitedly reflected to civil society organizations, and, there was no strong civil society support in comparison with the other examples from around the world. The social support which existed in the international experienc-

es but was missing in Turkey's experience was tried to be compensated<sup>19</sup> via the Committee of Wise Men<sup>20</sup>. The Committee of Wise Men which operated in seven different regions of the country as sub-committees consisting of nine people for two months contacted the local NGOs and held meetings with them. However, since the operation of this state-run delegation did not continue throughout the whole process, the area of influence remained quite limited.

The greatest contribution of civil society organizations to conflict resolution processes can be determined as the expansion and humanization of social relations, and providing the diffusion of the peace accomplished between the state and the organisation into the individuals. Yet, a peace which comes from the top and not internalised by the society likely will not be permanent and it can be reversed easily with the first big mistake. In fact, as Cuma Çiçek pointed out, this is how, after the failure of the process, a most intensive conflict period began which resulted in the the death of more than ten thousand people.

### **Impact or Ineffectiveness of Non-Governmental Organizations**

Although there are many rights-based organizations which have worked for years with the dream of peace in Turkey, those organizations have not worked with the same intensity when the peace process started. It can be said that here the biggest reason for that is that The Justice and Development Party embraced the process on it's own and the civil society organisations did not wanted to be seen as they supported the Justice and Development Party since there are many other controversial issues between them. The fact that the government was not able to free the process from its' own axis, for instance, it did not try other instruments such as establishing a coordination commission in which all the political parties in the parliament would have equal

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**19** Milliyet Newspaper "Akıllar'le toplantı yarın Dolmabahçe'de" <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-akiller-le-toplanti-yarin-dolmabahce-de/siyaset/siyaset-detay/03.04.2013/1688584/default.htm>

**20** The complete list of Committee of Wise Men: [http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akil\\_%C4%B0nsanlar\\_Heyeti](http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akil_%C4%B0nsanlar_Heyeti)

representation, and this situation may have resulted in that the civil society kept itself away from the government party and watched the resolution process silently. However, it is not easy to understand this silence, inaction, immobility or pessimism in the days when the possibility of peace which was desired strongly when it was a dream was the closest to happen, for it is a fact that it is possible to have a role in the peace building by only working with the society without contacting neither the state nor the organisation.

When we look at the examples from the world, although none of them resembles each other, we do not see any experience which resulted with success at once from today to tomorrow. It is the result of long-term efforts to learn not to win but to reconcile, to learn that politics is stronger than arms and peace is always the most profitable option. When it comes to the persistency on the negotiation processes by the parties, it largely corresponds to the pressure from the individuals and the civil society.

For example, the Northern Ireland Conflict Resolution should be seen also as a result of many non-governmental organizations' long-standing efforts on a voluntary basis. As Derek Mooney explained in detail, priests, women, youth, sports clubs, political organizations have provided a great transformative power in society as long as they can come into contact. Considering the work carried out by priests and former IRA militants, the society was prepared from bottom to top to live with its enemy. Again, women's organizations were actively involved in Spain-ETA and Colombia-FARC processes. In the Philippines-Moro solution, non-governmental organizations continue to act as a promotive and supportive role as well as a supervisory function.

Conflict resolutions, –even if the framework agreements have been signed, do not end in a real and absolute sense. Peace, which is directly connected to social dynamics, makes it compulsory to work all the times. As Derek Mooney said, the Irish conflict process did not result in a solution, the parties learned how to manage the conflict.

In Turkey, as the period in which implementation of the peace talks was just started, Gezi Park Actions took place in May of 2013. The Gezi Park Actions, which included civil society organizations and many political organizations, were welcomed with a greater interest than the peace process by the half of the population of the country. These actions without being allowed to harm to the extent necessary to end the process have been avoided but then there were some incidents that developed in connection with the Syrian war. Especially “Kobani Actions” that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2014, were among the most critical and risky days of the process. However, with the insistence of the parties to the solution, the process could continue for another year. Such events, which we might call the injury of the solution process, were not repaired by the healing and supportive activities of the civil society. Limited progress was made on the actors own insistence and effort.

It is of course possible to list the errors of the government and/or the PKK in the solution process. However, instead of shortcoming of actors who are taking the risk, the positive aspects of the actions taken and the disruption of the civil society left behind will provide the main perspective for the next process. Contrary to statements, such as “There will be no peace with the PKK” and “There will be no peace with the AKP” made by those during the solution process, the parties provided almost three years of non-conflict. Even on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the government and the HDP deputies met at Dolmabahçe in a joint statement.

Civil initiatives expected to offer solutions to many problems which we come across in different categories of social peace. For example, the conditions of providing home returns, ways of eliminating individual anger and grievances, adaptation of paramilitary organization members to the society, reinstatement of rights and freedoms, rehabilitation studies that will enable the exit of psychology of war as a society, creation of speech floors in which the normalization phase can progress healthily, restoring security concerns. Today, it is important to carry out these studies. As a matter of fact, when we look at the Philippines-Moro process, we have witnessed the signing of the framework agree-

ment and the reconstruction of the peace that has been opened by the negotiating tables that have been established repeatedly since the 70s.

Turkey-PKK process, though today in a conflictive period, also have a substantial corpus of solutions. There is no shortage for a new solution process as Etyen Mahçupyan puts it, “walking to peace by talking”. Moreover, when it is a well-known fact that the parties contact even during the conflicting periods, it is not easy to say that we are far from the solution even today. Provided that we are not caught unprepared for peace both individually and socially, and we do not abandon the social works for the solution to the hegemony of the state.

## ABOUT CONTRIBUTORS

**Derek Mooney** is a communications and public policy consultant working in Dublin and Brussels. He has been involved in peace and dialogue building in Northern Ireland since the early 1990s through political, civic society and NGO activity. Derek was a political/ministerial adviser on National Security/Defence in the Fianna Fáil led Government 2004 – 2010. Prior to this he worked on Fianna Fáil's Northern Ireland policy, both in Govt and opposition, from just before the Good Friday Agreement and was the Secretary to the Fianna Fáil delegation to the National Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, 2002 - 2004. In recent years Derek has also been an adviser to the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland. He was a core participant in the series of Political Dialogue Workshops organised by the Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation since 1995 and went on to work with a number of Glencree's international peace and dialogue programmes, including in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Haiti.

**Ana Vilellas** is a researcher at the Conflict and Peacebuilding Programme of the School for a Culture of Peace (ECP), at Autonomous University of Barcelona, since 2006. Her expertise is on conflict analysis and peace processes as well as gender and peacebuilding, and her geographical focus includes conflicts, socio-political crises and peace processes in Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. She has also been involved in support to Track II initiatives. She has conducted field research in Turkey, northern Iraq and the Balkans. As part of her work on the women, peace and security agenda, she has carried out research on EU's gender and multi-track diplomacy under the umbrella of the international research project 'Whole of Society Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding' (2015-2017), led by the Utrecht University and the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. Other projects where she has been involved include the ECP 'Conflict and Peacebuilding Database', among others. She has co-authored the yearbook Alert! Report on conflicts, human rights and

peacebuilding since 2007 as well as the yearbook *Peace Talks in Focus. Report on Trends and Scenarios* since 2018, and she written reports and articles on the Kurdish question, conflict-resolution in Southern Caucasus and Kosovo, gender and peacebuilding, among other issues. She lectures on conflict and peacebuilding and on the women, peace and security agenda at several Spanish universities, at Master and undergraduate level. Ana Vilellas holds an MSc in International and European Politics by the University of Edinburgh, a Postgraduate Diploma on Peace Culture (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, UAB) and a BA in Journalism (UAB).

**Luz Piedad Caicedo** Anthropologist, feminist, magister in Interdisciplinary Studies on Development, Master's studies in History and specialization in Political Sciences. She is a sub-director of the Corporación Humanas - Colombia and one of its founding partners. She has investigated: the reasons why women are involved in drug crimes and the situation of women deprived of their liberty; the impact of armed conflicts on the lives and safety of women and the impact of demobilization of paramilitaries on women in the host communities. She is co-author of several of the publications of the Corporación Humanas.

**Hüseyin Oruç** was born in 1969 in Malatya, Darende. He graduated from Boğaziçi University, Tourism Department and Anadolu University, Department of Public Administration. Between 1992 and 1995, he actively participated in the IHH's work as a volunteer. In 1995, he became one of the 6 founding members of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. He managed overseas projects of IHH for many years. Within this framework, he has taken place in hundreds of studies in more than 100 countries. He served as the general coordinator of the Mavi Marmara, which set off with the slogan, "Our Route is Palestine, Our Load is Humanitarian Aid". He is a founding trustee of the UK-based Humanitarian Forum, one of the international umbrella organizations; a member of the board of founders of the OIC Humanitarian Forum; and the founding member of the Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Islamic World (IDSB). He represents IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation in the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation and in the United Nations. He is a member of Independent Monitoring Panel of the Philippine Peace Process. He is still a member of TGTV Management and Executive Board and Vice Chairman of IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. He is married and has three children.

**Cuma Çiçek** was born in 1980 in Diyarbakır. After completing primary, secondary and high school education in Diyarbakır, he completed the Department of Industrial Engineering of Istanbul Technical University in 2004. He completed the Master of City and Regional Planning Program between 2005-2008. In his thesis he took a critical perspective on the governance process in Diyarbakır. Between 2009-2014 he completed his Ph.D. in Political Science and Political Sociology and Public Policy/Action at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (*Institut d'Etudes politiques de Paris – Sciences Po.*). Çiçek, one of the founders of the Peace Foundation, is a member of the Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA). His articles on Kurdish issue, Kurdish Islamism, local governments, regional inequalities, class and identity relations, conflict resolution and social peace are published in *Birikim*, *Praksis*, *Turkish Studies* and *Dialectical Anthropology* magazines. He is currently studying at International Research Center (*Centre de Recherches Internationales – CERI*) of the Paris Institute of Political Studies.

**Gülçin Avşar** graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Law in 2008. She took part in the execution of legal activities within the Committee for Solidarity with the Victims of TMK (Law on Fight Against Terrorism), The Signatories of the Call For Justice For Children, and The Committee of Solidarity with Silicosis Patient Sandblasting Workers. She took part in non-governmental organizations and initiatives such as Citizen Contribution to Democratic Opening and New Constitution Platform. In 2013, she wrote the report “The Other Side of Ergenekon: Unidentified Persons and Losses” published by TESEV. Gülçin Avşar who contributed to the theoretical and practical activities for the solution of the Kurdish issue, continues to her profession of attorney in Istanbul.



